An opinion article is a type of assignment that is common in subjects such as media, communications, and journalism. An opinion article is different from an academic essay, even though you are required to take a position on a topic for both. Opinion articles use a persuasive style of writing and can include personal anecdotes and rhetorical techniques. Essays are written in an academic style and use evidence from scholarly sources.

**An opinion article:**
- Expresses a viewpoint on a contemporary issue.
- Usually takes a controversial or provocative stance.
- Often features in newspapers, magazines and blogs.
- Is written in a journalistic style.

**How can I identify a topic?**
Look at current issues in the popular media. Select an issue that is subject to debate and discussion. This issue can be large and complex or small and trivial.

Adopt a viewpoint that will grab attention, for example:
- Technology is making us passive.
- Some illicit drugs should be legalised.
- Machines can think.

**Before you write**
1. Read newspapers and blogs to start thinking about what has been happening in the media.
2. Select an issue to write about.
3. Decide on a controversial position.
4. Consult sources to find evidence for and against this position.
5. Take notes that support your position and that provide any important counter arguments.
6. Pick a publication for your opinion article.
7. Analyse the style of writing used in the publication.

**When you write**
1. Start with a strong lead.
2. Summarise important issues.
3. State your opinion.
4. Present arguments, examples and details that will persuade your reader to adopt your position.
5. If you identify key counter arguments, refute them!
6. Draw on personal experience, supported by facts, statistics and/or anecdotes.
7. Think about the newsworthy values of your subject. You could ask:
   - Is it timely and relevant?
   - Does this story matter?
   - What are the different sides of the story?
   - What are the consequences?

**What style should I use?**
Adopt the form, style and conventions of mainstream media:
- Be succinct, entertaining and informative (just like real journalism).
- Write short sentences and punchy paragraphs.
- Use the first person (I, me, my, we, us, our) or third person (he, his, she, her, it, its, they, their).
- Choose language that is appropriate for your imagined audience.
Do I need to reference?
Although an opinion article is different to an academic essay, you should still look for evidence to back up your claims. Unlike academic essays, it is fine to use a mix of popular and scholarly sources, for example:
- Online blogs and media stories,
- Statistics and research findings,
- Personal stories and expert opinion

How should I reference?
Guidelines for referencing style in an opinion article may differ, so if you are unsure, ask your tutor. However, it is likely that you will:
- Adopt a more conversational style for in-text citations, for example:
  Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said…
  rather than
  Turnbull (2016) indicated…
- Include a bibliography.

How do I structure my opinion article?
Many structures are possible, but here is one structure that works:

Introduction
- **Lead**—Start with an interesting lead to hook the reader.
- **Context**—Briefly contextualise the issue and indicate why it is important.
- **Position**—State your position on the issue.

Body
- **Explanations, examples and evidence**—Explain your arguments and provide reasons for your position. Include specific examples and concrete evidence that will make the reader understand and agree with your position.
- **Evaluation**—Evaluate potential problems and offer detailed plans, solutions or alternatives. Address and evaluate any important counter arguments. Include specific reasons against these arguments and suggest improvements. Do not rant!

Conclusion
- **Summary**—Restate your position on the topic and why you feel strongly about it.

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