

Writing an effective Letter to the Editor

- 1. Read instructions provided.**
- 2. Include your name, address, email address and phone number at the top of your letter.** You can state that this information is not to be published.
- 3. Be concise and focused.** Name the article in the first sentence of the body of your letter. Write your letter in pithy, clever statements, but remember that this is easy to do! You will probably need to write several drafts of your letter to condense your message. Stick to 200 words and you'll be safe, no matter which newspaper you're targeting.
- 4. Limit your letter to two or three paragraphs.** Try sticking to the following format:
 - In your first paragraph, introduce your problem and sum up your objection.
 - In the second paragraph, include a few sentences to support your view.
 - End with a great summary and a clever, punchy line.
 - Since your letter may be edited, you should get to the point early. Don't bury your point inside a lengthy argument. Don't appear to be overly emotional. You can avoid this by limiting your exclamation points. Also avoid insulting language. Remember that short, concise letters sound confident. Long, wordy letters give the impression that you're trying too hard to make a point.
- 5. Proof read your letter.** Editors will ignore letters that contain bad grammar and poorly-written rants.
- 6. Submit your letter by email if the publication allows it.** This format enables the editor to cut and paste your letter.