***Editorial writing***

An editorial is an article that states the newspaper’s ideas on an issue. These ideas are presented as opinion. Editorials are meant to influence public opinion, promote critical thinking, and sometimes cause people to take action on an issue. In essence, an editorial is an opinionated news story. According to Webster's Dictionary an editorial is "an article in a publication expressing the opinion of its publishers or editors." Editorials appear on the newspaper’s editorial page, a page which includes editorials, columns, opinion articles, reviews and cartoons. If the paper contains more than one opinion page, the others are called op-ed pages. Another important item that appears on the newspaper’s editorial page is the masthead, also known as a staff box, which includes a statement providing the details of publication. Since a newspaper is not a living, breathing human being, it cannot form these ideas or opinions. However, the editorial board is made up of living, breathing human beings who determine, hopefully by consensus, the opinions that will be presented in the editorial. The editorial board is a group of people, usually the top editors, who decide on a plan for each editorial that will appear in a newspaper. Please note that editorials are not written by the regular reporters of the news organization, in fact, most major newspapers have a strict policy of keeping "editorial" and "news" staffs separate. That’s why editorials are written without any byline. Most editorial pieces take the form of an essay or thesis, using arguments to promote a point of view. Requirements for article length varies according to each publication's guidelines, as do a number of other factors such as style and topic. An average editorial is 750 words or less. But this length can vary depending upon the need and requirement.

**WHAT SHOULD AN EDITORIAL DO?**

• Criticize or attack: If they criticize, they require suggestions for change. If you launch an attack against something, you must be impeccable in your charge. An attack is forceful; criticism does not have to be forceful, but it has to be held down with facts and suggestions for change.

• Defend: Stand up for an individual or an institution that is under attack by society.

• Endorse: But you must give solid reasons for your endorsement of a political candidate, an issue, or the reasons behind building a new gymnasium.

• Compliment: Show evidence that the compliment is deserved. Do praise when warranted.

• Instigate, advocate or appeal: To instigate editorially would mean that the newspaper intended to go on a crusade for something--improvements in the school study hall system, for example. Or you might advocate that this be accomplished by backing suggestions put out by a school committee that studied the problem. An appeal editorial might mean that you’d encourage people to donate to a school fund drive or vote for a tax levy increase.

• Entertain: An entertaining editorial is good for the reader’s soul, but it should have a worthwhile point and should be written about something worth the reader’s time.

• Predict: Support your predictions with fact.

**IS THE ROLE OF A NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL**

• Advocate for the rights of individuals

• be strictly accurate,

• bring down a government,

• criticize government policies,

• Fight for the freedom of the press,

• indicate preferred foreign policy directions,

• Nurture enlightened values,

• preach,

• set a high tone for debate,

• suppress important facts,

• Promote critical thinking?

QUALITIES OF A GOOD EDITORIAL:

1. Clarity Precise conveyance of ideas

2. Color Using words that evoke images 3. Concreteness being specific

4. Economy making every word count

5. Tone the general impression of the writing

6. Tempo The pace (how the writing moves- fluency) 7. Variety Vary word choice, sentences, length, and sentence structure

**WRITING AN EDITORIAL:**

The writing process:

1. Invention: choose an issue VU Your editorial could be about how the readers could help the environment, inform the public about a particular endangered species, praise an effort by a group who has helped to take an endangered animal off of the endangered species list, or any other idea that can be used as an editorial.

2. Collection: gather support Gather as many details to convince others about your opinion. (Facts or evidence, written statements from sources or authorities in the subject (experts), comparisons to similar situations to support your argument, pictures or images that strengthen your argument, be able to counter argue your opponents on this issue.)

3. Organization: stretch from straight forward opening to closing

4. Drafting: write the first draft VU Body should have clear and accurate details and examples. Give strong arguments in beginning of editorial and at the end. Show the opposing arguments and their weaknesses. Offer a solution at the end. Do not be wish washy. Stick to your argument or opinion.

5. Revising: get it right your editorial should be clear and forceful. Avoid attacking others, do not preach, paragraphs should be brief and direct. Give examples and illustrations. Be honest and accurate. Don't be too dramatic.

