

Tips on Writing a Letter to the Editor

Don't be afraid speak up and send a letter to the editor (or LTE) of your local newspaper or one of the state's dailies. Here are some tips to assist you in writing an effective letter to the editor.

- Each newspaper sets guidelines for letters to the editor, including the maximum number of words that can be in the letter, where to submit the letter, how frequently a letter-writer can be published. Determine what those guidelines are by contacting the editorial page editor or checking on-line.
- Select a topic; narrow the topic to a single point.
- Start the letter with a statement of your point.
- Make the letter timely, such as a reply to a recent article, a published letter or an upcoming event.
- In the letter, express why the reader should care about the issue or should get involved in the issue. You might send a letter to correct an error or erroneous assumption. You might also relate the issue to what is happening in your community. Avoid exaggerating and NEVER lie.
- Your letter will have a better chance of being published if you write from a different point of view or different content from what has already been published.
- Do not send the same letter to another newspaper.
- Do not copy a letter someone else has submitted.
- When you submit the letter, include your name, phone number, address and e-mail address so that the editor can follow-up with you. Some editors will verify that you actually did write the letter.
- Determine how the letter to the editor can be submitted. Some newspapers allow the letters to be submitted via email as well as by hard copy.