

How to write a letter to the editor:

Letters to the editor allow community members to express their perspectives on current events. They can signal community interest in an issue and send a message to policymakers.

When drafting a letter to the editor:

- Respond quickly, within 1-2 days of when the article you are responding to was published.
- Keep the letter short and punchy: 250 words or less. Be sure to check the publication's guidelines to see if they have a word limit.
- Mention your reason for writing in the first sentence. If you're responding directly to an article, state the article's headline and publication date.
- Limit the content to one or two key points.
- Take a strong position, and try to use a compelling fact to show the urgency or importance of your issue.
- Include a call to action.

Most newspapers appreciate letters submitted by e-mail, and have a page on their websites to facilitate this, with fields for you to complete. Be sure to give your name, city of residence, e-mail, and phone number.

Work used:

Wallack, Lawrence, and Katie Woodruff, and Lori Dorfman, and Iris Diaz. News for a Change: An Advocate's Guide to Working With the Media. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1999.