



## Tips for Writing Letters to the Editor

*Letters to the editor (LTEs) are typically short piece (< 300 words), in contrast with opinion pieces (op-eds) which may be longer (800-1200 words).*

*Newspapers publish them as a space for social debate on opinions or to discuss issues missed by the regular news. They are written with a clear opinion and chosen by the editor of the paper. They are popular because they are among the most read sections in the newspaper. Legislators will read them to get a feel for concerns of constituents. This is another way to educate the public.*

### Before you begin writing

- Pay attention to submission requirements (word length, how to submit).
  - [Cleveland.com](http://Cleveland.com)
  - The Akron Beacon Journal
  - Others...
- Read other opinion/LTEs in that newspaper to get a sense of the criteria they use.
- If you have a relationship, call or discuss the opinion piece with the editor before submitting. For example, sometimes editors feel a story or particular angle has been exhausted and may indicate the need for a fresh angle. Relationships are easier to establish with local or community papers.

### How to write a letter to the editor/op-ed

- Connect it with something that is already happening in the news. Reference a former article that the newspaper wrote, or an event that happened in the community. Then link it to what you want to talk about.
- Order makes a difference: Keep the more important part of your message at the top. Sometimes editors may cut out the last part of your letter.
- Be concise and efficient with your words: Make sure every sentence has its own purpose.
- Stay on one message and don't use jargon: Make sure you know your message, what you want to say, and use clear and simple language—short words and sentences go a long way!
- If you have a strong personal story, include it (a compelling human story goes a long way to hook editors and readers).
- Proofread!
- Make sure you include your name, city and contact information.
- It is best to submit your piece via email, either in the body of your email or as an attachment.