

ENHANCE GETTING YOUR LETTERS PUBLISHED (LTE)

1. Sign 'em. Include postal address and phone number. No pseudonyms, please.
2. Keep 'em short. Less than 200 words best. Check with your local paper to see what the limit is.
3. Be timely. Commenting on month-old news rarely cuts it.
4. Focus on the **one thing** you want to say. We edit for length, clarity and punctuation. We want everyone to shine!
5. School yourself by reading the Letters page to see what gets picked. Being funny, wise, pointed, emotive, civil, polite and accurate on diverse subjects is good. Using name-calling, list-making, or being dull, lengthy, incendiary and inaccurate is bad.
6. We publish a cross section of the mail we receive, including those that disagree with our views; our bias is only toward short letters.
7. Feel free to include extra information to buttress your arguments - but put it outside of the text of your letter.
8. You may write as often as you like, but due to the volume of mail we receive, we try not to feature the same writer over and over again. Be your own first editor.
9. Form letters are routed immediately to the wastebasket. Letters must represent your own, original words and thoughts.
10. Make it interesting, not redundant of what other letter writers have already written. Remember, we get hundreds of letters each week. As a result, most cannot be published. If you don't succeed the first time, try again and again!

ENHANCE GETTING YOUR VIEWPOINTS COLUMNS PUBLISHED (OP-ED)

So, you want to sit down and write that op-ed column you've had on your mind the last couple of weeks, but you're not sure how to get started. Here are 10 tips for composing a column that's so persuasive it will convince even your mother-in-law:

1. Select a topic you feel passionate about. If you're not excited by it, you'll never get your readers interested in it.
2. Try to pick something happening in the news. If people already are talking about your topic, they'll be more likely to read your column.
3. Have an opinion. That's what makes an op-ed column different from a news story or a feature article: It expresses the view of the writer.
4. Express your opinion in the first paragraph or two. Let your readers know where you're headed; don't leave them guessing.
5. Provide concrete support for the points you make. Statistics and expert testimony are two ways to convince others that you're being reasonable.
6. But don't get carried away with numbers or quotes. While they can help make your argument, they're only the backup singers; you're the star.
7. Draw on your own personal experience, too, if it's relevant and helps to illustrate your viewpoint. That can be very persuasive.
8. Avoid sounding too preachy. You'll be more likely to convince others if you don't lecture them; just talk to them.
9. Give your writing some personality. People should have some sense of you after reading your words.
10. Have a good last line. It's your final chance to drive home your point. End with a bang, not a whimper. Got that? OK, now get started. Collect your thoughts before you

Pointers on getting your LTE published from Dallas Morning News

begin writing. Our op-ed columns run about 600 words, though we also like shorter pieces. After you're done, look over your writing to be sure it's as sharp and crisp as you can make it. Good writers are good editors, too. When you're satisfied with your work, send it to us.