

Texas Impact's Foolproof Guide to Writing a Letter-to-the-Editor

1. Newspapers and online news services all have specific policies for letters. Some have special email addresses for letters, and most have some kind of word count—for big papers, it's usually 150 words. You can get all the information you need on the paper's website.
2. Editors often call submitters to make sure they are “real people” so be prepared to answer a call and confirm the letter is from you. This is especially likely if it's your first submission to this paper.
3. Highlighting the first sentence of each paragraph helps you keep your thoughts organized. You should be able to read just the highlighted sentences and get the gist of what the letter is about—if you can't, consider rearranging your sentences to make the message clear.

THIS IS A MODEL LETTER ABOUT PUBLIC EDUCATION. IT HAS 105 WORDS, NOT INCLUDING THE SALUTATION AND SIGNATURE.

“Dear Editor,

I am very concerned about the impact budget shortfalls are having on our school district. As reported in your article [PUT ARTICLE NAME AND DATE HERE], our school district is [MAKING CUTS, CLOSING SCHOOLS, OR OTHER ACTIONS] due to the Texas Legislature withholding funding to public schools.

I'm concerned about this issue for my own family and the wider community. As a parent of a public-school student, I am concerned about how these cuts may diminish my child's educational opportunities. As a taxpayer, I am worried it will hurt our economy and drive employers away from our town.

[THERE'S ROOM FOR ABOUT FIFTY MORE WORDS—THESE COULD INCLUDE DATA POINTS; A STORY ABOUT THE HARM A SPECIFIC CUT WILL DO, LIKE CUTTING ART OR MUSIC; OR PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE. NOTE: BULLET POINTS ARE NOT APPROPRIATE FOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.]

Rep. [NAME] and Sen. [NAME] should do what's right for Texas and fund our public schools.

Sincerely,
Your Name
Your Contact Info”