Letter to the Editor—Advanced Health Advocates

NOTE: Teachers should decide whether to use the lesson for BHA (Beginning Health Advocates) or AHA (Advanced Health Advocates), depending on the students’ prior experiences with Healthy NewsWorks and students’ developmental/ability levels.

<table>
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<th>Objective(s)</th>
<th>Students will brainstorm ideas relating to one or more health-related topics, and then choose one and write Letters to the Editor of their school health newspaper.</th>
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| Essential Understandings | 1. Readers think and have strong opinions about health issues.  
2. Readers can turn their opinions into written responses that will make other people think.  
3. Readers can get their writing published in future newspapers. |
| Standards Addressed | W.5.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.  
W.5.1.A Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer’s purpose.  
W.5.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. |
| Key Vocabulary | editor - a person who is in charge of and decides the final content of a text, such as a newspaper or magazine.  
opinion – a belief, thought or feeling  
fact – a true piece of information  
journalist - a person who writes for newspapers, magazines, or news websites or prepares news to be broadcast.  
source (verb) - to locate information from a particular person or text.  
response - a verbal or written answer to a question or new information learned.  
salutation - a greeting |
| Materials Needed | 1. Anticipatory materials (see those for Heart Health ** sample below)  
2. School health newspapers, OR an article related to heart health and the environment.  
3. Blank chart paper identifying health issue and three columns labeled: Comments; Questions; Connections  
4. Handouts: Sample Letters to the Editor and checklist |
| Introduction: Anticipatory activity | • Pre-select one health issue that you think students will care about. This can be an issue which has been featured in an article in the school’s recent newspaper  
• DO an anticipatory activity based on this health issue.  
Heart Health ** Sample  
  o For instance, with heart health, distribute Move Your Way—60 A Day! handout. Set purpose for reviewing the handout: Which type of the three types of physical activity is your favorite? Why do we need all three types? How can you add more exercise to your day? Have students annotate as they read to answer these questions.  
  o Poll students on their favorite activities.  
  o Optional: Show students where and how to feel their pulse. Let students try some of the aerobic activities, and see how it increases their heart rate. |
| Letter-writing Lesson | 1. Distribute the school health newspaper or select reading(s) featuring one or more articles on heart health.
2. Ask students for comments, questions, or connections (CQC) to the issue raised by the article or story.
   a. They can write these on post-its and post them in the appropriate CQC category on the chart paper OR
   b. Teacher can note a few of students’ CQCs on board or chart paper
3. Explain that readers’ CQC’s can inspire Letters to the Editor. Once you know about these issues, you want to give your opinion and spread the word! That is what Letters to the Editor do.
4. Distribute handout: Sample Letters to the Editor
5. Generate list of features: Work with students to create a list of key features of the sample letters to the editor (Retain checklist and use it to guide list-making). Distribute checklist once students generate the list of features.
6. Model: Begin to draft a sample letter to the editor on a topic in the newspaper. Model each element of the checklist below.
7. Check understanding: Ask students to turn and talk with a peer. What topic could they write a letter to the editor about?
8. Students write independently. |
| Dig Deeper (Optional) | With the Move Your Way handout, ask students to compose a weekly aerobic schedule for a person their age. This can be included in their letter to the editor. |
| Check for Understanding | Have students read each other’s letters to the editor, using the checklist to make sure the letters are complete. |
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR – SAMPLES
(AHA STUDENTS)

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 an 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.

Here are two sample letters to the editor, written by Healthy NewsWorks student readers. As you read the letters, consider: Why do you think these letters were chosen? Identify key features in the letters.

Dear Editor,

I really did enjoy the "Taste Test" article. It made me want to go out and buy one of those apples. One of the apples that you mentioned, which was the Honeycrisp, sounded the most appealing. The way you described the apples made me actually imagine it in my mind.

The ways that you described how the apples tasted and how crunchy they are give an imagery of how good the apples really are. I do want to try new kinds of fruit and other healthy food items. I never knew that there are more than 100 different varieties of apples.

I hope you write another article about anything, because you did a really good job.

Sincerely,
Healthy NewsWorks reader

Dear Editor,

I really enjoyed reading your newspaper. My favorite article in this month's issue was "Reducing Stress." It was really interesting and it had a lot of different reasons for why you might be stressed.

I find myself getting stressed over the silliest things ever. One of my favorite parts of the article was when the editor said, "For instance, if you are anxious for a math test." I giggled at that part because I get really anxious when I take a math test or any test.

I also enjoyed how at the end of the article we got to circle ways that could help us relieve stress. I thought that was a really good idea because that could help someone who tends to get really stressed. Overall, I really enjoyed reading your newspaper. I can't wait for your next issue of the Healthy newspaper. Keep up the good work.

Yours truly,
Healthy NewsWorks reader
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR—CHECKLIST

( AHA STUDENTS )

Pick an article or topic that you care about in your school newspaper, or pick another health-related that you have been learning about. Write a letter to the editor about it. The letter should reflect your opinion and be backed up with at least one fact. A strong Letter to the Editor is at least 4 to 6 sentences. Use the following checklist to help you write a strong letter.

☐ START your letter with the appropriate salutation: Dear Editor,

☐ STATE YOUR OPINION on the topic you want to discuss.

☐ SUMMARIZE the topic.

☐ SUPPORT your opinion and feelings with at least one fact.

☐ SOURCE the facts you use. Use words like “according to,” “mentioned,” or "said" to tell the reader where the information comes from.

☐ USE quotation marks if you copy EXACTLY what someone else wrote or said.

☐ KEEP YOUR LETTER BRIEF. Letters to the editor should be 4 to 6 sentences long.

☐ MAKE SURE YOUR MEANING IS CLEAR!

☐ SIGN your name and grade at the bottom of your letter.
You know how sometimes it's really, really hard to sit still?

When you're young, your body wants to move — naturally! (Adults, not so much.)

So get active every day — and feel great!

Moving more can give you a boost — in lots of ways.

**Such energy!**

**So self-confident!**

**Very relaxed!**

**Amazing grades!**

* It's true — physical activity can actually help you do better in school.

**How much activity do I need?**

If you're between age 6 and 17, you need at least

**60 minutes**

of activity each and every day.
So, what kind of activity do I need?

Get a mix of activity. Do things that:

- Strengthen your bones
- Build your muscles
- Make your heart beat faster

Um, strengthen my bones?

Sounds weird, right? But bones need pressure to get stronger. So hit the ground running! Jump, sprint, or do a cartwheel.

60 minutes all at once? I’m pretty busy.

Not a problem! Split up your 60 minutes over the day however you want — it all adds up!

- **Before school**
  - Walk to school or the bus stop!
  - Dance around the living room!

- **At recess**
  - Play tag with your friends!
  - Swing on the monkey bars!

- **After school**
  - Walk your dog!
  - Go to basketball practice!

So get moving! Do activities you enjoy!

Be a good role model for your parents. Even better, go home and get them moving, too.

Walk. Run. Dance. Play. What’s **your** move?