

How to Write a Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor are an effective way to correct misinformation and misperceptions on key issues in popular news sources. To write a successful Letter to the Editor, you have to respond quickly to a specific article in that paper.

Here are a few tips to consider when writing a letter to the editor (LTE):

- Look for news or opinion pieces that are timely and topical. You will want to send a LTE within 48 hours of the publication of that piece.
- Good pieces to respond to are ones where the author makes a factual error, omits important information, or overlooks a policy solution. Your letter should correct the misperception created by the article. Prior to writing the piece, look up the requirements for LTEs for that source—each website will have different requirements for word count but typically LTEs are 200 words or less.
- Here is a format you can use when submitting a LTE via email:

Hello Mr/Ms. (Insert last name of editor),

Below is a letter to the editor in response to the editorial titled “(Insert the name of the article to which you are responding)” for your consideration.

Writer: (Your name)

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Thank you,

(YOUR NAME)

- Wait up to a week for a response to the LTE submission. If no response, follow up with the publication.

Example:

Saturday, February 27, 2010

In her Feb. 21 Outlook column, “[For women in America, equality is still an illusion](#),” Jessica Valenti claimed that the Independent Women’s Forum exists to tell women that equality is actually bad for them” and criticized me for arguing that the wage gap largely reflects women’s trade-offs for taking jobs with more flexibility and personal fulfillment.

Ms. Valenti may pretend that sexism is the reason women earn 76 cents on the dollar for doing the same job as a man, but the data say otherwise. Even the liberal [American Association of University Women](#) concluded that three-quarters of the wage gap is due to factors such as education, occupational choice and hours worked.

Yes, women face unique challenges in society. But it’s hardly empowering to wallow in the false notion that intractable discrimination condemns us to second-class earnings. The fact is, full-time working men spend more time in the office, take less time away from the workforce and accept more risk ([men suffer 93 percent of workplace deaths](#)) than full-time working women. These are the primary reasons for the gap.

Instead of encouraging victimhood and thus discouraging those who want to maximize earnings, feminists such as Ms. Valenti would better serve women by realistically describing workplace trade-offs.

Carrie Lukas, Washington

