

# Letter to the Editor/Op-Ed Tips and Template

Advocacy Toolkit

## Tips for sending an effective letter to the editor of a local or regional newspaper

The letters to the editor section is one of the most widely read sections of any newspaper or periodical. This section offers advocates a chance to reach a broad audience and provide readers with information and insights on unfamiliar issues that often inspire readers to take action.

### **1. Be professional and identify yourself**

Letters should be typed or neatly handwritten and should follow the submission rules of the particular publication. Language should be polite, but persuasive. Be sure to include any information that highlights your expertise on the issue. The publication will need to authenticate the letter, so sign your letter and provide contact information, including an address and daytime phone number.

### **2. Keep it brief and get to the point**

Keep it short, to the point and concise. Most published letters are 200 to 250 and take a strong position on a topic recently covered in the publication. Start with a compelling introductory sentence and follow with short and clear factual points. Introduce yourself and quickly describe your role and expertise in educational technology. Next, state the case you wish to make using powerful details that are important to the readership of the paper (e.g. higher test scores; scientifically based research; global economy). Do not make broad statements that can't be backed up with facts. It's best to focus on what is most important rather than trying to address every aspect of the issue. Keep your argument simple and the letter short.

### **3. Relate it to home**

Newspaper readers care about how an issue will affect them or their families locally. Including local facts or references in your article increases the chances it will be published and will draw the publications readers' interest.

### **4. End with a call to action**

Ask readers to follow up. For example, urge them to join you in calling on policymakers to address the issue.

## Letter to the editor template

<Date>

<Name of media outlet or publication>

Attention: <Dr./Ms./Mr. editor's first name and last name\* or Editor>

<Address 1>

<Address 2>

<City, State/Province, Zip/Postal Code>

Dear <Dr./Ms./Mr. last name of editor or Editor>:

### Introduction

<State your reason for writing here. If you are responding to articles or editorials by the media outlet, use the first sentence to reference the name of the publication (in italics), the title of the article, author's name and date when it appeared.>

### Case

<State your case here. Include facts, references or research here to establish credibility. Mention your expertise on the issue. Keep length in mind. Acceptable letter length will vary. Look at the newspaper's or periodical's letters section to get a feel for an appropriate length.

Include a call to action, asking readers to follow up with some activity, such as calling on policymakers to address the issue.>

### Conclusion

<End with a strong, positive statement in support of your case.>

Sincerely,

<Writer's signature>

<Name of writer>

<Writer's title>

<Writer's organization's name and address>

<Daytime contact information>

*\*Find the editor's name on the masthead of the publication.*