



## How to Write an Effective Letter-to-the-Editor in Under 20 Minutes

Editors pay attention to well-written, succinct letters that respond to an article just published. Here are some tips to get your letter written and published:

### **Check submission guidelines for your local paper.**

Look for the submission link on the Opinion page of your paper's website. Copy and paste your letter in the body of an email or submission form. Do not send attachments. Follow up with a call 24 hours after you submit to confirm receipt of your letter and ask about a usual timeframe for hearing back on a decision. Ask for the Letters editor.

### **Be brief and get to the point.**

Do not waste the first paragraph building up to your point. Start off with a strong value statement, a big idea, then get into specifics.

### **Decide what you want to say:**

- 1) Praise an article, or at least the reporter's attention to an important topic
- 2) Appeal to your authority and expertise.
- 3) Informational - use article as opportunity provide more info and insight or an upcoming event.
- 4) Set the record straight, if needed.

### **Here is the structure of a letter**

#### **HEADING:**

Today's Date

Re: "Headline of article you are responding to," Date of article

"To the editor:" or "Dear Editor,"

BODY: Keep short, note word count limit. 2-3 short paragraphs. max.

#### **CLOSING:**

Your full name

City, State

Your phone and address (if requested by paper).

**For more information please contact [becky@npalliance.org](mailto:becky@npalliance.org) or 941/518-7051**

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