

Tips for Getting Started on an Odyssey Article



Odyssey (theOdysseyOnline.com) is a student-driven digital magazine that provides an opportunity for students to use their voice and share topics they're passionate about. It's a great way to hone your writing craft, gain confidence in your writing/voice, and gain experience with editing, collaborating, conducting interviews, and publishing on a digital platform.

Choosing a Topic:

Choosing a topic can be a difficult task. Here are some things to think ask yourself:

- What are some topics that I am interested and/or passionate about?
- Is this a topic that I feel others need to be informed about?
- Can my topic provide advice? Self-help, travel guides, etc.
- What is my relationship to this topic? Why is it important to me?
- Is my topic focused on or connected to local events?

Explore the different areas of the magazine: (Also see reverse side)

- local, regional, and personal events
- social justice activism
- interviews
- literary pieces

Finding the Hook:

Developing a strong hook is one of the most important parts of writing a successful article. The hook is the sentence near the beginning of your article; its goal is to capture a reader's attention and convince to continue reading.

Here are a few types of commonly used hooks:

- **Questions:**
Asking questions can produce very intriguing hooks. Phrases like, "What if..." or "How would you feel..." can make a reader curious and interested to read further
- **Fact or Statements:**
Hooks starting with credible information and/or justified statements can be incredibly persuasive to a reader. Credibility is more likely to encourage informed readers to trust your writing.
- **Creative:**
Creative hooks are great ways to immerse a reader into your writing. This is another way to help guide a reader deeper into your content, using tools like descriptive phrases (e.g., "His brow perched above his pointed glare like an angry buffalo.").
- **Anecdote:**
Anecdotal hooks are great introductions that can be thought-provoking and/or humorous. This type of hook establishes a personal connection with the readers.
- **Statistic:**
Starting with a statistic can add credibility, especially for certain types of articles like, scientific, political, medical, communications, etc. It is a great way to immediately inform the reader of the scope of the issue.



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The Body:

After choosing your topic, it's time to determine your genre, and develop the body of your article. This is where you expand on your introduction and hook. It can be helpful to read other articles online that you enjoy for inspiration.

Here are some popular genres to choose from:

- **Student Activism**

Articles focusing on social justice have a lot of freedom. You can basically write about social justice in any of the styles below. (Tip: check out the [Odyssey Online website](#) for more ideas)

- **How-to/Listicles**

These types of articles generally open with an intro., while a conclusion is optional. While Listicles are always numbered lists, How-to articles give you more flexibility and the option to select different formats.

- **Interviews/Alumni Profiles**

Typically, interview-style articles on Odyssey are written in various styles: persuasive, expository, argumentative, and descriptive. There are also a few formats to choose from when writing up your interview. You can write your article as a transcription, narrative, or a mix of both.

- **Lifestyle/SB Community**

These articles generally focus on Santa Barbara or neighboring communities on a wide variety of topics (nightlife, social events, festivals, music venues, etc.). Many of these articles can be interview-based and include a lot of great pictures!

- **Creative/Literary**

Creative and Literary pieces are incredible and give you the freedom to explore lots of different genres. These can include poems, memoirs, videos, and even podcasts!

- **Coverage/Informative**

These types of articles can often be structured in a traditional journalistic format. They can be persuasive or neutral pieces. (Typically 600–1200 words.)

Formatting:

Once you feel confident and happy with your content, the last step is making your article visually appealing. One of the first things a reader will see will be the visual readability of your article, so it's important to make your online article appear aesthetically pleasing.

- Do the images relate to your topic? Are they placed attractively in the text?
Tip: the [Unsplash](#) website offers images that can be used freely. (No permission needed, though attribution is appreciated.)
- How does the font look? Is it too big, too small?
- How does the spacing look? Is it too far apart, too squished together?
- Is the length of the paragraphs too overwhelming? Do they feel readable?
- Did you use a pull quote or some block quotes to visually break up the text?
- Did you hyperlink your sources?

The most important thing is to have fun! Writing and publishing an article is an exciting experience, so don't feel intimidated. The Odyssey internship is a great opportunity if you're interested in learning more about article writing.