Sample Op-Ed Outline

I. Introduction
   a. Hook: The beginning is your chance to capture your reader’s attention! What can you start with that will compel your audience to pay attention? Perhaps an anecdote or surprising fact?
   b. Context: Now back up a little bit. Explain what the issue is at hand. In a few lines, provide some background and context.
   c. Thesis: Finally, make an argument. Tell your reader where you stand on this issue.

II. First body paragraph
   a. Evidence #1: Describe the central piece of evidence that supports your position.
   b. Tie Back: Make sure to connect this evidence back to your main argument, explaining to readers how it supports your thesis statement.

III. Second Body Paragraph
   a. Evidence #2: Describe a second piece of evidence that supports your position. Try using a different type of persuasion (see list below).
   b. Tie Back: Again, make sure to connect this evidence back to your main argument, explaining to readers how it supports your thesis statement.

IV. Third Body Paragraph
   a. Counter Argument: What would be the main argument of the opposing side?
   b. Rebuttal: What is your response to this argument? Why doesn’t it apply to this situation/context?

V. Conclusion
   a. Summary: In just a few lines, remind your reader of the main argument and evidence.
   b. Thesis: No need to repeat your thesis word-for-word, but remind readers what you’re arguing and why they should care!
   c. Personal Comment, Call to Action, or Question: The last few sentences of your essay will linger in your reader’s mind? What do you want to leave them with?

Try out different forms of persuasion!

Some readers might be convinced by hard facts and statistics. Others might be persuaded by an emotional anecdote, or a story from your own life. Writing a compelling op-ed often depends on looking at the topic from multiple angles—each perspective helping to solidify your argument, while also convincing readers to listen up! Here are some different strategies for you to try out as you craft your argument:

• Personal Experience: The writer describes an experience he or she has had.
• Expert Opinion: The writer draws on the opinion of an expert—someone trained in a particular area, or someone who has relevant personal experience.
• Example: The writer provides an example that supports a larger idea or pattern.
• Analogy: The writer compares the situation to another similar situation.
• Facts and Statistics: The writer uses facts or numbers to prove their idea. Often this information comes from other sources, such as books, newspapers, or websites.
• Logic: The writer uses reasoning or logic to argue their point.
• Emotion: The writer makes an emotional appeal to the reader.