

## **General feedback on drafts**

1. The story **MUST** emerge from your analysis
2. Only put it in the lede what you can prove
3. Write a new lede at each stage of your research, a practice that will help you focus
4. Avoid speculation on your part
5. If advocates or experts speak of cuts or fear of cuts, ask them for proof. If there is no proof, make it clear that they are speculating
6. Do not rely on media reports for information, or provide hyperlinks to media reports when you should be connecting readers to primary records
7. Avoid acronyms. For instance, if you are writing about any one of the 14 local health integration networks, **DO NOT** refer to them as by the acronym LHINS
8. Be sure to response accurately to programs; in a number of instances the Champlain network was incorrectly referenced
9. Make the first reference to a specific program general. Example: a program to deal with mental health; an agency responsible for health care facilities such as local hospitals and long-care homes
10. The first reference to public accounts data should also be generic. Example: an analysis of data the province uses to track spending
11. Keep the stories simple. Some of you are trying to cover too much ground. You only have 600 words
12. Keep the numbers to a minimum. I'm not big on rules, but in general, your story should have no more than four numbers, one of them being your analysis
13. If the percent increase is more than 100 per cent, then use a ratio. Instead of saying spending increased by 200 percent, say it tripled or increased three-fold. To get a ratio, you divide the small

number into a big number and use one decimal. If something increases by 2.7 times, it almost triples; if it increases 2.3 times, it's more than double

14. Please make sure you cite the source of your analysis. It is not according to Ontario's public accounts, but YOUR analysis of it
15. Make sure your stories are balanced. Just because advocates fear cuts, doesn't mean those are cuts are wrong. It could be that the program is inefficient. It could be that the money is being spent unwisely. It could be that the program is not needed. This balanced, neutral point of view can be expressed by experts such as health economists and professors, or in primary records such as studies by reputable and neutral bodies. So, seek out this information.
16. Be sure to challenge your advocates. What proof do they have that their programs work, or are needed? If they make claims, ask them for documented proof, which you can also include in your background material submitted as part of the assignment, or upload to DocumentCloud and provide access through hyperlinks
17. While it's okay to use population increase and inflation as context for your analysis, it's tricky to compare programs that may have different criteria. For instance, mental health and addictions
18. What's the overall message: keep it simple. If you can't prove it, leave it out