6. Proofreading: check the language Check content, format and mechanics

**STRUCTURING AN EDITORIAL:**

Whatever type of editorial you write, it must be built around a logical framework. It must have a/an:

• Introduction: To get the reader’s attention

• Body: To persuade the reader

• Conclusion: To prompt the reader into action an effective formula for editorial writing is SPECS.

State the problem or situation; Position on the problem;

Evidence to support the position;

Conclusions: Who’s affected and how; state and refute the position of the other side Solutions to the problem: At least two.

**DO’S AND DON’TS OF EDITORIAL WRITING do’s:**

• Change abstractions into living examples

• highlight emotional hooks - a warm positive tone is essential

• soften criticism; never divide your readership

• speak as the voice of the whole community

• tie the editorial to a news item or current issue of public concern

• Show a local flavor; local loyalties and interests relate to readers

• beware legal challenges over reputations

• avoid a preachy tone and rhetorical flourishes

• convert statistics into factions

• simplify grammar and vocabulary

• Limit questions to a minimum; your task is to offer answers

• Clarify your point of view before beginning; state a Headline.

• establish your authority, credibility

• Simplify expressions; talk plainly.

• Focus on three points only

• Avoid language knots: in which, through which.., of which.

• Avoid lists; avoid "First, second ...” etc.

• Avoid need to cross reference: not "as was said above." name it again.

• Avoid dialogue. It is not a novel.

• avoid "I you me" pronouns; use a plural voice = the community

**Don’ts: What NOT to put in your editorial**

• The singular pronoun "I"

• Falsehoods, suppositions, exaggerations

• Libel and defamation • advocate anything illegal

• Long paragraphs

• Subheadings

• Difficult, technical words

• Grammatical knots, confused writing

• Questions to finish

• forget to devise and include a headline

• ignore the obvious a

• Vague ambiguous references, the unattached "It"

***COLUMN ERITING***

**What is a column?**

WRITING COLUMNS VU LECTURE 38 “The heart of journalism may be news reporting, and the soul of journalism the editorial page, but the personality of journalism is the column.” Sam Riley a former columnist. "What should a columnist write about?" What's on his heart? What has provoked him or her to outrage or the small, day-to-day, real-life dramas of ordinary folk? Should the columnist's goal be to inform, to persuade, to entertain? I'd say some of all. A column is written weekly, monthly or bi-monthly, and must be focused on one particular topic. You have to be consistent in what you write, maintain the same tone of voice, and stay focused on the issue at hand. A column can last from three to four months, to ten or maybe even twenty. What differentiates a column from other forms of journalism is that it meets each of the following criteria:

• It is a regular feature in a publication

• It is personality-driven by the author

• It explicitly contains an opinion or point of view there are two main types of analytical writing in newspapers: editorials and opinion columns. Opinion columns are often found on the page opposite the editorial page. The page is usually labeled "Opinions" or "Comment." Opinion columns may be found elsewhere in the newspaper as well, especially on the page preceding the editorial page. Opinion columns are usually labeled as such, to separate them from news reports.

**Column and a news report:**

The main difference between a column and news reports is that opinion columns are subjective rather than objective. This means that they express an opinion or make an argument. A news report, for example, might list various mistakes that a politician has committed. It would not however, go on to state that because of these mistakes the politician should resign. An opinion column, however, may do exactly this. When reading an opinion column, it is helpful to imagine that the writer is engaged in a debate with his or her readers. The writer is trying to persuade you or convince you that a certain point of view is the correct one. There are, however, important differences between editorials and opinion columns.

**Column and an editorial:**

Personal columns differ from editorials in that editorial is a voice, policy and ideology of the newspaper whereas a column is a view point of the columnist himself. This view point of the columnist may come in clash with the newspaper or the editorial’s stance at times. Only responsible for his words whereas the whole columnist is

**HOW TO WRITE A COLUMN?**

Before writing a column, think about purpose, audience, content and structure. Purpose

Why are you writing? Is it to inform the community about an event? Does the paper's editor, the community or co-workers want it? Are you entertaining, informing or educating? Do you seek an identity or exposure?

Audience

Whom are you trying to reach? Who are you reaching? Decide on your audience. Write in their language, at their level, about things the audience needs to know or wants to know.

