

Activity

Instructions for Writing a Letter to the Editor

Learning Objectives

Students will write a letter to the editor.

Materials

[Instructions for Writing a Letter to the Editor \(Google Doc\)](#)



Instructional Plan

Writing a Letter to the Editor

Most newspapers and magazines print letters to the editor: letters that readers send in, usually in response to recently published articles. These can be a useful way to get your voice heard.

The following are some general tips, but there's no substitute for going and reading the directions on the website or editorial page of the newspaper you're writing to. Some have unique requests or requirements.

Choose Your Target Wisely:

- National and big city newspapers get thousands of letters a day and have room to print only a dozen or so.
- A neighborhood or small town paper will have fewer people writing to it and often more space to devote to printing letters.
- Whichever publication you choose, make sure to get a copy and look at previous letters to get a sense of what kind of letter that outlet likes to publish.

Engage with Recent Articles:

- Always write in response to an article published in the last few issues.
- Cite the article by using the headline and day of publication.

Seek Disagreement or Overlooked Issues:

- Agreeing with the article will almost never get you published.
- Look for something you disagree with or raise an issue that the article overlooked.

Keep it Concise:

- Be brief in your letter, as editors often prefer shorter submissions.
- Letters may be only a few sentences long, although small papers may print longer ones.

Focus on a Single Point:

- Make just one point in your letter to ensure clarity and impact.

Be Memorable and Personal:

- Be as clear and memorable as possible to stand out among the many letters editors receive.

- If you have personal experience or expertise on the issue, use it to strengthen your argument.
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Template for a Letter to the Editor

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

[Phone Number]

[Date]

[Editor's Name]

[Newspaper/Magazine Name]

[Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

Subject: [Briefly mention the subject of your letter]

Introduction:

- The opening line should name the article you are referencing (or the letter to the editor you are responding to)
- State your position.
- Summarize your issue of concern.
 - tie your issue to a recently discussed topic
 - take a stance on a debated topic
 - correct an error or misrepresentation

Body:

- Present your main points in a clear and organized manner.
- Include facts, statistics, personal experiences, or other supporting evidence to strengthen your points.
- Offer possible solutions or suggestions to address the issue.
- Consider including a counter argument and respond to it, reinforcing your position.
- Call to action. What is at stake if no action is taken? What will happen if people respond with action? Make the consequences of each very clear, and try, when possible, to inform the reader about the direct impact of taking or not taking action.

Conclusion:

- Summarize your main points, restate your stance on the issue, and reiterate your call to action.

Sincerely,

[Your Full Name]