

## How to Write an Editorial ?

Joshi S

Tribhuvan University, Institute of Medicine, Office of the Dean, Maharajgunj, Kathmandu

**Correspondence:** Prof. Dr. Sarala Joshi

**Email:** jsarala@yahoo.com

Editorial is an opinionated document, aimed to enlighten about a public opinion to promote critical thinking and raise conscious to take action on a public concern. In general, an editorial is considered as an unsigned document proposed to persuade readers to think over on a particular sensational issue. While structuring an editorial, one needs to keep in mind a specific issue for an argument. The title of an editorial should encompass a brief description about a selected topic which is written in short, precise, and well organized manner. An editorial resembles to an academic article comprising an introductory statement, body/main content and conclusion.

An editorial should capture the reader's attention by affirming the content in a coherent and logical sequence for arguments, and draw an effective conclusion to maximize the impact on the reader. Likewise, while deciding for an editorial writing, one need to clearly define the selected issue (as for instance, Medical Education in Nepal), consider intended audience, select the strategies, develop logical and ethical arguments, gather research based information, collect evidence based examples, and support for the proposed vision. In most editorials, the opinion of the writer is presented at the beginning, followed by supporting evidences. The first person plural voice is the most common method while writing an editorial for establishing the credibility of the writer.

Moreover, in an editorial the author needs to provide an overall view on a particular issue; where a final appeal for the reader is to propose their vision which needs to be further restated in the conclusion. Hence, while writing an editorial, it would be better to consider certain points as given below:

- Choose your words carefully, and write exactly what you mean to express in this article.
- Avoid using slang words, it is unprofessional to use slang words in academic writing, e.g. always use boys/men or girls/women instead of — guys; mother/father instead of — mom/dad.
- Avoid using certain words such as always, average, perfect, all etc. as these words can be unclear and misleading.
- Use the active voice to make words lively and vigorous, rather than the passive voice.
- Avoid sexist language; use “Ms.” instead of “Mrs./Miss/Mr.”; “women/men” instead of — “ladies/gens”.
- Use “homemaker” for woman who does not work outside of the home instead of “housewife”; and write “adult women/

men” instead of “girls/ boys”.

- Do not use abbreviations at the title. For example “Prevalence of ARI among Children...IOM” as these abbreviated words may give different meaning. Some abbreviated word like “IOM” mean Institute of Medicine and or International Origination for Migration; similarly, “NHRC” also mean as “Nepal Health Research Council” as well as “National Human Rights Commission”.
- In the text, the abbreviations can be used after using the term first time: World Health Organization (WHO) and put the abbreviation in parenthesis right after it. Thereafter, one can just use the abbreviation as WHO.
- Be concise, select a synonymous word which represents many words: instead of “do not like” – use “unlike”; instead of “do not smoke” – use “no smoking” etc.
- Consider dividing long sentences into two or more smaller ones. A solid page of text without paragraph makes it hard to read.
- Use paragraphs to divide content into different topics, points, or issues. Each paragraph should have a unifying theme.
- Avoid using one single sentence as a paragraph; to entitle as a paragraph it needs to have more than two sentences.
- Distinguish between verified facts and your impression. As for examples, to phrase your impressions include: My impression is . . ., It appears to me that . . ., and it seems to me.
- Proof read your written products before submission. Failure to do so, can ruin the impact of your message, two heads are always better than one. It is better to keep someone on your team to look over your work to make is grammatically sound without mistakes.
- If your work is a part of an organization, make sure you have not misrepresented their viewpoints. Allow your group to go over the piece of work and make sure everyone is acknowledged for their contribution.

