

Tips for Writing Letters to the Editor

by Angie Many

1. Know the word count allowed by the paper. If there are too many words in your letter, you give the paper the right and opportunity to delete some of your words. They may delete differently than you would. Use your Word Processing program's 'word count' function.

Keep letters concise. Write what you want, and then go back and cut unnecessary words. (You'll be surprised at how many there are!) Most newspapers allow 250-300 words. After that, you run a chance of losing the reader, anyway. Look for ways to change wording to use fewer words, and don't forget contractions. (I've' is one word. 'I have' is 2 words).

I write a letter with the 300-word limit, then cut it for different publications. When you do that, you'll find different ways of wording to eliminate words.

Your letter does not have to be long, but the more people writing, the more it will help your cause. It can be as short as "I'm voting Republican because I can't afford the cost of gas and food anymore." If a second letter says; "I'm voting Republican because we cannot afford to spend billions supporting millions of illegal aliens," two very valid points have been made in only two sentences.

2. If you can't cover all the points you want to make in one letter, find a like-minded friend and help him/her to compose a letter. Whether you get credit for the thoughts should not be as important as whether the thoughts get publicized.

3. Send your letter to every applicable publication. Get the most mileage possible out of it

4. In most instances, it is best to write in a cool, calm manner. People are more likely to agree with-and papers more likely to print-rational letters than angry, vitriolic letters. If you are responding to another letter, it's often better to not even name the original writer. Just say: "A recent letter stated..." or "A 6/30/24 letter stated..." Do not make personal attacks against another letter writer. If you're passionate, it's fine to show that, but not in an angry manner.

5. Make your letter neat. Check spelling and punctuation. (Remember that your computer's spellchecker is not always accurate. If you type 'threw' and meant 'through', the computer will not catch it because 'threw' is a word.) Write clearly and concisely. Short sentences are much better than long, rambling sentences. Don't give anyone an opportunity to misinterpret your meaning.

6. Never write as a fact anything that you cannot substantiate. If you are found to be exaggerating or misinforming, your credibility is destroyed, and so is that of your cause. If you can't substantiate something, use a lead-in such as "In my opinion..."

7. Always include your name, address, email, and phone number with letters. Sometimes the newspaper will want to confirm that you actually sent the letter.

8. Don't give up. If your letters are not published, find out why. Make an appointment with the editor if possible. Take copies of your letters with you so that they are easily accessible. Ask--very nicely--why they are not being published and what you change, other than your opinion, to make them more acceptable to the publication. If the problem is simply your viewpoint, remind the editor that a newspaper should provide an overview of community opinion, not just concurring opinions. If you can't go in person, call or email (using the addresses below).

9. Don't be afraid to submit a letter. It's time that we all stand up for what we believe in. If we don't, we may lose our country. It is unbelievable how many people did not realize the extent of Biden's dementia. They believed that the videos showing him freezing up, wandering off, etc. were Republican 'deep fakes'. If they watch and listen to mainstream media, they are being totally misled about what is going on in this country. It's up to us to tell them the truth.

Just Do It!

I write a lot of letters to the editor. But sometimes I feel like I'm the lone voice in the wilderness. Letters to the editor are much more effective if there is more than one to drive a point home. Please, write letters to the editor. If anyone needs a little 'wordsmithing' or proofreading, I will be glad to help. You can send your draft letter to me at angiegm2004@aol.com
-Angie Many

Newspapers and their word limits

Note: since the Delta and Montrose papers have the same owners and editors, you can send your letter to them in the same email. Otherwise, make the submission to each paper its own email.

Delta County Independent
editor@deltacountyindependent.com
300 Words

Montrose Press
editor@montrosepress.com
300 Words

Grand Junction Sentinel
letters@gjsentinel.com

Denver Post
OpenForum@denverpost.com
300 Words

I used to send letters to USA Today, but I can't seem to get into their site anymore without a subscription or without changing my security. So I don't. But if you can, that would be great. Their limit is 200 words.

If you have ties to other towns, submit your letter to their newspapers, also. And try other towns. A few newspapers will accept submissions even if you don't live in the area. If you travel through an area and see something to respond to in their newspaper, they are more likely to print your opinion. You can find how to submit letters on each newspaper's web site.