

How do you write a letter to the editor?

(Although we are using the word 'letter' here, these days you should write an email, not an actual letter, but it should still follow the format outlined below)

Open the letter with a simple salutation.

If you don't know the editor's name use "To the Editor". If you have the editor's name, however, you should use it.

Grab the reader's attention.

Your opening sentence is very important. It should tell readers what you're writing about, and make them want to read more.

Explain what the letter is about at the start.

Throughout your letter, remember the rule:

- Be quick,
- Be concise, and then
- Be quiet.

State your key point at the beginning.

Explain why the issue is important.

Explain the issue and its importance simply.

Give evidence for any praise or criticism.

State your opinion about what should be done.

If you have suggestions about what could be done to improve the situation be sure to add these. Be specific. The more reasons you can give to back up your suggestions, the better.

Keep it brief (= short)

Under 300 words is the norm. For students practising writing such a letter in English it should be approximately 100-150 words.

Sign the letter.

Write your full name and address, phone number, and e-mail address.

Proofread your letter (= check your letter for mistakes)

Your letter will not be printed if it is full of grammatical errors and bad spelling.