



## YOUR ASSIGNMENT: Writing a letter to the editor

Journalists enjoy hearing from their readers. They want to know what people think about a news story, picture, or another published item. Readers write letters for different reasons:

- They agree with an article and want to say something else about the topic.
- They disagree with the article and want to explain why.
- They want to provide some additional information about the subject.
- They want to discuss a subject which was not in the paper, but is important.

When a letter is well-written, the editors may even publish it. So what makes a strong letter?

- It is written clearly.
- It is brief.
- It is supported with at least one fact.

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**TIP:** Letter writers may need to **SOURCE** a fact or information. That means they let the readers know where they found the information. A source can be a person, a book, a magazine, a website, or the newspaper article. **HINT:** The letter writers use the words "according to" or "said" to tell the reader where the information comes from.

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Pick an article or topic that you care about in your school newspaper. Remember the letter reflects your opinion. Use the following checklist to help you write a strong letter to the editor.

- START** your letter: Dear Editor,
- SUMMARIZE** the topic.
- STATE** your opinion.
- BACK UP** your opinion with **at least** one fact. You may need to **SOURCE** the fact you use.
- USE** quotation marks if you copy **EXACTLY** what someone else wrote or said.
- WRITE** your letter in four to six **COMPLETE SENTENCES**.
- SIGN** your name and grade at the bottom of your letter.

**YOU ARE READY TO WRITE YOUR LETTER!**

Teacher's Guide: Lesson 7 for Advanced Health Advocates

Activity: Letter to the Editor

Resource: Sample letters to the editor



Dear Healthy NewsWorks Editor,

Thank you for the article about bullying and eating healthy. I really liked the article about bullying because I used to be bullied and this article will help stop bullying. Also, I liked the article about eating healthy and eating less salt, because salt can make you thirsty and too much salt can be harmful to your body.

Thanks for keeping us informed,

J----- M-----

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Dear Healthy NewsWorks Editor,

Thank you for your awesome articles. I really love your suggestions about making communities safer. One way that we can make our community safer is by having an adult with us when we are going to places that are far away. You should also pay attention to your surroundings and try to avoid arguments. Walk with a group of friends. We can keep our community safer by putting up security cameras around our house so that there won't be any criminals. Another way I can keep my community safer and cleaner is by having 10 to 15 kids from the neighborhood clean up the trash.

Thanks for listening to my suggestions,

Y----- A----

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Dear Healthy NewsWorks Editor,

Thanks for such a great newspaper. I can't wait to be a reporter next year.

I like when students give their opinions about the city and keeping neighborhoods safe. Another good thing we can do is not littering and not spitting on the ground. I wish people wouldn't sell drugs or act violently. Cursing is a problem, too. I guess things will change one day. Maybe you could do an article about how bad it is for us to be around drugs and violence. It's not healthy for kids.

Sincerely,

T----- M-----

