

# Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor

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A Letter to the Editor (LTE) is an easy way to make a BIG impact. Editors do not publish every LTE, but they do pay attention—especially to letters that are well-written and connected to an article they just published. Here are a few helpful tips:

## Writing Your LTE

- **Be concise.** The first sentence should summarize your position. One of the biggest mistakes in LTE writing is using the first paragraph (or the entire letter) to build to the point. Most editors read 2-3 sentences before making a decision to go on.
- **Mind your word count.** Check the LTE guidelines for the paper you are targeting. If they give a word count, follow it. If they don't, 200 words are generally considered the maximum length. Many papers will not consider LTEs that exceed the word count.

## Submitting Your LTE

Many newspapers have specific format requirements, so please check the paper's website before submitting. Always include full contact information for the author(s).

- **Follow the guidelines.** Follow the outlet's rules regarding LTEs and make sure to adhere to the guidelines on length. Spell everything correctly and pay close attention to grammar—letters are not usually edited, rather the outlets select well-written letters that meet their guidelines. Email your LTE to ensure timeliness. To do this, paste the LTE text into the body of an email—DO NOT SEND AS AN ATTACHMENT. You may also fax it, but sending it electronically is generally the preferred way to receive LTEs.
- **Follow up.** Once you have submitted your LTE, follow up with a call 24 hours later to find out if it will be printed.