

ANG 5554 LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Purpose

The purpose of a letter to the editor is to express your individual views about a current issue. Letters to the editor are published in nearly all magazines and newspapers. Anybody can write a letter to the editor, but generally, the composers of letters to the editor are those individuals who are passionate about particular and topical issues.

Tone

The tone can be informal or formal, depending upon the publication in which it is to be published. This is because the audience is the readership of any given publication. A letter published in *The Economist* is likely to have an extremely formal tone, whereas letters to the editor published in *The Montreal Gazette* have various tones, dependent on the audience that the composer of the letter is targeting.

Possible publications are: *The Gazette*, *Toronto Star*, *The National Post*, *The New York Times*, *Boston Globe*...

Features of a letter to the editor

- A letter to the editor is an expression of opinion on a topical subject (usually one that has been recently published in the publication to which it has been written).
- A letter to the editor is a persuasive text, with the aim to express views to a wider public.
- Effective letters to the editor rely on fact as well as opinion.
- Letters to the editor are responses to articles from the particular publication, or to other letters to the editor.
- Always start with 'To the Editor,' and then leave a line.
- Sign off briefly, with either your initials or your first initial and last name and suburb.

Hints for writing effective letters to the editor

- The secret to writing good letters to the editor is to combine persuasive language with well researched evidence.
- While some letters to the editor are composed in an informal tone, keeping a formal tone will help your letters to carry an air of authority.
- If you compose a letter to the editor on a subject that you know very well, be careful to not use jargon and technical terms unless you are absolutely sure that your intended audience will understand them.
- The use of the first person is standard for letters to the editor.
- Persuasive techniques are necessary for this task. You are trying to persuade people to see your point of view. This means that you can use a tone that is outraged, happy or interested. It also
- means that a number of persuasive techniques can be employed.

Structure and format

Introduction

- Briefly outline the issue that you are writing about
- Mention the author and title of the article you are responding to (it may be a neutral, factual article or one with an opinion), and summarize the journalist's opinion (if it is not a neutral news article)
- Express your agreement or disagreement with the journalist's opinion

Body

- Explain your opinion about the event or subject in more detail.
- Give evidence for your opinion (minimum of three points).

Conclusion

- Restate opinion.

****SOMEWHERE IN THE TEXT, STATE WHY THIS SUBJECT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU OR TO SOCIETY IN GENERAL.**

Write a letter to the editor with a minimum of 150 words. Try to limit the writing time to 35 minutes.