



## WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Letters to the Editor (LTEs) page is one of the most widely read pages in a newspaper, so it's a good way to get your message out to a broad audience. The great thing about LTEs is that they are opinion pieces – you can write what you think about an issue. In fact, LTEs that get published are often snappy or witty – so be creative and use colorful language without sounding extreme or unreliable. Other factors for making your LTE publishable are: making it timely (relate it to a recent article or event), make it personal (write it about yourself from a personal perspective), make it clear (make only one simple point), make it short (keep it under 100-150 words).

In order to get your LTE published, find out where to send it and include your contact info. You can usually find this information on the opinion page of the paper. After you submit it, call the Opinion Editor (or whoever at the outlet handles the LTEs). Ask them if they received your letter, if it meets their requirements, and when they are planning to print it. This phone call could double your chances of getting the LTE printed.

A sample letter to the editor might look like:

Dear Editor,

This December 3<sup>rd</sup> marks 25 years of corporate irresponsibility. Since the Bhopal disaster occurred in 1984, more than 23,000 people have died and more than 100,000 people have been left chronically ill either because they were directly exposed to the toxic gas or because they continue to live with contaminated groundwater. Dow Chemical Company, who took ownership of Union Carbide, refuses to take responsibility.

This issue is crucial because it has huge implications for the chemical industry, globalization, and human rights. As a local [student/mother/etc] activist, I am organizing with [people can insert own short thing here]. We demand that Dow take responsibility for the disaster and show some congruence with their supposed values. After 25 long year of injustice, it is time that Dow finally owns up to their catastrophic mistake and shows some heart.

Sincerely,  
Name

There are additional sample LTEs in the Media Resources section of the toolkit.

Good Luck!