

How to Write Letters to the Editor of a Newspaper

Writing a Letter to the Editor of your local newspaper is a clear and simple way to share your opinion, respond to an article, or influence public discussion. It is often easier to have a letter published than to arrange an interview or write and send a media release.

Letters to the Editor allow you to voice your opinions, advocate for a cause, or highlight community issues to a broad audience – including local readers and policymakers such as councillors and Members of Parliament.

These letters are most effective when submitted within 1–3 days of the article or event you are commenting on. Newspaper editors strongly favour prompt responses.

Choosing a Topic

- Respond to a specific article or editorial for higher chances of publication.
- Address local issues or community events to increase relevance.
- Correct misinformation, praise a decision, or raise awareness about under-reported topics such as local healthcare for Parkinson's.

Structure of the Letter

1. **Salutation:** Begin with “Dear Editor” or the editor’s name.
2. **Opening Paragraph:** Reference the article or issue and clearly state your main point or stance.
3. **Body:** Present supporting evidence, personal anecdotes, or data in one or two concise paragraphs. Use logical flow and transitions like ‘furthermore’, ‘as a result’, or ‘for example’.
4. **Conclusion:** End with a **call to action** or recommendation for readers. State briefly and clearly what you are suggesting should change or happen.
5. **Closing:** Include your name, contact information, and any relevant affiliations e.g. your leadership or membership of the local Parkinson’s Support Group.

Style and Length

- Keep the letter short and focused, typically 150–250 words, as most publications have strict word limits
- Focus on one main idea to maintain clarity and impact.
- Use a professional yet engaging tone, combining facts with personal experience when appropriate.
- Stick to one main subject and avoid complex arguments or explanations.