Here's a checklist to keep your op-ed on track: from http://aboutpublicrelations.net/ucmclaina.htm

* Focus tightly on one issue or idea --- in your first paragraph. Be brief.
* Express your opinion, then base it on factual, researched or first-hand information.
* Be timely, controversial, but not outrageous. Be the voice of reason.
* Be personal and conversational; it can help you make your point. No one likes a stuffed shirt.
* Be humorous, provided that your topic lends itself to humor.
* Have a clear editorial viewpoint - come down hard on one side of the issue. Don't equivocate.
* Provide insight, understanding: educate your reader without being preachy.
* Near the end, clearly re-state your position and issue a call to action. Don't philosophize.
* Have verve, and "fire in the gut" indignation to accompany your logical analysis.
* Don't ramble or let your op-ed unfold slowly, as in an essay.
* Use clear, powerful, direct language.
* Emphasize active verbs, forget the adjectives and adverbs, which only weaken writing.
* Avoid clichés and jargon.
* Appeal to the average reader. Clarity is paramount.
* Write 750 double-spaced words or less (fewer is always better).
* Include a brief bio, along with your phone number, email address, and mailing address at the bottom.