

# Lesson Plan: Junior Editor for a Day - Cracking the Code of Opinion Editorials

**Subject:** English Language Arts

**Grade Level:** 8

**Student:** Aira Marie

**Learning Standard:** EN8INF-III-1: Examine text structures for clarity of meaning and purpose in journalistic texts (opinion editorials).

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## Materials Needed:

- Notebook or writing paper
  - Pen or pencil
  - Highlighters (at least 4 different colors)
  - Access to the internet
  - Printer (optional, for printing articles and worksheets)
  - **Handout 1:** "The Op-Ed Blueprint" Graphic Organizer (a blank version)
  - **Handout 2:** An example opinion editorial. A good choice is "School Is for Learning, Not for Dress Codes" by the New York Times Editorial Board or a similar student-focused piece.
  - **Handout 3:** "My Op-Ed Planner" worksheet (same as the graphic organizer)
  - **Handout 4:** "Junior Editor's Checklist" (for self-assessment)
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## Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, Aira Marie will be able to:

1. Identify the four key components of an opinion editorial's text structure (Claim, Reasons/Evidence, Counterclaim, Conclusion).
  2. Analyze how this structure helps an author build a clear and persuasive argument.
  3. Create her own short opinion editorial on a topic of her choice, using the correct text structure to express her viewpoint clearly.
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## Lesson Procedure:

### Part 1: The Mission Briefing (10 minutes)

**Goal:** To engage Aira Marie and connect the topic to her own life.

1. **The Hook:** "Good morning, Aira Marie! Today, you're not just a student; you're the new Junior Editor for our very own newspaper. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to learn how
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the most persuasive writers build their arguments so you can write a powerful piece yourself. First, let's warm up. What is your opinion on this: **Should students be allowed to use their phones during lunch at school?** Why do you feel that way?"

2. **Discussion:** Listen to her opinion and her reasons. Point out how she naturally just made a *claim* and supported it with *reasons*. Explain that today, we're going to look at how professional writers do this in a very structured way in newspapers.

## Part 2: Decoding the Blueprint (15 minutes)

**Goal:** To directly teach the text structure of an opinion editorial (Op-Ed).

1. **Introduce the Concept:** "What you just shared is an opinion! Journalists share their opinions in special articles called **Opinion Editorials**, or 'Op-Eds'. They don't just state their feelings; they build a strong case, like a lawyer. To do this, they use a special blueprint or structure. We'll call it the **C-R-E-C** method."
2. **Explain C-R-E-C using the "Op-Ed Blueprint" Graphic Organizer:**
  - **C - Claim:** This is the author's main argument, stated clearly. It's the whole point of the article. (*What does the author want me to believe?*)
  - **R - Reasons & Evidence:** This is the "why." The author provides reasons to support the claim, backed up with evidence like facts, statistics, expert quotes, or real-life stories (anecdotes). (*How does the author prove it?*)
  - **E - Counterclaim:** A smart writer acknowledges the other side of the argument. They might say, "Some people believe that..." and then explain why their own point is still stronger. This shows they've thought about the issue from all angles. (*What's the other side's point?*)
  - **C - Conclusion:** This is the final wrap-up. The author restates their claim in a new way and often includes a "call to action"â€"telling the reader what they should do or think now. (*So what? What should I do now?*)

## Part 3: The First Assignment - Investigative Analysis (20 minutes)

**Goal:** To practice identifying the C-R-E-C structure in a real-world example.

1. **Set the Task:** "Okay, Junior Editor. Your first assignment is to analyze an Op-Ed from a rival newspaper. We need to see how they built their argument. Let's read this article together."
2. **Guided Practice:** Read the example Op-Ed aloud with Aira Marie.
3. **Color-Coding:** Give her the highlighters. "Let's use our highlighters to find the C-R-E-C blueprint.
  - Read through and highlight the author's main **Claim** in yellow.
  - Next, let's find all the **Reasons and Evidence** they use. Highlight those in green.
  - Can you spot where they mention the **Counterclaim**? Let's highlight that in pink.
  - Finally, where is the **Conclusion**? Highlight that in blue."
4. **Fill the Organizer:** Together, use the highlighted text to fill in the "Op-Ed Blueprint" graphic organizer, summarizing each part in your own words. Discuss how seeing the structure helps make the author's point much clearer.

## Part 4: Your Editor's Desk - Write Your Own Op-Ed (30 minutes)

**Goal:** To apply understanding by creating an original piece of writing.

1. **Brainstorm Topics:** "Excellent work, editor! Now it's your turn to write a persuasive Op-Ed for our newspaper. You can write about the phone topic from earlier, or choose something you are passionate about." (Suggestions: The best video game ever made, why a favorite book is better than the movie, the importance of a hobby, a rule you'd like to change at home, etc.)

2. **Plan Your Argument:** "Before a great writer starts writing, they plan. Use the 'My Op-Ed Planner' worksheet to map out your C-R-E-C structure. What is your claim? What are your best reasons? What might someone who disagrees say? How will you conclude it?"
3. **Draft Your Op-Ed:** Once the planner is complete, Aira Marie will write a draft of her Op-Ed (about 3-4 paragraphs long). Encourage her to use strong, persuasive language.

## Part 5: Going to Print! (10 minutes)

**Goal:** To share work and reflect on the learning process.

1. **Share:** Have Aira Marie read her Op-Ed aloud with confidence, as if she were presenting it to the world.
2. **Self-Assessment:** Hand her the "Junior Editor's Checklist." Ask her to review her own work. "Did you include a clear claim? Do you have at least two reasons? Did you acknowledge a counterclaim? Does your conclusion have a strong finish?"
3. **Reflection:** Ask: "How did using the C-R-E-C planner help you organize your thoughts and make your argument stronger?"

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## Differentiation & Extension

- **For Support:** If Aira Marie struggles with planning, work together to fill out the "My Op-Ed Planner," providing sentence starters like "My main point is...," "One reason for this is...," "Some people may think..., but..."
- **For Extension (The Sunday Edition!):** If she finishes early and is excited, propose a new challenge:
  - Find an Op-Ed online that she disagrees with and write a "rebuttal" or response article, using the C-R-E-C structure to argue against it.
  - Turn her written Op-Ed into a short, 1-minute persuasive video script to be "broadcast" on the family news network.