

## Writing an opinion piece for Nation.Cymru

Nation.Cymru's goal is to create a national conversation. We have all the institutions of a nation state in Wales: A parliament, a national library, museum, several universities, etc. But without a *national* English-language, popular press, much of Wales is being left out of the conversation about what to do with them.

Nation.Cymru is a volunteer run news site. So here is a guide for contributors who are keen to pitch in and help.

### **Thank you!**

We need your help and are immensely glad that you're offering it. I thought we could get that out of the way first.

### **What's a suitable subject for Nation.Cymru?**

Anything that touches in any way upon the challenges and opportunities facing Wales as a nation. Transportation, health, politics, history, culture, education, the economy, tax, housing, culture, the environment, tourism, Wales' role in the aerospace industry – the list goes on. It all has a place.

### **We are particularly keen to hear from marginalised voices**

Do you belong to a group whose voice isn't heard as often in the media? Are you female, working class, or belong to an ethnic minority? If so, we want to give you the opportunity to tell your story.

That doesn't mean we don't want articles from white, middle aged men. I am one. But if only white, middle aged men contribute, it's not much of a national conversation!

### **Punch up, not down**

Feel free to criticise governments, organisations or authorities. But don't blame the ills of society on minority groups within it. We won't publish intolerant or hateful articles.

### **Find a timely hook**

If possible, try to find a link between the opinion piece you want to write and something ongoing in the news. People are more likely to read an article about a topic they're already interested in or have read about elsewhere.

### **Keep it short**

Research suggests that the maximum most people will read on a screen is 800 words. If you're writing articles longer than that, most people will stop reading before the end and may not recommend the articles to others. If you have many interlocking ideas, consider writing two or three separate articles instead.

However, don't keep your articles so short that you don't say anything at all – somewhere over 500 and under 800 words is the ideal.

### **Keep articles to the point**

Don't get to the point halfway through. Let the reader know at the start what your opinion piece is about and what your argument is. Make that argument without deviation or repetition, backed up by evidence. And then conclude what it means.

If you have a list, consider using bullet points. Consider separating different points with sub-headings.

### **Keep your language accessible**

Write for the average man or woman on the street. You may not like the Sun or Daily Mail but they have a lot to teach us about communicating with the masses. If you use academic terms or jargon you may earn plaudits amongst your peers, but you are excluding 75% of readers from the conversation.

*Please note: This doesn't mean dumbing down your argument. People aren't stupid, they just may not understand the specific language you're used to using at work.*

We look forward to hearing from you!

- Ifan Morgan Jones, Nation.Cymru editor