



**Stick to a 200 Word Limit** – Most letters should be about 150 words, give or take about 25 words. If it is shorter than that don't worry, but it should be under 200 words or it may be too long to be published in some papers.

**Choose a Topic** — Letters are much more effective when they focus on a single issue rather than a laundry list of ideas or concerns.

**Keep It Simple** – Avoid obscure words and try to break down complex ideas to simple ones. If your letter is difficult to understand, it is less likely to be published.

**Use Specifics** – Don't be afraid to quote specific numbers and key facts about your topic.

**Use Local Stories** – Using personal or local stories can make your writing more interesting than simple repetition of numbers and studies.

**Check for Mistakes** – Before submitting, proofread your letter. More than just embarrassing, your letter may not be printed if it is full of typos and other mistakes

**Think About the Context** - The letter is coming from a constituent and voter who has been affected by the issue that you are writing about. Also, avoid using phrases like “last week” or “yesterday” because it can take a long time to get a letter submitted and published.

### **General Framework**

**Context** - Introduce the problem. If a letter starts attacking a Republican right away, it will lose credibility. Describe how a policy or issue area impacts you and your neighbors.

**Contrast** - Why is this a certain Republican Congressman's fault? Or if it's a positive letter, what has your local Democratic Congressperson done to address the problem?

**Call for Action** - The letter should urge voters to consider your argument when they vote. A good way to do this is by briefly contrasting the good things Democrats are doing with Republicans' agenda.