

Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor

A publication's "Letters to the Editor" section offers you a chance to respond to an article that was recently published by that newspaper or magazine. A letter to the editor is a very short (150-200 words)

Letters to the Editor sections are among the most widely read sections of the newspaper.

You can find submission guidelines for the following papers at these URLs. If your paper is not listed here, please contact executivedirector@nmaap.org for help finding submission guidelines:

- Albuquerque Journal: <http://www.abqjournal.com/letters/new>
- Santa Fe New Mexican: https://www.santafenewmexican.com/site/forms/online_services/letter/letter_editor/
- Las Cruces Sun News: <http://static.lcsun-news.com/lettertoeditor/>
- Farmington Daily Times: <http://static.daily-times.com/lettertoeditor/>

These tips will help you craft an effective letter to the editor:

- *Identify the issue.* Your letter should focus on a specific issue that was discussed in an article published by the paper. Some papers will also accept letters that discuss upcoming and current events or legislative votes.
- *Cite the article.* Be sure to mention the title and date of the article you're responding to in one of your first two sentences. For example "Dear editor, your recent coverage of the issue of opioid misuse in New Mexico's children ("Opioid Overdoses Soar in New Mexico's Children," March 20, 2018) was a thoughtful piece..."
- *Make one clear argument.* The piece should be in favor of or critical of a particular position taken by the paper, a columnist or op-ed writer or described in an article.
- *Keep it short.* The most effective letters to the editor run about 150 to 200 words, broken into three to four paragraphs. Word limits for some newspapers are higher, in the 300 to 400 word range.
- *Follow up.* If you have sent your letter to the editor and haven't heard anything within a week, email a note or make a follow-up call to check on its status. Be aware that editors receive hundreds of letters and may not respond to you immediately, if at all.
- *Include contact information.* Include your name, address, and daytime phone number in your letter. Instructions for submitting a letter to the editor are usually at the bottom of the page where they appear or on the paper's website. Find out from your local paper the best way to send a letter. Most prefer you use the form on their website or you send it via e-mail.

Need help? Email executivedirector@nmaap.org for professional writing help with your customized letter to the editor.