

How to Write a Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor are often one of the most popular sections of a newspaper or online news site. However, the competition can be fierce to get your letter printed. Follow the guidelines below to help make your letter stand out and get published.

Writing a Letter to the Editor:

Research Your Chosen Publication

Where are you sending your letter? Does it have a daily edition or does it only print on Sundays? Go to the website for the publication and find the guidelines for that individual outlet. What do they require to be submitted? Can you e-mail your letter or snail mail it? What is the deadline?



Identify Yourself

Include your name, address, e-mail address, and phone number at the top of the letter. If you can identify yourself with a local organization, that will increase the chances of the outlet publishing your letter. While generally, such personal information will not be printed, it is important to include so that the editor can follow up with you if needed.

Get to the Point

Your letter should be between 150-200 words. Longer letters rarely get printed due to space considerations. To achieve this word limit, write in short sentences and try to use an active tense to make a precise point. Be sure to check the word length of the media outlet you are contacting since many vary on letter length.

Be Polite

Always be respectful and polite when writing a public letter to the editor. Insults, names, threats and rude language will not be printed. Your letter has a far greater chance of being published if you are respectful of the subject matter. Newspapers are responsible for what they print, even if it is opinion and rarely will publish anything that could be deemed slanderous.

Proofread

Proofread your letter. Letters without spelling and grammar errors are more likely to be printed.



Try to Email Your Letter

When completed, submit your letter to the editor submit via e-mail if possible.

Look for an Online News Source

Because online news sites have a greater demand for content, they are more likely to publish your letter. If there is a popular online news outlet in your community, start there.