

Evaluating Editorials & Op-Eds



Objective

Evaluate an author's argument in an opinion piece.

ELA Common Core Anchor Standard

- CCSS ELA R.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Connect

What is one social issue you feel strongly about? Why?



Arguments in Newspapers



Newspapers often take on the most pressing issues of our time through the opinion pages.

These opinion pieces include:

- editorials: arguments written by the editors of the newspaper
- op-eds: arguments written by individual staff writers or guest contributors

Individual readers may also submit their opinions in “letters to the editor” that are often published alongside the editorial and op-eds.

Reading Opinion Pieces



- When you're reading a news article, it's important to pay attention to whether it's being presented as news or opinion.
- It's also helpful to notice whether you agree or disagree with the author and be mindful of how your perspective might shape your reading.
- Regardless of your opinion, you'll want to decide whether an author supports their position with strong evidence and reasoning.
 - You can cross-check the evidence by looking at other reliable sources.

Practice

Search Mucktracker for three opinion pieces. (Enter the term “opinion” or “editorial” in the search box to help). Use the comment box to answer the following questions for each article:



- What is the author’s claim, or main position? Does the author support that claim with strong evidence and reasoning?
- Is the evidence accurately represented?
- Does the author make assumptions? If so, what are they?
- How might someone else think about this issue? Does the author address these opposing views?

Extension: Would you share one of these articles online? Why or why not? If no, explain who you think would share this article and the possible effects of this sharing.

Wrap-Up



- Journalists write editorials and op-eds in order to address important issues.
- When reading these opinion pieces, remember to identify the main claim and evidence the author uses to support that claim.
- When you looked at the opinions today, which article best expressed its argument? Why?
- Which article was the least convincing? Was this a position you agreed with? Why or why not?