



Contributor Handbook

Thank you for your interest in becoming a contributor for TldrHub!

This handbook contains important information on our procedures and standards, so please read through this before writing any articles.

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Publishing process

When you submit an article, it goes through two editors before it can be published. First, it goes through a section editor, who checks for content, and then it goes through a copy editor, who checks for grammar. Here's the process of what happens when you submit an article:

1. Submit your article

When you have an article that's ready to be published, email it with the instructions on page 9. This is usually all the contributor has to do to publish an article — the rest of the process is left to the editors.

2. Section editor reviews the article for content

Each section of TldrHub has an editor:

- **Politics:** Irfan Kovankaya
- **Social:** Emily Case
- **Money:** Aditya Srivastava
- **Science:** Connor McClellan

When you submit an article, you'll select which section it should be in. The respective editor will then review the article to make sure it is accurate. In some cases, the editor may ask the contributor to rework a section if it doesn't seem to flow or if something needs to be changed.

3. Section editor writes a “tldr”

The biggest difference between TldrHub and other sites is that we understand the need for quicker, more efficient media. Because of this, every article has a 100-word-maximum summary at the beginning, known as a tldr (too long; didn't read). When you submit your article, you can choose to include your own tldr, but the section editor may change it.

4. Copy editor reviews the article for grammar

Once a section editor has okayed an article, a copy editor reviews it to check for proper grammar, punctuation, and style. Because of this, you don't need to stress too much over small grammatical details, but please make sure articles you submit are as properly written as you can make them.

5. TldrHub publishes the article

You don't have to worry about uploading your article to our site — a member of the website team will do that. You will get an email as soon as your article is published. We strongly encourage you to share every article you write on social media so that both you and TldrHub can get more readers.

Frequently asked questions

1. How long will it take to publish an article after I submit it?

The entire process should take less than forty-eight hours, but it may take longer if we have a high volume of submissions or if many of our editors are unavailable. Editors may also ask you to fix something in your article, which can make it take longer. If your article is on a quickly-developing current event, you may contact the Editor-in-Chief (see the last page) and request that it be expedited. It should then take only a few hours.

2. I'm not a good writer. Can I still write articles...?

Yes! As mentioned earlier, we have copy editors who make sure your writing is high-quality. Also, the more you write, the better you'll get. Unless a five-year-old could write better than you, we can work with you and get your articles published.

3. How often do I have to submit articles?

We do not have any requirements on how often you must submit articles, but we prefer that you write an article at least every week or two.

4. Do my political, religious, or personal beliefs matter?

They matter the most! We want writers from all sorts of backgrounds — liberal, conservative, atheist, religious, and so on. Perspective matters to keep us balanced.

5. Can my article be rejected?

Not usually. Editors will work with you to fix anything that needs to be changed. There are a few circumstances in which an editor may choose not to publish an article: it is unreasonably offensive, it is poorly written beyond repair, or there are already too many articles on the same subject. If an editor decides not to publish your article, you can appeal to the Editor-in-Chief at the email below:

Nathan Morse, Editor-in-Chief - nmorse@tldrhub.com

The Editor-in-Chief has the final decision. If he concurs that an article should not be published on TldrHub, it will not be published.

6. Can I publish articles on other sites, such as The Tab or The Odyssey?

You may certainly write for other sites, but articles you publish on TldrHub may only be on TldrHub. Publishing the same article or even a very similar article on another site is considered self-plagiarism. However, we do allow you to repost an article on a personal blog or portfolio as long as you say that this was originally posted on TldrHub and include a link to the original post.

Types of articles

Most articles on TldrHub fall into one of two main categories: op-eds (opinion/analysis) and reporting (explaining events or issues). The majority of our articles are op-eds, since we often cannot compete with larger newspapers and news sites for reporting. But there's one thing we have that they don't have: you. Your opinions and backgrounds are the most important aspect of our entire company. Your story and your viewpoints are what make us unique.

1. Op-eds

With op-ed pieces, you're explaining an issue and giving your opinion on it. You don't have to get into controversial areas to write op-eds — there are plenty of topics you can analyze without worrying about upsetting anyone. But you're also free to be bold and to express your opinion on hot issues. Some examples of op-ed topics: explaining why a politician should or should not be impeached, describing the benefits of investing in a particular company, arguing for or against the legalization of marijuana, or defending or condemning a police officer who fatally shot someone.

