

## **Letters to the Editor: How to Get Yours in Print**

### **Letter Writing Tips**

- **Be relevant.** Write about a *current* issue or upcoming event. It does not have to be about something that was recently in the newspaper. But if you do respond to a story in the paper, mention *in the beginning of your letter* the specific story in which your issue was discussed.
- **Have a point.** Your letter should have a main idea that you want to get across. And the sooner you say it in your letter, the better.
- **State the facts.** Facts and statistics that make your case stronger should be included. However, don't overload your letter with numbers and information. Stick to the facts that matter.
- **Write for the masses.** Limit the use of jargon and acronyms that the average person wouldn't know. If you must use technical terms, explain them in plain and simple language anyone can understand.
- **Tie it all together.** Try to end your letter by restating your argument and main point for emphasis.

### **Newspaper Guidelines:**

- **Short and sweet.** The shorter the better. Newspapers have limited space for readers' letters. They are more likely to print shorter letters. Try to keep yours 150 words or fewer.
- **Follow the rules.** Newspapers have guidelines for sending letters to the editor. You can find these on the editorial/opinion page in the paper or on its Web site. Following these policies will improve your chances of getting a letter into print.
- **Sign it.** If you send your letter in a hard copy (by fax or mail), make sure to sign your letter at the bottom.
- **Leave a number.** Always include a phone number where you can be contacted. Someone from the newspaper may call you to make sure the letter was written by you and not someone claiming to be you.