

## **Steps To Writing Letters To The Editor**

With a little practice, writing good letters to the editor is neither time consuming nor difficult. Your letter will be more effective if it is not copied from a sample letter, but comes directly from the heart. No other form of communication can match the impact of a thoughtful letter written by a concerned citizen.

- Identify the editorial or article to which you want to respond, or the issue you want to personally address
- If necessary, research the issue to understand it better and to collect supplemental information and/or evidence to use in your letter
- Determine your primary purpose so that your letter will be focused and direct. Focusing on one specific item is critical. You only have one nail (your point), so pick a strong one and pound it firmly.

### **Write A Draft**

- Revise your draft by reading it aloud to “hear” how it sounds. You can revise effectively by allowing some time to pass and then rereading it again.
- Send your draft to a friend or family member for suggestions and comments.
- Send your final draft to the newspaper(s) by email or regular mail

### **Style and Tone**

Be polite and civil even when you are disagreeing. Remember that letters written for and about an individual reflect on them and you. You are more likely to have your comments printed when you can disagree by being civil.

- **Use irony and sarcasm sparingly.** Humor is fine’ just be sure it is not at someone’s expense
- **Be positive when it is appropriate and possible.** Ranting and raving seldom persuades anyone of anything
- **Be brief.** Short letters are published more often than long ones, so be as concise as possible
- **Be specific and to the point.** Vague generalities are not persuasive; direct refutations are.
- **Use your own writing style and your own voice.** Your letter should reflect you. Use language with which you are comfortable and write as simply and direct as possible.

## **Other Suggestions**

- It is important to realize that you are writing primarily to the readers of the paper rather than the editor
- Although you will, of course, want to express your opinion(s), you should support your assertions and opinions with specific details and evidence such as facts and figures
- Your arguments should be primarily rational than emotional because you want to appear reasonable. However, an appropriate emotional appeal can be occasionally effective. For example, a brief anecdote or quotation can sometimes be extremely convincing. Just be sure you don't go overboard.
- Use brief paragraphs and reasonably short sentences. You want your letter to be easy to read and understand, as well as convincing and forceful.
- Remember that the overall goal is to persuade readers to your point of view. Impressing them with your wit and brilliance are optional and may even be detrimental.

## **Local Paper Contacts:**

### **Fort Worth Star-Telegram:**

[neletters@star-telegram.com](mailto:neletters@star-telegram.com)

### **Dallas Morning News:**

E-Mail: [letterstoeditor@dallasnews.com](mailto:letterstoeditor@dallasnews.com)

Mail: The Dallas Morning News, PO Box 655237, Dallas, TX 75265

Fax: 972-263-0456

### **The Dallas Observer:**

[http://www.dallasobserver.com/feedback/index\\_html](http://www.dallasobserver.com/feedback/index_html)

### **The Fort Worth Weekly:**

[feedback@fwweekly.com](mailto:feedback@fwweekly.com)