



Letters to the Editor: *Maximize Impact*

The Basics

- ◆ A letter to the editor is a BRIEF, 1-2 paragraph statement of opinion about a recent news item.
- ◆ Be sure to refer directly to a relevant RECENT article within the first sentence (*Example: I was concerned to hear of Ms. Robertson's comments regarding medical research [citation]*).
- ◆ Include your name, address, and daytime phone in case the editor should need to contact you.

Getting Published

- ◆ Include your credentials (degree, academic affiliation); a paper is more likely to publish someone who is an expert. Caution: check your employer/university policy first.
- ◆ Write to a local paper. Your chances are better, and if you are published it may spark interest in a bigger outlet.
- ◆ Find out how letters to the editor are accepted (email, U.S. mail) and submit your letter using each method.
- ◆ Organize your community. The more letters a paper receives on one topic, the more likely they are to publish one.
- ◆ **Think digital. Beyond the traditional print letters, many publications have online forums, comment sections and other venues for audience expression.**

Stay on Message

- ◆ Stick to ONE main idea for your letter. State your position, offer supporting information (facts, statistics, or specific examples), and then restate your position.
- ◆ Keep your tone professional; angry or hostile letters do not help to get your point across.
- ◆ Remember your audience: not every one is a scientist or understands technical jargon.



FINAL THOUGHTS:

Be persistent, and stay positive. Your chances of publication increase with every letter you and like-minded people send.

Get the word out! Let us know when you write a letter to the editor or organize others to do the same, whether or not you get published.