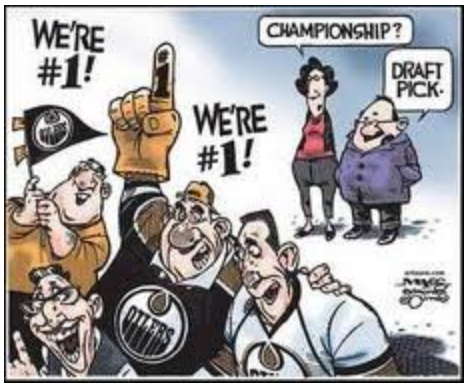
1.4 Lesson

Editorials

INTRODUCTION



Editorial pages often aim to influence readers through an analysis of major news stories. A newspaper's editorial page differs from the news pages in both writing style and layout. By analyzing the opinions presented in each editorial you encounter, you can gain insight into the possible biases and slants of a given newspaper.

Editorials are articles, cartoons, or videos that present a point of view and a message to the reader. These types of articles often contain opinions as well as factual information. For example, if you look at the cartoon to the right, there are a few facts"

FACT: Edmonton Oilers have won five championships

OPINION: We are number one!!!

And yet, for the fan who knows more than the facts presented in the cartoon, there is a bit of irony here. For example:

FACT: The Oilers have not won a championship since 1990, and yet we still call ourselves the "City of Champions"

OPINION: We are not number one! Actually, we are currently the second worst team in the league.

Of course, not every editorial will present such a simple opinion or argument as the cartoon above. Many editorials are complex arguments, presented for a number of different purposes. There are essentially four types of editorials:

EDITORIAL TYPES

Explain or Interpret: Editorials will try to explain a sensitive or controversial topic. School newspapers may explain new school rules, or a particular student body effort like a "Food Drive"
Criticize: Editorials will constructively criticize actions, decisions, or situations while providing solutions to the problem identified. The purpose is to get the reader to see the problem, not necessarily the solution.
Persuade: Editorials will aim immediately to see the solution, not the problem. From the very first paragraph, readers will be encouraged to take a specific, positive action. Political endorsements are good examples of editorials of persuasion.
Praise: Editorials will commend people and organizations for something done well. These are not as common as the other three.

Watch this video. As you watch, try to figure out what sort of editorial this is. How do you know? What clues does the speaker give you? What is the problem that the speaker is talking



about? At first, it may not be obvious what problem he is addressing. It may, in fact, not be the same problem for everyone. Watch, and see what you think.

So what do you think? What is the speaker's purpose in the above editorial? Is his argument persuasive? Some editorials are obviously more straightforward and blunt than others. For example, how many of you have read an editorial about Edmonton's potholes this year? Usually,

issues that are fairly black-and-white (nobody likes potholes) are presented in a straightforward, sarcastic way. For example, check out this Rick Mercer rant on snow days. Mercer's editorial would be classed as an "Explain and Interpret". It just so happens that the author's interpretation is fairly one-sided. Do you agree with him? Why or why not?

WRITER'S VOICE

A writer's (or speaker's) voice or tone is often revealed through their writing. Whether a writer intends to explain, criticize, persuade or praise, he or she conveys a certain tone or attitude toward his/her subject or audience. The tone of a written (or spoken) work may include emotions such as frustration, sincerity, anger, mockery, or encouragement. Through the use of **diction, rhetorical devices, and stylistic strategies** a writer creates his/her own tone or voice that is distinctive. The writer's personality emerges. And personality, as you see in the videos above, can be incredibly persuasive.

Read through this document on "Writer's Voice". You will want to review this handout for your upcoming assignment.

