

Letters to the Editor

If you feel strongly about an issue and you want to bring awareness to it then “letters to the editor” can be an effective way to spread the word. Almost every daily newspaper publishes “letters to the editor,” and many people read them. With a single letter or email you can draw widespread attention to your concerns and perhaps get more support.

If your letter is published, show it to other people. Photocopy it and include it with handouts, flyers, news releases, etc.

Follow the paper’s instructions. You can find them in the letters’ section, near the editorials or online at the newspaper’s website. They will tell you where to send the letter or email and other requirements. If you write a letter for regular mail, make sure the letter is typed and double-spaced. Many newspapers only accept emailed letters to the editor.

Include your contact information. This includes your name, address, and phone number. Many papers contact the sender before publishing the letter.

Use “To the Editor” as the salutation. Don’t worry if you don’t know the editor’s name. However, if you have the editor’s name, you should use it to increase the chances of your letter being read.

Keep it less than one page. Long letters or emails are seldom printed. Editors shorten longer letters.

Grab your reader’s attention. Your opening sentence is important and should make readers want to read more. It should also tell readers what you’re writing about.

Get to the point. Tell readers your main point at the beginning. Be clear about why the issue is important and state your opinion and the reasons that support it. If you have a solution, include it as a suggestion.

Connect to what’s happening in the news. Readers usually write in response to something they read about in the news source or newspaper. If you find news about the issue you’re working on, it’s a great opportunity to highlight what you are doing about it for a public audience.

Make it stand out. What makes a letter stand out? It might be interesting, have a good argument, use language well, be funny, etc. Include your age if this will help your letter stand out.

