

Letter to the Editor

Writing a letter to the editor can be a useful way to share your knowledge about nursing and healthcare with the local community and policymakers. State legislators and federal lawmakers regularly read the opinion pages of newspapers for cues about issues of concern in their community.

Letter to the Editor Strategies

1. **Check the newspaper's print guidelines** about submitting a letter to the editor.
2. **Be clear.** In your letter, make one main point.
3. **Keep it brief and to the point.** Letters should be concise—typically newspapers have a word limit of about 250 words (about three paragraphs).
4. **Make your letter timely.** Tie the subject of your letter to a recent article, editorial or column. Use the article as a hook for communicating your message.
5. **Explain why the issue is important.** Remember, the general public probably doesn't share your background. Explain the issue and its importance simply. Use language that most people will understand.
6. **Give evidence for any praise or criticism.** Be clear in showing why this action will have good or bad results.
7. **State your opinion about what should be done.** You may write a letter to support or criticize a certain action or policy, but you may also have suggestions about what could be done to improve the situation.
8. **Be accurate.** Letters that are not accurate are not printed.
9. **Localize your letter.** Lend credibility to your letter by noting your professional experiences in the community that prompted you to write on this topic.
10. **Be mindful of the tone of your letter.** The tone of your letter can either support or overpower the substance of the message you are trying to communicate.
11. **Avoid personal attacks.** Show respect for the opposite opinion.
12. **Include your name, title, address, and daytime phone number.** Editors often confirm that the letter was actually written by the person whose name is on it. Providing your professional title and affiliation lends credibility to your letter.