- **Assume that the reader does not know anything about the issue.** In general, the beginning of the article should establish background information for the issue and explain what the problem is. As the article goes on, you can propose a solution and show why you're right.
- **Use facts and experts to back up your opinions.** The more examples, statistics, authorities on the subject, and other devices you use, the better your argument will be. If you search forever and still can't find anything to support your opinion, you're probably just wrong.

2. Reporting

Reporting at TldrHub is usually about issues that don't get as much attention in the mainstream media. Be careful, though; if a topic is local and insignificant, you won't get many readers. TldrHub is not the place to report about your niece's wonderful piano recital or an outrageous move by your elementary school's PTA. When reporting on an issue or event, make sure anyone anywhere could be interested in reading about it.

- **Use multiple sources.** This is especially important if you're reporting on an event you didn't actually attend or an issue you don't have first-hand experience with.
- **Interview people.** We have an entire section on this on the next page.
- **Structure your article.** We recommend using one of two structures. One option is to place the most important content first, leaving the rest of the article for the details. The second option is a narrative — tell a story and go through the events chronologically.

Interviews

Oftentimes you'll want to interview people to get more information. These can be eyewitnesses of an event you're reporting on, experts on the subject you're analyzing, or anyone who knows something that would be helpful for your article.

1. Setting up an interview

You can interview people in person, over the phone, via email, or through any other medium you can agree on. Here are some general guidelines for arranging an interview:

- **Introduce yourself.** Say your name and say that you are writing an article for TldrHub, which is an online news platform.
- **Ask politely if you can interview the person.** If he or she doesn't want to be interviewed, don't push it.

2. Questions

Unless you are interviewing people on the spot at an event, put some time into preparing questions beforehand. Some general tips:

- Make sure questions are open-ended and relevant.
- The only time you should ask a yes-or-no question is when you're asking about the person's opinion, and you always want to end the question with "and why?" or follow up with a question about why.

3. The interview

- **Record it.** If you can, record either just the audio or a video of the interview with your phone. This is helpful during the writing process for quotes or if something escapes your memory.
- **Make it natural.** Don't feel like you have to stick to your prepared questions if the conversation is going well on its own.
- **Get the interviewee's information.** You'll want the person's full name and some way of contacting them in case something comes up. It's also helpful to get some information so you can identify them in your article. If it's a student, get their college, year, and major. If it's anyone else, get their job title or whatever bit of information would be helpful for identifying them in the article.

Article style

As mentioned earlier, you and your viewpoints are the most important aspect of our website. Here are some suggestions we have for how to write your articles:

- **Write with a conversational tone.** In other words, write the same way you would talk. Chances are, you don't usually speak with ridiculously long sentences that use seven commas, two semicolons, and a dozen ten-syllable words that even a snobby English professor would have to look up. (That sentence, for instance, is too long and complicated.)
- **There's nothing wrong with starting a sentence with a conjunction or ending one with a preposition.** We're a news site, not your English teacher.
- **Use active voice rather than passive voice.** Say "The president signed the bill" instead of "The bill was signed by the president."
- **First-person language is acceptable.** You probably learned in English classes that you shouldn't use words like "I" and "me" in your essays. Screw that, who cares. It may not always be appropriate to talk that way, though — it depends on what style you want the article to have. First-person point of view makes a piece more personal but sacrifices professionalism, so decide which is more important for your article. If in doubt, ask an editor.
- **Keep your audience in mind.** Most of our readers are young, so the most successful content is geared toward millennials, especially college students.

Stylistic details

You don't need to worry too much about grammatical nuances, since the copy editors will do that, but here are some basic guidelines to make it easier for the copy editors:

- **Names and titles** – Always write a person's full name first, and subsequently just put his or her last name. Additionally, say who that person is, even if it's obvious. For instance, even though everyone knows who Hillary Clinton is, write "former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton" or "presidential candidate Hillary Clinton" the first time, and thereafter say "Secretary Clinton" or just "Clinton."
- **Dates** – Put them in the form of "January 1, 2016." If the year is already clear, you can just put the month and day.
- **Oxford commas** – Always use Oxford commas. An Oxford comma is the comma before a conjunction when listing several things in a sentence. For instance, in "one, two, and three," it's the comma before the "and." Most news outlets follow Associated Press (AP) style, which bans Oxford commas. However, because our Editor-in-Chief so fiercely advocates for Oxford commas, we don't follow this pointless AP rule against Oxford commas.

