

Writing a Letter to the Editor



a program of the Jane Goodall Institute

Getting Your Letters Published

Most newspapers and magazines publish letters from readers, typically in response to an article or letter previously published. Letters sent to radio stations will sometimes be read on air as well. The Letters to the Editors section is one of the most read sections of a publication and is a great place to be heard!

Here are some tips to help you get your letter published.

- **Relate your letter to a previously published article.** Letters that are not written in response to an article are rarely published, but there are a lot of imaginative ways to creatively relate to an article.
- **Keep it short.** Read the paper's limitations on the maximum word length for letters. In general, use as few words as possible to get your point across quickly.
- **Keep it positive.** Even if you're criticizing or complaining, find a way to give your argument a positive, encouraging spin to avoid offending editors and readers. Whenever possible, give readers a suggested action to take.
- **Send via email** instead of snail mail. By the time the postal service delivers your letter, the topic about which you are writing will probably be out of date.
- **Submit ASAP** (in relation to timely event or article) to have the best chance of getting your letter published.
- **Include your address and phone number.** Most papers will call you before publishing the letter to confirm that you wrote it.
- **Check spelling, grammar and punctuation:** Papers will choose to publish well-written letters before they publish letters that need editing.

Following these tips will increase the chances that your letter will be published. Use the sample letter on the next page to guide you in writing your letter.

Sample Letter to the Editor Email

Dear Editor,

I was disappointed to read David Jones' article, "Recycling: Too Much Hassle" in last week's "News Day." I'm a member of the Spring High School Roots & Shoots group. We started a recycling program at our school this year, and it has been very successful.

Contrary to the article's statement that people "don't care about recycling," we have found that people are very willing to recycle if the recycling containers are clearly marked and convenient. In fact, many students and faculty have thanked us for taking the initiative to start the recycling program.

We've estimated that the amount of paper alone that our school now recycles will save 700 trees and 50 tons of water each school year. That's plenty of motivation for us.

Roots & Shoots has many amazing stories of young people making a difference in their communities. To learn more, visit www.janegoodall.ca.

Sincerely,

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