

## Persuasive Writing

# Creating an Editorial

Every major newspaper has an “Op/Ed” page, which is short for “Opinion/Editorial.” An editorial is a short essay that gives a writer’s opinion about a timely event or issue. Many times during the history of our country, editorials have paved the way for great changes.

In this chapter, you will be writing an editorial of your own. Perhaps your school is having a crisis over the food choices in the vending machines. Or maybe some sports teams are arguing over who gets to use the gymnasium after school. In an editorial, you can give your opinion about the events happening around you.

### Writing Guidelines

- Subject:** A school issue
- Form:** Editorial
- Purpose:** To persuade the reader
- Audience:** Classmates



## Editorial

An editorial expresses an opinion about a timely event. The editorial that follows was written by Hassan and published in his local newspaper.

### Beginning

The issue is introduced, and the opinion statement is given (underlined).

### *Let the Kids Choose*

*A group of parents has asked the school board to remove the vending machines from Lincoln Middle School. They say that the soda and junk foods in the machines are creating bad eating habits among students. These parents are probably right, but removing vending machines won't solve the problem. Lincoln Middle School should keep its vending machines so that students have more food choices, not fewer.*

*A healthy diet is based on wise food choices. Removing the vending machines only removes the decisions students have to make about the foods they eat. The problem isn't the machines but what's in them. Machines that now hold only soda could just as easily hold juice, milk, and bottled water. Machines full of candy, cookies, and donuts could hold fruit snacks, nuts, and low-salt pretzels.*

*That doesn't mean that all the chips, cookies, donuts, and soda should be removed from the machines. If only healthy snacks are provided, students still won't learn anything about making smart choices. Instead, the vending machines should offer wholesome foods and other foods*

### Middle

The middle paragraphs support the writer's opinion.

**Ending**

The opinion is summed up in a thoughtful way.

*side by side. Then students will have to learn how to choose for themselves.*

*Healthy eating habits begin with wise food choices. Removing the vending machines won't help students learn anything about healthy food choices, but stocking those machines with a mix of foods will.*

Bridgewood Gazette

**OPINION/EDITORIAL**

*City Voices:  
 Let the Kids Choose*

A group of parents has asked the school board to remove the vending machines from Lincoln Middle School. They say that the soda and junk foods in the machines are creating bad eating habits among students. These parents are probably right, but removing vending machines won't solve the problem. Lincoln Middle School should keep its vending machines so that students have more food choices, not fewer.

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problem isn't the machines but what's in them. Machines that now hold only soda could just as easily hold juice, milk, and bottled water. Machines full of candy, cookies, and donuts could hold fruit snacks, nuts, and low-salt pretzels.

That doesn't mean that all the chips, cookies, donuts, and soda should be removed from the machines. If only healthy snacks are provided, students still won't learn anything about making smart choices. Instead, the vending machines should offer wholesome foods and other foods side by side. Then students will have to learn how to choose for themselves.

Healthy eating habits begin with wise food choices. Removing the vending machines won't help students learn anything about healthy food choices, but stocking those machines with a mix of foods will.



**Respond to the reading.** Answer the following questions.

- Ideas** (1) What is Hassan's opinion? (2) What details offer the strongest support? Name two.
- Voice & Word Choice** (3) How would you describe the writer's voice? (4) What words make it sound that way?



**Literature Connections:** For another example of persuasive writing, read the editorial "Do Professional Athletes Get Paid Too Much?" by Justin Hjelm.

## Prewriting Selecting a Topic

An editorial gives an opinion about a current event or issue, so the best way to find a topic for an editorial is to focus on things happening around you. When Hassan received his assignment to write an editorial, he used sentence starters to make a list of all the current events he could think of.

### Sentence Starters

*At Lincoln Middle School,*

*the biggest problem is . . . the gym locker rooms are gross.*

*. . . that some homework is busywork.*

*the worst change is . . . removing the vending machines.*

*the one change I would make is . . . adding a study hall.*

*. . . starting school later!*



**Use sentence starters.** Use the sentence starters above to think about issues or problems in your school. Finish each sentence with your opinion. Review your opinions and choose the one issue that will make the best editorial.

## Supporting Your Opinion

Now that you have selected an opinion, it's time to come up with reasons to support it. Hassan used a table diagram. The “tabletop” gives his opinion, and the “table legs” are reasons that support it.

### Table Diagram

Opinion

*Lincoln Middle School should keep its vending machines.*

Support

*students need the chance to choose good foods*

*the problem isn't the machines, but the junk food*

*machines should have all kinds of food in them*



**Create a table diagram.** Use the sample above as a guide to create your own table diagram. Write your opinion in the top box and your supporting reasons underneath. Come up with at least three reasons.

## Refining Your Opinion Statement

Now that you have selected an opinion and come up with reasons to support it, you are ready to write your opinion statement. An effective opinion statement gives your opinion and sums up the reasons for it.



**Write an opinion statement.** Create an opinion statement that combines your opinion with your reasons. Use the formula above as a guide.

## Writing Creating Your First Draft

As you write your editorial, make sure each part does its job.

- **Beginning paragraph:** Introduce your topic and give your opinion statement.
- **Middle paragraphs:** Present your reasons in a logical order or in order of importance. (See page 551 for help.)
- **Closing paragraph:** Reflect on your opinion and reasons and give your reader something to think about.



**Write your first draft.** Let your table diagram list and the tips above guide you as you write your editorial.



Always think about your audience. In order to convince a reader to agree with you, avoid offending her or him. Therefore, don't blame or sharply criticize anyone in your editorial. Also avoid inflammatory words that are likely to make people angry. (See page 246.)



## Revising Improving Your Writing

Revise your first draft by focusing on the following traits of writing.

- Ideas** Do I clearly state my opinion? Do I provide supporting reasons? Do I include details for each reason?
- Organization** Do I organize my sentences and paragraphs in the best order?
- Voice** Is my voice polite and convincing?
- Word Choice** Do I use strong action verbs and specific nouns?
- Sentence Fluency** Do my sentences read smoothly?



**Revise your editorial.** Use the questions above to help you improve your writing.

## Editing Checking for Conventions

Once you finish revising your editorial, polish it by focusing on *conventions*.

- Conventions** Have I checked for errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar?



**Edit your editorial.** Check the conventions in your writing. Make a clean final draft and proofread it for any remaining errors.

## Publishing Sharing Your Editorial

Because editorials share opinions about timely events or issues, this type of writing is made for publication. To find the right place to publish your editorial, ask yourself the following questions.

- Who is my audience? (Classmates? Parents? People in the community? People who belong to a specific organization?)
- What publication do these people read? (A local newspaper? A school paper or Web site? A PTO or PTA newsletter?)
- How can I submit my editorial to this publication? (What are the guidelines? How should I send in my writing?)



**Publish your editorial.** Use the questions above to help you find the right place to send your editorial for publication. Prepare your work according to the submission guidelines and send it in.