

How to write opinion pieces that make a difference

Brooke Masters
Opinion & Analysis Editor
Financial Times



FINANCIAL
TIMES

Why write for a news organisation?

- ❑ Reach a wider audience
- ❑ Participate in a debate
- ❑ Influence policy

A Regulatory Framework for Exchange-Traded Funds

[Southern California Law Review, Vol. 91: 839-941, 2018](#)

104 Pages • Posted: 13 Mar 2018 • Last revised: 19 Oct 2018

[Henry T. C. Hu](#)

University of Texas at Austin - School of Law

[John Morley](#)

Yale Law School

Exchange traded funds

+ Add to myFT

The \$5tn ETF market balances precariously on outdated rules

Let us create regulations that put all these investment products under one umbrella

Author	Subject	Status	Date
Hamilton C Carvalho	New op-ed submission: corruption - Dear FT editorial team, Please see my submission below. I am the sole writer and I give FT the publica...	No	22 Feb
Bathsheba Asati	Opinion Piece: Out of Court Restructuring Kenya: Prolonged Death or panacea - Dear editor, Kindly find an article on Out of Court Restructu...	No	22 Feb
Simon Griffiths	What can we learn about the Independent Grouping from the SDP? - column pitch - Dear Opinion, I thought you might be interested in 700 ...	No	22 Feb
Bridgette Burkholde	Op-ed: Costa Rica's 'Green New Deal' - President Alvarado - Hi Brooke, On Sunday, Costa Rica will release its version of the 'Green New De...	No	22 Feb
Pitamber Kaushik	Opinion Article Submission - Respected Editor, Kindly consider my piece for publication in your esteemed columns. It attempts to rectify th...	No	22 Feb
Sheon Karol	OpEd submission: THE "ACCIDENTAL HEROES" OF CAPITALISM: AN ANTIDOTE TO OCASIO-CORTEZ AND SOCIALISM - To the Edito...	Kinda cool	22 Feb
Glennon, Michael J.	Op-ed on how the Supreme Court gutted Congress's ability to check phony emergencies - Dear Editors: I'm appending below, for you...	Kinda cool	21 Feb
Ari Haque	Time limited pitch - when might I lose my citizenship now that Shamima Begum has? - Hi there, I'm a Bengali-British writer and I want to pi...	No	21 Feb
Harry Nedelcu	Op-ed Submission Moldovan elections this weekend - Hi Brooke, Moldovan elections are going to take place this weekend - with the pro-R...	No	21 Feb
Omid Malekan	Op-Ed: Decentralized Banking is Here - Hello, I'm a published author on blockchain technology and an independent consultant. I have no a...	No	21 Feb
Michelle Jeffery	Opinion article: Why retailers need to ensure cash is still an option! - Colin Close, Managing Director, UK and International Corporate, at Ela...	No	21 Feb
David Blue	Editorial: A Speculative (and Concerning) Bubble in the Long Tail of Digital Media - Hi, My editorial is pasted below. It discusses a valuatio...	No	21 Feb
Michael Sturrock	Article Pitch - Dear Joshua, I'm a journalist and writer with a background in security and terrorism. I have several degrees in security and c...	No	21 Feb
Brown, SA	The Independent Group and Spain's Ciudadanos - Opinion Piece - Dear FT, I'm an academic based at the London School of Economi...	For Brooke	21 Feb
Bob Crew	ANY INTEREST ??? - SORRY TO UPSET THE APPLE CART FOR APPLE BUT I BY BOB CREW IN LONDON The Top 15 Best Global Brands for ...	No	21 Feb
Jebriil Domenico	Somalia war: A continuing result of United States foreign policy - By Jebriil Domenico Pentagon bombing operations against the Horn of Af...	No	20 Feb
John Ralfe	Fwd: Possible comment article on the threat to the NHS from pension tax rules - John Ralfe John Ralfe Consulting 0115 9821911 07779 5...	No	20 Feb
Rabah Arezki	the economic and social transformation of the Middle East and North Africa - Dear Editor: Please find below an opinion piece for the FT. I...	No	20 Feb
Iain, me 3	Janet Daley in Sunday Telegraph today - No don't like it Sent from my iPad > On 20 Feb 2019, at 15:20, FT Comment <comment@ift.com> ...	No	20 Feb

Cutting through the clutter

- Pick your topic wisely
 - Why now? Why you?
- Make sure you match the format
 - Opeds are not press releases or speeches
 - Don't send 2,000 word research papers

Make an argument

Wrong

1. We did XXXXX, hooray for us
2. We did a study and found XXXX
3. XXXXX happened, then YYYY happened
4. Anything that ends “time will tell”

Right

1. While doing XXXX, we overcame YYY and learned ZZZZ, which matters because....
2. AAAAAA should doBBBBB and avoid CCCCC
3. DDDD is happening, which reminds me of EEEEE, so I predict FFFFFFFF

Write what you know

It took years of legal wrangling and an act of parliament to finally allow female scholars in 1977 — the year I applied in New Jersey. At the interviews, the men were asked what they would do if they became secretary of state; women's topics were confined to health, education and welfare. At the reception the night before, the men were offered Scotch, women received soft drinks.