Content

What will your column discuss? How will you discuss it? Answering why and how will help determine what. Remember, columns should be based on facts and should be accurate. Names are crucial in a personal column. Personal columns may be informal; yet accuracy and sourcing material counts.

Structure

How will your message get to your audience? There are other types of columns besides the personal column, too. Some of these cover specific topics or types of information. They can be "question and answer," "new ideas," "how-to-do-it" pieces or "calendars." Personal columns often have departments. These departments help you to write your column. Departments can be "coming events," applications, notes or some of the categories suggested for the non-personal columns. Before writing, decide on the purpose, content, audience and structure. Personal columns should have many local names. They also use words like: "I," "we" or "you

**DO’S AND DON’TS OF COLUMN WRITING:**

When writing a column, do

• Give the reader timely, helpful information.

• Develop a structure and keep it. Write on a regular schedule.

• Write simple and short sentences and paragraphs.

• In personal columns, use local names and places.

• Let others speak for you by use of quotes and references • Learn the difference between a column and a news story

When writing a column, don't

• Use technical or complex words.

• Talk in jargon or unfamiliar terms.

• Talk about one topic constantly.

• Include too much detail or material. You should be stimulating interest, not exhausting a subject.

• Refer to yourself as a third person (this author, your reporter) or quote yourself (Jimmy Jones said). Instead use mine

**Skills to be a good Columnist:**

Ability to thinking Strong Observation skills Avid reading Ability to use narration and humor (Humor in writing takes many forms: satire, parody, irony, lampoon and just plain nonsense.) "So long as there's a bit of a laugh going, things are all right. As soon as this infernal seriousness, like a greasy sea, heaves up, everything is lost." D. H. Lawrence

**Tools for Beginning:**

Epigraph/quotation: (Quote an authority that you either agree or disagree with and use it as a starting point to build into your thesis statement. Quote a famous saying, or truism to orient the reader to your topic.)

Example:” Jon Peters, President of Marine land Park, argues that, `captivity for the whales is the best thing for them. Our habitat pool is just like the Pacific Ocean: our killer whales can't even tell the difference. They're very happy here.'

“Concession: (If you're writing a persuasive piece, you might consider beginning with a concession--that is, by beginning with an acknowledgement of part of your opponent's argument as being valid. Remember that aconcession is not a form of weakness. In fact a concession is strength as it finds common ground with your opponent and establishes your ethical appeal: you are a reasonable person willing to listen to/acknowledge that there are more sides to an issue than yours.)

Example: "I think you're quite right; gun control legislation in Canada needs to be tightened to prevent us from becoming as violent as our neighbors to the south. However, I don't think your proposal goes far enough. We need also to..."

Narrative / hypothetical example: (Use a personal story or a "what if" scenario to help your reader to visualize the topic.)

Example: "When I was seven years old, I remember being at the Marine land park in Niagara Falls, wondering how such a big whale could be happy in such a small pool."

Example: "If we don't introduce tougher restrictions on assault weapons, our city streets will become a war zone for gangs, drug deals, and drive-by shootings, much like our southern neighbors."

Question or a set of questions: (A question or a series of questions can be very effective in orienting your reader and outlining the issues you plan to discuss in your text.)

Example:” What is the average life span of a whale in captivity compared to a whale in the wild?"

Striking fact or statistic (Use a striking fact to engage your audience's interest Cite a startling statistic from a reliable authority.)

Example: "According to a 1999 Statistics Canada poll, 93% of Canadians would support legislation to ban assault weapons."

Paradox: (Begin with a statement that seems absurd, but may be true.)

Example: If writing a paper on disciplining children in the home, you might begin by arguing that "Parents must be cruel to be kind." At a first glance, this may seem to endorse child abuse. However, a more detailed discussion in your paper might reveal your belief that in order to help children grow into responsible adults, rules in a household must be followed. You're not necessarily endorsing physical punishment: instead, you might be endorsing grounding the child.

Background information: (Introduce relevant background information to orient your reader to the topic. Keep such material focused and condensed, particularly for shorter papers. If you're writing a persuasive piece, it's a good idea to use background material that leans toward your position.)

