



# AppalachianVoices

## How to Write & Publish a Letter to the Editor (LTE)

“Letters to the Editor” –or “LTEs”– are a fantastic way to advocate for an issue - from anywhere, at any time!

### ***LTEs are important because they:***

- Bring information to new audiences
- Correct false narratives
- Encourage newspapers to increase coverage of issues you care about
- Offer readers a way to advocate for an issue, as LTEs should always offer a “next step” for the audience.

### **The basics of a letter to the editor:**

- **What** - a letter of 200-500 words in length, responding to important issues, news coverage and existing opinion pieces
- **How** - submission via email or online form, for both print and digital publication
- **When** - submissions can be sent at any time in response to related coverage—some newspapers have a limit on how many you can have published in a certain timeframe

### ***What makes a good LTE?***

- **Follow the guidelines:** Check the paper’s rules for word count and submission method. Each paper is different. Consider having someone else read over your letter for feedback before you submit it.
- **Be concise:** Stick to 2-3 persuasive points you want to stay in the mind of your reader.
- **Make it fact-based:** LTEs are great to counter false data and information. Make sure you can find sources for the information you include. Some publications may ask for those.
- **Make it timely and related to the paper’s content:** Respond to an article or opinion piece in the newspaper as quickly as possible, preferably within 3 days, to increase your chance of publication. You can always creatively link your issue to existing articles!
- **Connect to local issues:** Think about the audience for your paper and what local issues the readers may already care about. You can talk about a global or regional issue, but connect it to what’s going on where you live.
- **Make it personal:** No one else has your lived experience and perspective. Consider weaving that into your letter.
- **Include an “ask” or next step for the reader to take:** Your letter is like a conversation with a reader that should keep going! Mention a method of advocacy the reader can take (attend an upcoming meeting, call your elected officials, etc).

Want support writing your LTE or someone to look it over? Contact Juhi at [juhi@appvoices.org](mailto:juhi@appvoices.org)