I was turned down. Afterwards, the head of the selection committee, media mogul Malcolm Forbes, put his arm around me and walked me outside to offer some consolation. "Don't worry," he said, "You can make some man senator some day!" I gave the only answer possible under the circumstances: "But Malcolm, what if I want to be senator someday?" He stopped walking: "Dammit, that's what we couldn't understand about you!"

How to write well



Four simple rules

- ❑ Think about the readers
- ❑ Write clearly and accessibly
- ❑ Use specific examples
- ❑ Be pithy and sharp



Who are your readers?

Where do they live?

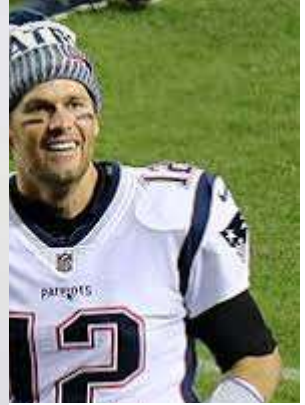
How does that affect what you write



Who are the readers

What do they know?

An **inverted yield curve** is an interest rate environment in which long-term debt instruments have a lower **yield** than short-term debt instruments of the same credit quality. ... An **inverse yield curve** predicts lower interest rates in the future as longer-term bonds are demanded, sending the **yields** down. 5 Feb 2019



Uranium / Atomic n

92



Uranium is a chemical element with symbol U and atomic number 92. It is a silvery-grey metal in the actinide series of the periodic table. A uranium atom has 92 protons and 92 electrons, of which 6 are valence electrons.

Write clearly and accessibly

- ❑ Short, sharp sentences
- ❑ Specific examples
- ❑ Avoid complicated sentence structures and multiple clauses
- ❑ No Jargon

Use colourful phrases

Happily, I've encountered more **asexual introverts** in the course of my career than **lecherous gropers**. No one has ever put an exploratory hand on my arse.

In Britain, too, the country where Mr Soros completed his studies and owns property, he is remembered for being the man who **"broke the Bank of England"** with his 1992 bet against the pound. Decades on, he is maligned for

"goat standard"

Use specific examples

A puffa jacket selling for \$139.99 on Amazon has a story to tell about the disruptive threats facing the luxury goods industry.

When I visited Kigali, [Rwanda](#)'s capital last week, I noticed an array of new fast food restaurants downtown. This is not an exception — chains such as Burger King, Pizza Hut and KFC are proliferating across [Africa](#).

Meanwhile, obesity rates are skyrocketing across the continent. Eight of the 20 nations with the fastest rising rates of adult obesity in the world are in Africa, according to [research](#) by the University of Washington. This has caught the public health community, more used to nutrition problems in Africa related to famine, off-guard.

Avoid Jargon!!!!!!

As the markets fluctuate, equity cheerleaders are insisting that a correction presages further strength amidst solid growth prospects.

Yet, the parallel with year 2000 when similar promises were trounced by many a dead-cat bounce is unmissable; not so much in terms of over-valuation in the tech sector but rather on account of the leverage built into company balance sheets.



Don't do it

- Acronyms and jargon
 - CDO, CDS, MBS, MBA, AAAS, AARP
 - C-suite, innovation-based,
- Lots of internal quotes
 - “Covenant lite”, “rights-based”
- Clichés
- Latin
- Unnecessary complexity



Why bother?

Study shows newspaper op-eds change minds

Through two randomized experiments, researchers found that op-ed pieces had large and long-lasting effects on people's views among both the general public and policy experts. The study, [published in the Quarterly Journal of Political Science](#), also found that Democrats and Republicans altered their views in the direction of the op-ed piece in roughly equal measure.

Brexit: the unsettling business of applying for 'settled status'

UK government is forcing a choice that many of us never wanted to make

FREDERICK STUDEMANN

+ Add to myFT

UK to scrap £65 application fee for EU citizens to stay

Get out there and pitch