Example: You might, for instance, provide background on the Water world Marine Park, highlighting the shortcomings of its pool habitats, or detailing the number of fines it has had to pay for its inappropriate treatment of the animals.

Analogy: (You might employ a striking comparison to make a point or introduce your reader to an unfamiliar topic. Usually, you draw a comparison to something common in order to explain something uncommon or unfamiliar.)

Example: "A habitat at Marine land Water Park is a cell not unlike what you'd find at the Kingston Penitentiary, or at the Kent Correctional facility. The difference, of course, is that every inmate at Water world has been wrongfully persecuted and incarcerated. The inmates are serving life sentences without having committed any crimes."

Definition (not from a dictionary): (Using a definition can be very effective in efforts to clarify difficult terms or in an effort to orient your reader to a particular topic or your angle on a particular topic. Avoid using dictionary definitions--especially of common terms--because your reader will likely know what they mean, or can easily access such definitions themselves. You might, however, cite a dictionary definition and then go on either to dispute the definition, or expand upon it within the context of your paper. Definitions from authoritative texts can be very helpful when writing persuasive texts.)

Example: When arguing for or against the use of physical discipline of children in the home, for instance, you might cite the Criminal Code of Canada definitions of the terms "child abuse" and "corporal punishment."

Humor: (You might use a humorous example or personal anecdote to establish your topic and engage your reader. Remember that humor can be an effective tool only if it is funny and appropriate to the audience and the writing context.)

“Columns sell newspapers.” Shahida Imran Signed columns give you the opportunity to speak out. The style can be formal or informal, depending on the subject. The column can focus on any subject--sports, social issues, daily lives, religion, and observations. The column should be written so that the reader can “hear” the writer thinking. The columnist’s voice should be so powerful that readers can hear the writer talking to them

**What should a column do?**

• Highlight creative expression of opinion.

• Reflect the personality of the author.

• Showcase superior writing ability and distinctive style.

• Express the viewpoint of one writer rather than a newspaper. (Any approach--persuasion, praise, explanation, entertainment--can work)

• Build on careful, thorough reporting that incorporates purposeful interviews and documented observations.

• Focus on subjects that appeal to many readers.

• Present new insights in a lively manner that shows the writer’s conviction.

• Provide commentary that stimulates readers to think, to evaluate, to act, and to see everyday life from a new perspective ranging from the serious to the humorous.

• Use an original title that defines the slant or the type of content. Good titles often play on the writer’s name or reflect the writer’s skills. Also the “live” headlines must follow appropriate styles. By lines are essential, and photos of the writer are appropriate.

• Appear regularly in a newspaper on the same page.

• To establish an appropriate identity and to distinguish the column from other articles, the column title should use typography and graphics to complement the publication design. A column, however, should never be confused with a regular feature in the paper.

**HOW SHOULD A COLUMN BE WRITTEN?**

• A simple way is to follow the pattern of the editorial.

• A better way is to make the viewpoint come alive by showing rather than telling. Use colorful nouns and action verbs.

• The issue, not the writer or the writer’s experiences, should be the focal point of the column.

• The message of the columnist dictates the form of the writing.

• First person is permissible but not required--and always it should be used in a subdued manner.

• Rather tstyle, such as the following: Narrative story Fictional dialogue Witty comment Critical Review Editorial slant any freeform structure that fits subject

• A column contains a consistent tone, such as the following: Thoughtful (stimulating) Analytical (serious) Conversational Confidential Reportorial Critical Satirical an argue a specific viewpoint, often a column achieves a more powerful effect by using a creative

TIPS ON COLUMN WRITING

• Write the way you talk. But don't discard good English usage and grammar by being friendly and informal.

• Try to uncover a "lead" or opening that will catch the interest of your readers.

• Use a variety of material, not just one subject.

• Write about people. Keep heavy subject matter to a minimum. When using subject matter, try to tell the story through the experiences of local people.

• Write simply. Avoid technical or difficult words, long sentences, and long paragraphs.

• Don't weigh your column down with too much detail. Try to stimulate interest in a subject, but don't exhaust the subject.

• Jot down ideas, names, figures, impressions, etc., in a note pad while visiting farms and homes. This provides the very best column material.

