

How to write a letter to the editor

Letters to the editor are among the most highly read items in the newspaper. Elected officials pay very close attention to them and treat them as a gauge of community interests. When writing a letter to the editor, do not forget to send it to your neighborhood and community newspapers. Their readership may not be in the tens of thousands, but their audience will read an entire edition. To find out submission information for your local paper, visit www.mnnews.com

Tips for writing a letter

- All letters should be typed or neatly written. They should be signed and include your home address and your home and work phone numbers. The editors may want to contact you prior to printing your letter.
- Letters should be between 150 and 200 words. If your letter is longer than that, or may be significantly cut or not printed at all. Be sure to have a clear message.
- Timing is important. If the issue you write about is in the news, your letter is more likely to be printed.
- Keep your tone reasonable and lively. Personal attacks or emotional or bland messages are less likely to be printed.
- Verify the facts and quotes you cite in your letter. Your credibility is diminished if you cannot get the facts straight in a public forum.

Sample Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

The University of Minnesota affects the lives of all Minnesotans in a profound way. A strong U of M can provide a well-educated workforce and develop leading medical research and new technologies that would in turn attract new business and strengthen the state's economy.

(Briefly mention what the U means to you)

The future of Minnesota depends on a strong U. Let's send a message to our state leaders that we recognize how valuable the University is to our community, state, and country. Contact your legislators and urge them to reverse the trend and support the U.