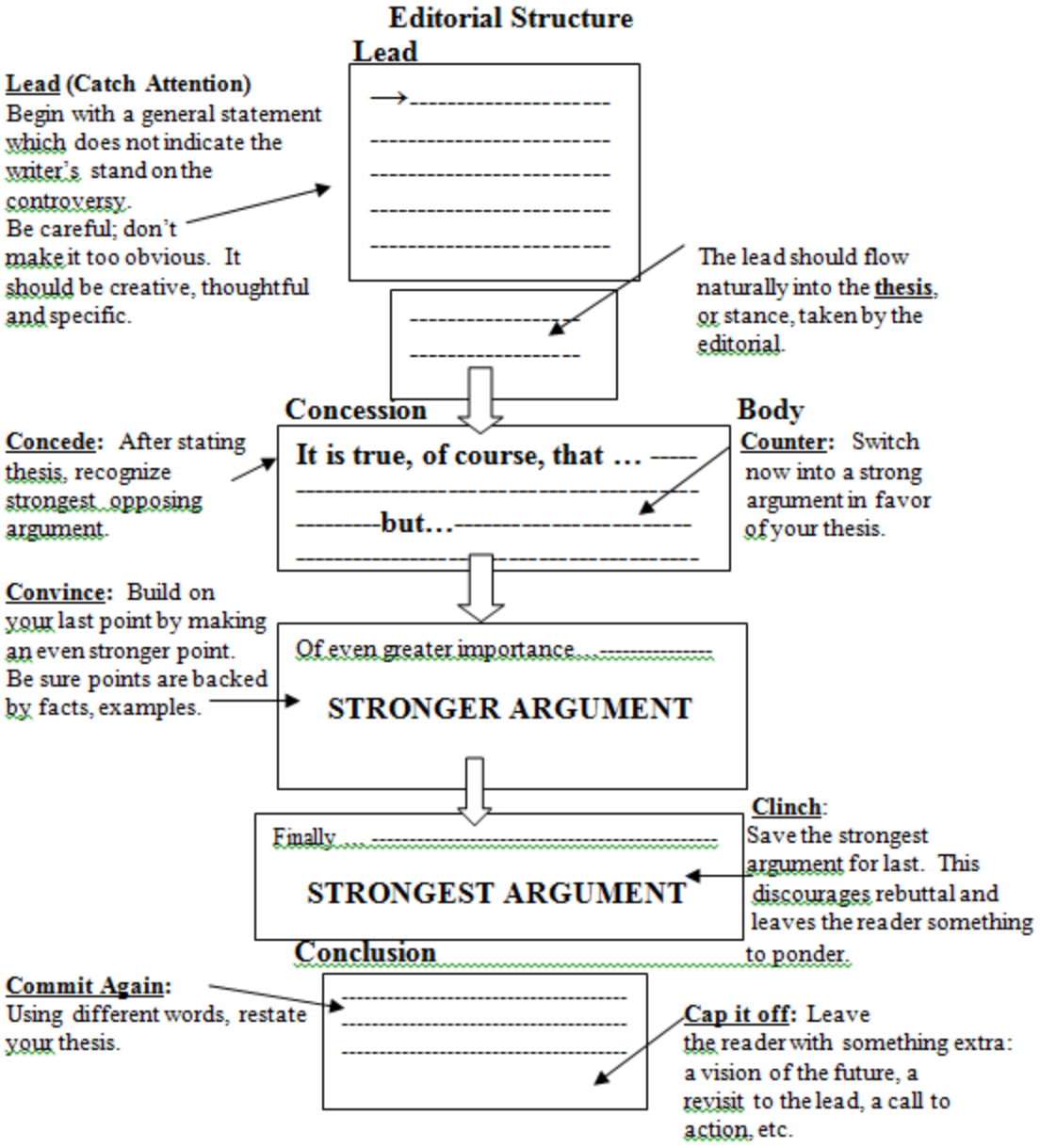
Later on, you will have a chance to write your own editorial. Read a few editorials from Canadian newspapers by following the links below. This will give you some idea of how to write an editorial, and what topics are important to newspapers. Try to see if you can tell if the paper is left-wing, right-wing, conservative, liberal, etc.

Edmonton Journal \ Calgary Herald \ National Post \ Globe and Mail \ Toronto Star \ Edmonton Sun

Read and analyze this editorial by Margaret Wente, from the *Globe and Mail*. What type of editorial is "Medical Care That's Not Even Fit for a Horse"? What is Margaret Wente's tone and attitude toward the state of medical technology in Canada? How is the writer's tone conveyed through the use of: a) diction, b) rhetorical devices, and c) stylistic strategies, as found in the "Writer's Voice" document? Are you persuaded by the author? Why, or why not?