Using sources

Anytime you give a specific fact or statistic that you looked up somewhere, cite that source. It doesn't have to be formal at all; just make sure your readers know where you got that information. There are a couple ways to do this. It's up to you how you do it as long as at least one of the following citation forms is used.

1. In-text citation

No, we're not talking about those MLA parenthetical citations — we just mean you can casually say what your source was in the article.

Bad: *There are nearly 350,000 college students in Florida.*

Good: *According to the State University System of Florida, there are nearly 350,000 students at public universities in Florida as of July 2015.*

A lot of times, this should be all that's needed, but if you want include a link to the website where you found this information, use a hyperlink.

2. Hyperlinks

If you give an in-text citation, reference a previous article you've written, or reference an article on another site, you can link some text to that site. This way, you don't have to worry about a footnote or even an in-text citation if you want people to know where you're getting information.

To indicate that you want some text linked when you submit an article, put the URL in brackets right after the text that should have the link.

Example of how to indicate a hyperlink: *Scientists conducted a study in 2011*
[<http://www.researchgroup.org/2011study>] which showed that...

How that'll be displayed: *Scientists conducted [a study in 2011](#) which showed that...*

Photographs

Every article should have at least one photograph, but we don't absolutely require this. Here are some guidelines for photographs:

- **You must own the photograph or have permission from the owner.** If you didn't take the picture, make sure you have permission from whoever did to publish it. You'll also need to tell us the photographer's name or the name of the company that owns it so we can give credit. On the form where you submit articles to us, there's a field to enter this information.
- **The image must be at least 500px by 500px.** This is so we have only good-quality pictures on our website. If you have a smaller picture that you feel would be especially useful for your article, send it anyway. The editor may consider using it, but prepared to find another image if it's not high enough quality.
- **Be reasonable.** No nudity or obscenity. Keep pictures relevant and useful.

Sections

TldrHub has four sections: Politics, Social, Money, and Science & Technology. You can write articles in any section. When you submit an article, you'll select the section it should be published in. Below are some examples of topics that go in each section, but the section editors will make sure each article is published in the right spot if you're not sure.

1. Politics

- Elections
- Politicians
- Laws and policies
- Wars and foreign relations
- Governmental issues

2. Social

- Education
- Culture
- People
- Society
- Religion

3. Money

- Finance
- Investing
- Economics
- Business
- Entrepreneurship

4. Science & Technology

- Technology
- Science
- Health
- Environment
- Space

Submitting articles

When you have an article ready, send it via email to the corresponding email for the section your article will be published in. If you're not sure which section it should go in, send it to submit@tldrhub.com.

- **Politics:** politics@tldrhub.com
- **Social:** social@tldrhub.com
- **Money:** money@tldrhub.com
- **Science:** science@tldrhub.com

What to include

You can either attach a Microsoft Word document with your article or paste it directly in the email. Please include the following information along with your article:

- **Article title** – Create a catchy headline that briefly describes what the article is about.
- **Tldr summary** – Optional. In 100 words or fewer, summarize the main points of your article.
- **Photographs** – Attach any photographs you want published, and be sure you follow the guidelines on page 8. NOTE: If you just insert photographs into a Microsoft Word file, we will not be able to publish them. You must attach them to the email as a jpg, png, or other common image file.
- **Photograph information** – Write a caption for each photograph, and if you didn't take it yourself, include the photographer or the source of the picture.

Once you've submitted your article, it'll be edited and published within two days.

Too long; didn't read

Now that you've read through this handbook, you're ready to submit articles. Here's a tldr for the handbook:

- Articles are edited twice before publishing
- Most articles are op-ed (opinion) pieces, but some are reporting (explanatory) articles
- Write with a conversational tone
- Interview people and cite your sources if needed
- Include a photograph
- We have four sections: Politics, Social, Money, Science
- Submit articles to the section email or to submit@tldrhub.com
- **The bottom line:** We are a platform on which you can express your opinion and raise awareness of issues. We will do everything we can to get you published. Thanks for joining the team!

Contacting editors and staff

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