

## Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor

**Respond the same day or not at all.** When you read an article that causes an emotional response or that has a factual error you should write your response immediately.

**Identify yourself and why you are qualified to comment.** "I was in Chile when General Pinochet took power...." or "I have just returned from a mission to the Ivory Coast...." are good opening sentences. Be sure to include your title and contact number at the end of the letter.

**Keep it short.** Editors cut from the bottom, so put your main point up top. Letters should have short sentences and ideally, be no more than a couple of paragraphs long. Short letters show confidence in your position -- and long letters do the opposite.

**Style.** In terms of style, the best letters are punchy -- and if possible, brief, wry and sharp. Readers hate nit-pickers. Moreover, a point made with humor is one that people will remember.

**Know the style and format of where you are sending your letter.** In order to increase the chances of it getting published, a letter should be tailored to the paper to which you are sending it.