



LETTER TO THE EDITOR TIPS



Here are some tips for sending an effective letter to the editor of a local or regional newspaper.

The letters to the editor section is an excellent opportunity to reach a wide audience, allowing you to provide information about an issue and urge readers to take action.

1. Letter Guidelines

Letters should be typed. Publications will accept handwritten letters, but they aren't preferred. Publications prefer letters to be emailed. They are easier to handle and eliminate the need to retype them into the publication's editing system. Follow the rules for the newspaper you are sending the letter to. Letter to the editor rules and guidelines usually can be found on the newspaper's opinion page and on the publication's website. Many newspapers also have forms on their websites to submit letters.

2. Letter Content

Keep your letter short and to the point. Again, check the newspaper's rules, because most have word limits on letters to the editor. Be sure to sign your letter and provide your address and daytime phone number. Most newspapers require that so they can contact you to confirm that you wrote it.

3. Identify Connections

At the top of your letter, clearly state the importance of the Census to your community. Identify yourself and explain your expertise or connection to the subject.

4. Include Relevant Information

Follow by driving home points that demonstrate why the Census is important to your readers' lives. Include relevant local information. You can check the fact sheets in this toolkit for ideas to write about. Choose those facts and talking points that are most relevant to the readers. Be sure to refer readers to our website, [Census.Ohio.Gov](https://www.census.gov/ohio).

5. End of the Letter

End with a call to action: ***Be Counted Ohio: It's easy, safe and important.***



Letter to the editor template

While most newspapers have forms on their website where you fill out information, a template is useful when you are sending the actual letter to an outlet or attaching it in an email. Below is an example guideline.

Date

- Name of media outlet or publication
- Attention: Dr./Ms./Mr. editor's first name and last name* or Editor
- Address 1
- Address 2
- City, State/Province, Zip/Postal Code

Dear (Dr./Ms./Mr. last name of editor) or Editor:

Introduction

Introduce yourself and explain your reason for sending the letter. The goal is to state why you want them to write or cover a Census story.

Case

State your Census story here. Include any facts, references and research you have available. This establishes credibility. Follow the letter to the editor tips we provided to include the relevant information in a professional way.

Conclusion

End with a lasting, positive statement. This should reiterate the most important aspect of your case and include the Census call to action.

Sincerely,

- Writer's signature
- Name of writer
- Writer's title
- Writer's organization's name and address
- Daytime contact information

**Find the editor's name on the masthead of the publication*