



Write a Letter to the Editor

Writing a letter to the editor offers an excellent opportunity to share your point of view or respond to a story you disagreed with or you think left out some critical points. When reaching out to an editor, keep in mind the following tips:

- **Try to express the point of your letter to the editor (LTE) in one or two sentences.** Before you start, try to explain what you want the LTE to convey in only one or two sentences. If you can't, the topic may be too complex.
- **Limit the length to no more than 250 words.** Some papers won't print more than 200 words or will be motivated to edit your letter down to size. Check with the paper to find out their word limit.
- **Timeliness is key.** Your LTE response may not get printed if you haven't submitted it within a few days of when the piece or article about which you are commenting ran.
- **An LTE is often responding as "and" or "but".** A letter that only says, "Rah-rah! I agree with this author" is not enough.
- **Identify your target.** In the first sentence, reference the date, author, and title of the opinion piece or article about which you are commenting.
- **Raise the topic of your letter in the first sentence.** Provide an interesting lead that sets up the topic and piques the attention of the reader. For example, did the original piece "not go far enough," "mislead your readers," "fail to mention an important fact," or "not tell the full story"?

Just remember to focus your comments on your opponent, not the paper itself. You may only get one shot to respond whereas the newspaper has unlimited space to counter your claims. In general, focus on positive points, not repeating the negative or offering attacks on the other opinion.