

Guide to Writing Letters to the Editor (of a newspaper or other publication)

A. First the Logistical Aspects.

1. To write the letter is the easy part, to have it published is another matter. The ideal situation is when the paper is short of letters to fill the editorial page or op-ed page. However, this rarely happens because smart editors always keep a bag of non-time sensitive letters from the past to fill that gap.
2. An author of a Letter to the Editor should attempt to contact the editor by way of a phone call - to inform him or her, in a calm and articulate manner, that the letter is on the way to the newspaper. Describe the topic and strive to have a discussion on the issue. At this point, the editor may decide to just do a story rather than publish the letter (BONUS). When you get a chance, commend the paper on previous articles or in general terms regarding credibility and quality of journalistic content (without being sappy or insincere). In other words ... Build a Relationship !!!

B. Construct the Letter ... Write a draft in point form that should include:

1. The issue at hand, i.e., Our dependency on foreign oil will result in the largest transfer of wealth in the history of the world...
2. The scope of the issue, i.e., This dependency threatens to jeopardize the future of our country, our children and our existence as a nation.
3. Examples, i.e., The high cost of gasoline will at some point will have a negative impact on our ability to grow food, transport goods and products, etc., etc.
4. Offer Solutions. "The Pickens Plan will..."
5. THEN link everything together
6. Keep the letter to 250 words OR LESS

C. Tips

1. Use proper grammar....Editors will not waste time rewriting or correcting submitted letters. USE SPELL CHECK
2. NO NEGATIVITY ... do not blatantly discredit people, programs or beliefs...take the high road...The Pickens Plan positively has no equal!!!!
3. ALWAYS INCLUDE YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER AT THE END OR YOUR LETTER WILL BE DISCARDED.....if you do not wish your name to be published...request so and the editor will insert "name withheld by request
4. After your letter appears....call again and thank the editor for his or her cooperation.