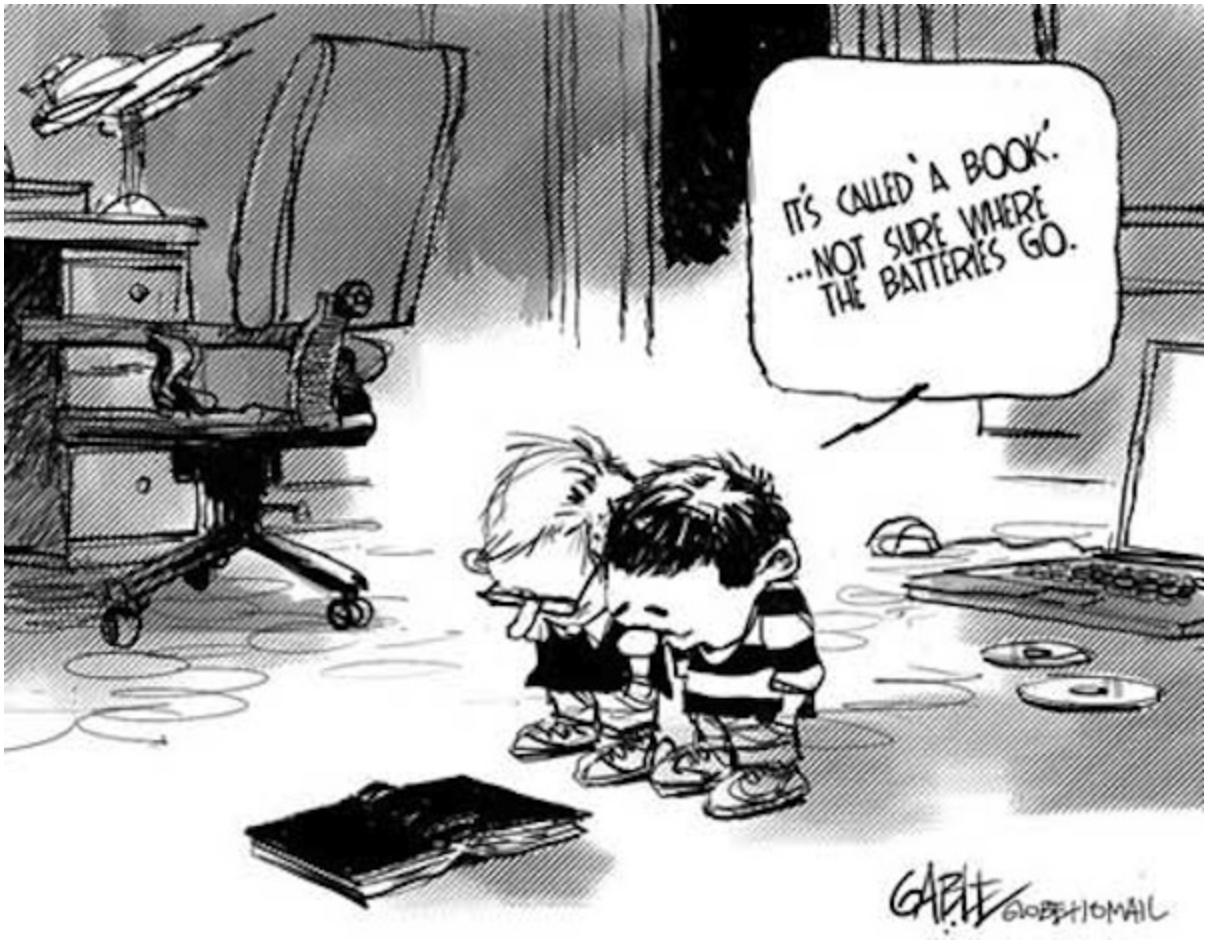
EDITORIAL STRUCTURE

Editorials are articles that present a point of view and a message to the reader. These types of articles often contain opinions as well as factual information**.** Editorials are often found in the "Opinion" section of the newspaper, but check the index box of your particular newspaper; they may also be listed under "Editorials." Although subjective, they are written in a style similar to formal essays, with an introduction, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. The personal pronoun "I" is generally not used. Editorials represent the views of the newspaper, so they do not always carry a byline (the author's name). Just like an essay, editorials follow a strict formal structure:



Editorials do not necessarily deal with political issues. Other topics of interest or current issues being debated (such as how to fix Edmonton's pothole problem) are legitimate topics. For example, sports figures, television programs, or even restaurants can be the topic of an editorial. Also, they do not have to be negative in tone.

Editorial cartoons often feature visual symbols, caricatures, and deliberate exaggeration. These cartoons comment on important issues. They also serve to visually perk up the page. My own personal favorites are from the New Yorker, and are usually fairly subtle - that is, you have to know a bit more than the cartoon tells you to understand what it is saying. Here is one from Toronto that is fairly subtle:



Does this editorial cartoon seek to satirize or poke fun at the youth of today?

PREPARATION FOR THE "EDITORIAL ASSIGNMENT"

Having evaluated an editorial, you will now be required to write one of your own. There is a list of possible topics below - feel free to use one to help you focus your editorial. You may choose whether you support or reject the topic of your choice, and write accordingly. Refer to the Editorial Structure Guide earlier in this lesson to guide you in your writing: your editorial must have a title (or a headline), and be structured as above. There is no length restriction to this assignment, but please remember that *your editorial should fully and adequately address all areas of the editorial structure.*

The document template attached to this assignment has the rubric that will be used to grade this assignment. You will need to scroll to the second page of the document to see it. Begin writing your editorial on the first page and do not delete the rubric from the document. Feel free to email, call, or drop into an open office should you have any questions!

Possible Topics:

1. Should the school day start later? Should the school day be longer or shorter?
2. Should animals be kept in zoos?
3. Is requiring students to wear school uniforms beneficial to learning?
4. Is cheating getting worse?
5. Should parents pay their kids for good grades?
6. Should kids and teens participate in beauty pageants?
7. Is year-round school a good idea?
8. What are you really learning in school?
9. Should school administrators be able to monitor what kids eat for lunch to make sure that it is healthy?
10. Is technology making us stupider than we have ever been?
11. Can people be addicted to social media?
12. Is "affirmative action" really fair?
13. Should kids be able to participate in contact sports such as football?
14. Should food manufacturers be required to label products that contain genetically modified foods?
15. Explain how playing sports can teach us virtues like courage, self-sacrifice, etc. (Or the opposite - playing sports may be good training for selfishness, aggression, etc.)
16. How much homework should students have? Is it helpful for learning?
17. Children who have been adopted should have the right to find out about their biological origins, regardless of the wishes of the biological parent(s).
18. To improve the fitness of Canadian students, schools should make daily physical education mandatory until high school graduation.
19. Does Facebook or Instagram or Twitter ever make you feel bad? Explain.
20. A topic of your choice. Passionate about something, and want to write about it? Please feel free to write on your own topic. In fact, research suggests that when students choose their own topic, their writing dramatically improves. Find an extended list of great topics HERE.