



## Tips for Writing a Powerful Letter to the Editor

Letters to the Editor (LTEs) are one of the most widely read sections of the newspaper and reach a large audience. They allow community members to comment on the way issues are being addressed in the media and to influence what topics the local paper covers. Elected officials monitor this section of the newspaper and take notice of constituents' opinions.

Due to strict space limitations in newspapers, not all letters are published, but the more letters the newspaper receives on a certain topic, the more likely they are to run at least one letter on the topic. Check the letter guidelines in your local paper and use these tips to write an effective letter to the editor:

**Keep it Short and Focused** — Many newspapers have strict length limits (usually 250 words) and edit letters for space. A concise, single-issue letter has a better chance of retaining its salient points and keeping the reader's interest.

**Assume Nothing** — Do not assume that your readers are informed on your topic. Give a concise but informative background before plunging into the main issue. Also include any relevant credentials that prove you are informed about your topic.

**Be Brief** — State your position as succinctly as possible without eliminating necessary detail. Keep your paragraphs short. Long rambling sentences and digressions will cause people to lose interest quickly. Stick to one subject.

**Maintain Composure** — It is okay to express outrage, but it should be kept under control. Avoid personal attacks and focus instead on criticizing specific policies or ideas.

**Find a Local Angle** — Readers are more interested in an issue when they see how it affects their lives and communities. Find a way to show how budget cuts or environmental policies will affect this particular readership.

**Avoid Duplicate Letters** — Do not send the same letter to two papers. Most major papers will only print letters that are exclusive to that paper.

**Consider the audience you are trying to reach or influence** — If you want action, ask for it. If you want change, demand it. Present clear solutions to the problems you are identifying.

**Be factual** — And highlight aspects of the issue that haven't been previously addressed.



## Contact Information for Selected Newspapers

Make sure to include your name, address, and telephone number or papers will not print the letter. When printed, the letter will only include your name and city.

### **Portland Press Herald**

Letters to the Editor  
Portland Press Herald  
P.O Box 1460  
Portland, ME 04104

Or

[http://www.pressherald.com/readerservices/Send\\_a\\_Letter\\_to\\_the\\_Editor.html](http://www.pressherald.com/readerservices/Send_a_Letter_to_the_Editor.html)

### **Bangor Daily News**

P.O Box 1329  
Bangor ME 04402

Or

<http://www.bangordailynews.com/external/contact/letter.php>

### **Kennebec Journal**

Mail: 247 Western Ave  
Augusta ME 04330

Or

[http://www.kjonline.com/readerservices/Send\\_a\\_Letter\\_to\\_the\\_Editor-KJ.html](http://www.kjonline.com/readerservices/Send_a_Letter_to_the_Editor-KJ.html)

### **Lewiston Sun Journal**

Mail: 104 Park Street  
Lewiston, ME 04240

Or

<http://www.sunjournal.com/submit/letter>

### **The Times Record**

Mail: P.O Box 10  
Brunswick, ME

Or

Email: [letters@timesrecord.com](mailto:letters@timesrecord.com)

Or

<http://www.timesrecord.com/forms/letters/>



**Morning Sentinel**

Mail: 31 Front Street  
Waterville, ME 04901

Or

[http://www.onlinesentinel.com/readerservices/Send\\_a\\_Letter\\_to\\_the\\_Editor-MS.html](http://www.onlinesentinel.com/readerservices/Send_a_Letter_to_the_Editor-MS.html)

**Journal Tribune**

Village Shoppers Mall  
Sanford, ME 04073

Or

Email: [letters@journaltribune.com](mailto:letters@journaltribune.com)