

How to Prepare a Letter to the Editor

A Letter to the Editor (LTE) is a reader's response to something published in the paper to which the LTE is submitted. The bigger the outlet, the more submissions they receive, so think as locally as possible with which outlet you monitor, looking for something to respond to or initiate discussion.

Characteristics of an LTE

Purpose	To offer a response or different perspective to a published article.
Target Audience	Outlet editor and readers
Document Length	<200 words

GETTING STARTED

1. **Act quickly!** Aim to submit your response within two days of the article's publication date.
2. **Before you start writing, check the outlet's guidelines for word count and other requirements.** Usually you are limited to 100-150 words.
3. **Quote/reference what you are responding to,** usually an editorial or op-ed from that specific paper.
4. **Be concise yet compelling.** Consider using a personal story about how you have been impacted.
5. **Use facts, figures, and/or research to support your case.**
6. **End with a call to action** for the readers, even if it is a simple challenge to change their mindset on an issue.

DO'S AND DON'TS

- Prioritize well-written and well-argued writing that is rooted in facts.
- Submit your LTE using the website's online form or by emailing it to the person listed on their website.
- Read examples of the latest op-eds and/or LTEs published by the outlet you plan to pitch. You'll have a leg up if you get a sense for what they publish before you start your draft.

- Do not "yell" to get your point across. Editors often reject submissions because of tone.
- If submitting your LTE via email, do not send it as an attachment. Instead, paste your entire LTE into the body of the email and note your credentials/association.

Visit us at projectsunset.ash.org for more information.