SESSION 5

Op-Ed Template

W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

Paragraph 1 (opening paragraph or lede):

Grab the reader's attention. Starting with the challenge can bring your audience into the middle of the story. Include the description of the protagonist, their feelings and their values to make them relatable. Bring up news hooks if they are timely and relevant.

Example Opening:

> I couldn't see any way out. All I wanted to do was provide for my 4-month-old baby. [protagonist] To do that, I needed to find a job. In the middle of struggling with postpartum depression, I tried to find childcare that I could trust to take care of my baby so I could look for work. But I couldn't afford it. [challenge]

Paragraph 2 (thesis):

State your argument as close to the top as possible, and include urgency.

Example Thesis:

> The state legislator is on the verge of voting on the budget. [news hook]. It needs to ensure no one else has to go through what I did by including subsidies for childcare. [thesis]

Paragraph 3:

Continue story of protagonist and challenge.

Paragraph 4:

Describe the problem as widespread or systemic with supporting data or history.

Paragraph 5:

Describe the solution as common-sense, practical and accessible. Identify and explain two to three reasons why your solution will benefit your audience.









Paragraph 6:

Describe the protagonist's transformation. How has the protagonist changed as a result of their journey? How can the world be a better place if we learn from their story?

Example Transformation:

> Since those impossible days, I've become an advocate for affordable childcare. I was eventually able to begin working, but I think about how many other mothers have not been as lucky.

Paragraph 7:

This is the "To be sure…" paragraph. Acknowledge any flaws and shortcomings in the argument and address any potential counter-arguments.

Paragraph 8:

Call to Action. Make your policy "ask" specific and clear.

Byline:

Include a name, title and brief, two-to-three sentence bio about the author.