

How to Write Letters to the Editor

A letter to the editor (LTE) is more likely to be published when you are responding directly to a timely article or op-ed piece.

Always research the news outlets' specific LTE guidelines; stick to the word limits and submission deadlines. Note email vs. snail mail instructions.

Elements of a good letter:

- It has one compelling point;
- It names a personal impact, preferably yours rather than an abstract impact;
- It's brief and within the word limits.

Identify yourself as one with direct interest and experience, or as an advocate for others

“I am writing you as a customer of Duke Energy....”

Pick one idea/concept and stick to it

Use simple sentence structures

“I pay my bills. I save energy...”

Have a friend read it and mark out anything that does not directly speak to the concept/idea

OPTIONAL - Plan a “letter to the editor” writing party

- You can provide the envelopes/stamps/computer if you like
- Always get commitment and follow up with people who committed to write a letter to the editor
- Identify group person whose task it is to follow up with people

REMEMBER...MANY LETTERS ARE RECEIVED, ONLY SOME ARE PRINTED