



Tips on How to Write Editorial Articles

Dr N. Mallikarjuna Rao
Editor in Chief

An editorial article can be about anything and from any standpoint. Articles come in all shapes and sizes. They are in Medical Journals, Newspapers, Magazines, and Posted on the Internet. They cover any and every topic imaginable. As long as you have an opinion and can support it with facts, you have the makings of an interesting piece. We all have opinions, right? Yet not all of us are editorial writers and not all editorials are worth reading. Despite the wide variety, there are guidelines to write clinical oriented articles that can help you improve your articles' readability.

PLAN AHEAD

Too many people begin writing their topic with only a vague sense of opinion, never honing, or refining, that opinion into something sharp and distinctive. Be sure to have a solid grasp of what you're arguing and why you're arguing. What are the factors that inspired you to write on this issue? Without planning, your article is bound to come across as disorganized and difficult to read. Even short articles require planning to be as readable as possible.

Brainstorming is a great technique to help you figure out what topics you want to cover in your article. Think about your topic From the ideas you get, decide which topic is most important and why you've chosen it first. For example, if you're writing an article about Prostate Cancer, you could write about the causes for Prostate Cancer, History , Markers for identification, many types of markers for Prostate Cancer..... The list goes on.

If you want your article to delve deeply into one topic, make sure you research & reviewed the complete literature and correlated with the previous researches in case if it is an original work.

If your article is more of an overview, you have a bit more freedom with the number of topics you choose. You may find that you'll have to brainstorm more than once to narrow down your topics sufficiently. If you chose History of Prostate Cancer from the above example, you might brainstorm "subtopics" such as the Prostate Cancer of a certain country, decade, or its prevalence. Again, depending on the aim of your article, you might choose only one topic to explore or several.

RESEARCH YOUR TOPICS

Most people read articles because they want to learn something about a particular subject. Your readers will be able to sense if your article is backed up with fact or not, so do your homework before you write.

Your articles will be much more interesting if they are well researched. You'll also find you will have many more quality details to incorporate into your articles if you do adequate research first, and the more captivating facts you include, the more loyal readers you'll have.

MINE THE DATA

An editorial is only as good as its facts. Sure, you may think that HIV can't be transmitted through mosquitoes is wrong and worthy of

outlaw, but without backing it up with data, you have nothing but a half-formed opinion. Get the back-story; understand your argument inside-out. Research every aspect of your topic and cite as many facts as possible; generalities are the death of interesting editorials.

CONSIDER THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Don't pigeonhole yourself into writing from majority's opinion just because you can make easy arguments. Think long and hard about your position on the chosen issue and write from the standpoint that makes the most sense to you. Never, ever, ever compromise your beliefs for the sake of a byline.

UNDERSTAND THE OPPOSITION

The only way to create a fully formed editorial with tons of depth and poignancy is to understand what the other side is arguing. Research opposing viewpoints with the same voracious energy as the ones with which you line up. Take the time to understand what the other side is arguing and why; after all, you can only combat a particular argument if you know exactly what that argument is.

SHORT, SHORT, AND SIMPLE

It's the three "S"es of article writing - short sentences, short paragraphs, and simple English.

- Short sentences are easier to digest than long ones. It's okay to vary sentences to make your writing more interesting, but still be careful about their length. A sentence that is too long will lose your audience's attention.
- Short paragraphs are a necessity in article writing. In most cases, you should be able to restrict a paragraph to no more than five sentences for strong readability. If you have a particularly strong sentence you'd like to showcase, feel free to put it in a paragraph all on its own, but only do this once or twice per article.

- Simple English is best in most types of writing, including article writing. You may want to use fancy words to impress your readers, but the majority of people are not likely to appreciate your efforts unless your article is having new information about that topic. Write your sentences with simple, easy-to-understand words to appeal to the broadest audience.

Integrate the "short, short, and simple" rule into your articles and you are guaranteed to have a much more readable result. Remember that the best articles are informative and entertaining without being too wordy or complicated.

Editor in Chief

E-mail: editorjmst@hotmail.com