



GUIDELINES & TIPS FOR HOW TO WRITE A LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR

WHAT IS A LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR?

A letter-to-the-editor (LtE) is typically a brief response to an article that has been recently published in a print periodical such as a daily or weekly newspaper. Although guidelines vary per outlet, LtEs are typically less than 150 words and usually must be received by the outlet within seven days of the publish date of the article that is being responded to in order to be considered.

GETTING STARTED

In order to write a LtE, you must first find an article to which you'd like to respond. We'd encourage you to monitor your local newspapers (including weeklies, community papers, and specialty interest publications) and find articles that address a topic of interest to you that is related to *Standing on the Side of Love*. Even when you know there is an issue that is being generally covered in the news media, you should still find a specific article that you can "piggyback" on to and offer a response. It is best to submit a LtE as soon as possible after an article is published.

CONFIRMING SPECIFICS

Before preparing a draft, go online and reference the outlet's LtE submission policy. This can often be found under the opinion tab or under "contact us." If you do not find the guidelines online, call the newspaper. There are three topics to which you should pay particularly close attention:

- Word count guidelines and/or limits
- Due date
- Submission address information

SUGGESTED OUTLINE

- Brief restatement of author's position
- Reference past article
- State your position
- Present evidence and facts
- Short restatement of argument and/or pithy comment

Tips to keep in mind:

- Lead with your most important point.
- Stick to a single topic—only one issue per letter.
- Don't be condescending or combative—address the article writers and other actors fairly.
- Type and proofread your letter carefully.
- Include your name, address, day-time phone number and signature.
- Direct your letter to "To the Opinion Page Editor" or something similar.
- You are encouraged to submit your LtE to more than one outlet—but modify your language slightly and the article to which you're responding in order to keep each draft unique.

REMEMBER: Your letter doesn't need to be perfect, just as well-articulated as you can make it. And don't be discouraged if your letter doesn't get printed—the more LtEs you submit, the more likely you are to be published!