In general, there are four types of editorials frequently seen on the magazines: to (1) **Explaining or interpretation**: this type of editorials are often use to explain the enforcement of new rules and regulations, for describing sensitive or controversial issues, or to explaining implementing new policies for the betterment of the public. (2) **Criticizing**: Some editorials are written to criticize on the public actions or decisions or situations to get readers to see the problem behind the enforced initiatives. The author often

suggests certain constructive activities to solve or minimize the identified problem (3) **Persuading:** Editorials are also aimed to convince people. From the first paragraph onwards, readers will be encouraged to take a specific action; as for instance, political endorsements are the good examples of editorials of persuasion. (4) **Praising:** Some editorials are written to recognize for their good deeds. These editorials appreciate people and or organizations for their charitable activities. The selection of topic and type of editorial depends on opinion of the writer.

In this article some critical tips for writing an editorial is mentioned which would help you in writing an effective editorial, which are given below:

1. **Selection of a topic:** Editorials are written to influence people to promote critical thinking and taking actions on an issue, so the selected topic should be based on the interest as well as purpose of a current event for recitation. It can be in the form of explaining, criticizing, persuading or praising to show support for people and organizations for launching prominent performance for the community.
2. **Make an Outline:** Making an outline before writing helps you to move forward with necessary supporting information. With an outline one can assess where you stand on the issue, and it also helps you to get through in the opinions in order. The outline also helps you discover the credibility of opinions you may have missed.
3. **Start writing:** The first step to writing an editorial is to pick up a headline that grabs reader's attention. If you grab their attention from the very beginning they are more prone to keep reading. Your opinion on the topic should be addressed as an introduction to new editorial.
4. **Get your facts straight:** An editorial is a mix of fact and opinion agreed by the opinion of the entire staff. A good editorial needs to contain at least one point of clarification which can be described as an observation that is fresh and original. Hence, need to collect facts and figure based on objective reporting and evidence based reports from a number of different sources to reveal the patterns, impending consequences or a gap in current analysis.
5. **Keep it user-friendly:** Editorials are short and précis document which is written in a range between 600 - 800 words. It is often written for quick actions by appealing reader's judgment so it should not contain high sound technical jargon. Using simple sentence by using non-technical terms would be suitable for making an editorial interesting and useful.
6. **Start with a thesis like statement:** Start with introduction of about one or two paragraphs to grasp the reader's attention. One can start with a specific question which should reflect about the whole editorial is about. Clearly state the argument and continue it by supporting the opinion in an informal manner and enlighten why this situation is important to the public. Include who, what, when, where, why, and how the situation has revolved around. Cite some important facts and or quotations from relevant sources to support the argument and make sure that every reader has at least a basic knowledge about the raised sensational issue.
7. **Present the opposing argument first:** Make sure to identify the groups who oppose to the selected issue; then state their opinions objectively by using accurate facts and figures. It would be nice to state positive effect of the conflicting side, if they are realistic. Consider the honest realistic point as presented by the opposing side for argument and present a balanced opinion for betterment. Provide a chance to the conflicting statement for argument, and then seek evidences to support the proposed issue for making it clear about the beliefs that you are advocating.
8. **Present evidence to refute the opposition:** One can start this section as an evolution which should flow from their argument then utilize facts and figures from others who support your opinion. Make sure to clarify the argument by evidences to enhance credibility.
9. **Make your solution accepted:** Provide solutions to clarify the issue with additional evidences. It should be more convincing to believe the proposed alternatives for resolving the issue. However, it is imperative to address the problem by providing other alternative solutions for betterment.
10. **Conclude the editorial with a punch/striking remark:** Create some questions that would catch the reader's attention. Then end with a hard-hitting summary that may provoke readers to think over unconsciously on the proposed issue: "Confrontations in Medical Education in Nepal" towards the end of the editorial, make a striking remark to flourish the editorial into the reader's mind by providing evidences for further action, as for instance: "Being medical professionals, if we are not concerned for the conductive environment for flourishing medical education, then who will? shall we remain in this dilemma forever? If not shall we move forward with collective motive? "

Finally, in the editorial a conclusion is drawn based on the elaborated description related to proposed phenomena. There should be tie up on findings that were presented in the editorial, along with viable solutions. Ultimately, the readers would be motivated to think over the possibilities in enhancing better opinions for humanizing medical education in Nepal during this transitional period.

## References:

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