• Be timely. Keep up with the effect of weather conditions, seasons, etc., pointing out the significance of these conditions locally.

• Remember the people you're talking to and give them information that will benefit them in a way they can understand.

• Always get your column to the editor on schedule. Remember, the editor is holding space for it.

**BECOMING A COLUMNIST:**

Columns are a great way to share information and ideas, promote your business and philosophy, and have some fun in the process. But that's just part of their appeal. They also help you develop your "voice" and writing muscle, so you can move more confidently toward equally ambitious projects, be they articles or books. How do you create—and market—a winning column that attracts a loyal following? Read on!

1. Understand the genre Shorter than most newspaper and magazine articles, columns generally run between 350 and 1,000 words. Their writing is tight, light, and bright, and their subject area, like their format, is predictable (e.g., personal development, politics, parenting, gardening). The columns themselves, however, are unpredictable, meaning fresh. Readers know they'll be getting new information and insights with each instalment, and so they return for more.

2. Learn from the masters Follow the work of three to five established columnists over a several-week period. Or, go to your local library or bookstore for the collected works of favorite columnists. Read actively to discover key tricks of the trade. Study how columnists organize their work, open and close their pieces, interweave quotes and statistics. Observe how each has a "voice," or style, that is as distinctive as a fingerprint. Note what you like and don't like—and why.

3. Determine your goals. As mentioned, columns can be great vehicles for promoting your service or cause. But they'll only get you where you want to go if you know where you're going. Accordingly, take a few moments to determine where you want to be one, two, or three years or more from now. In what ways can a column support your efforts, further your goals, and keep you on track?

4. Question yourself. Articles are distinct units; when they're done, they're done. Not so columns; finish one and another dozen or two are waiting in the wings to be written. Your audience and editor literally await your next instalment, and so you must deliver, be it daily, weekly, or monthly. So here's the key question you must ask and answer: Do you have what it takes to produce a column over time, given your busy schedule and competing priorities?

5. Serve others. The successful column has a dedicated readership. These folks take time out of their busy schedules because they need something from you, be it information, insight, or entertainment. As a columnist, it's your job to give them all they want—and more. And you do this by identifying the many ways you can be of service to them. The greater your willingness to serve their specific and individual needs, the greater your column's relevancy and popularity

6. Attract the right reader. Different strokes for different folks—and different columns as well. That's because all columns appeal to somewhat narrow (though not necessarily small) groups of individuals. To attract the right group for you, pinpoint their key characteristics. For example, what's their age and sex, their educational and economic level their political and spiritual beliefs? Where do they live and work? The more specific you can be, the greater your ability to "talk your reader's talk," not just in terms of subject matter but word choice

7. Play with format. Columns may be short, but they've got lots of room for creativity. Anything goes ... as long as it works for readers and is replicate. Play with several formats before zeroing in on one. Study what other columnists have done (see No. 2 above), and use their work as a template. Or create a wholly new format tailored precisely to your audience and message. The key is to experiment and to have your content and format mesh seamlessly

8. Develop your prototypes. Once you determine your format, write five to seven sample columns. This serves two purposes. First, you will get your feet wet, shake out all bugs, and polish your writing style. (The more distinctive the style, the more unique the column) Second, you will create a representative sample of your work, which you can then market or launch; editors, after all, want to see a column's treatment over time, not just a single column.

9. Choose your marketing approach. Columns can be marketed in a number of different ways. You can distribute your work through syndicates, for example, which are companies that serve as your sales/marketing/PR teams in one and which take a cut of the proceeds. Or you can self-syndicate your work by going directly to individual newspapers, magazines, or Web sites. You also can launch your column via your own e-mail or snail mail newsletter, or Web site. (There are pros and cons to each of these approaches, as discussed in the WriteDirections.com telecasts "Become a Columnist"; some, like working through syndicates, are more of a long shot than, say, self-syndication.)

10. Be patient. Columns take time to develop, so if you're looking for quick results, look elsewhere. Like a fine wine, they tend to get better with time. Their scope deepens, their writing improves, and their audience builds. These things take time and patience; however, if you're truly willing to make the investment, the payoffs can be enormous.