



Task Title: Write a Letter to the Editor

OALCF Cover Sheet – Practitioner Copy

Learner Name: _____

Date Started: _____

Date Completed: _____

Successful Completion: Yes ☐ No ☐

Goal Path: Employment ☐ Apprenticeship ☐

Secondary School ☐ Post Secondary ☐ Independence ☐

Task Description: The learner will write a letter to the editor of a newspaper.

Main Competency/Task Group/Level Indicator:

- Find and Use Information/Read continuous text/A1.2
- Communicate Ideas and Information/Write continuous text/B2.3

Materials Required:

- Pen/pencil and paper and/or digital device
- Dictionary or digital device with dictionary application

Learner Information

Anyone may decide to write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper to raise awareness about important issues.

Read "How to Write a Letter to the Editor" and "Suggested Topics".

How to Write a Letter to the Editor

Many people feel strongly about an issue, and want to let others know what they think. They may decide to share their opinion by writing a letter to the editor of the local paper. Letters to the editor can be an effective way to get the word out.

Letters to the editor are generally found in the first section of the newspaper, or towards the beginning of a magazine, or in the editorial page. They can take a position for or against an issue, or simply inform, or both. They can convince readers by using emotions, or facts, or emotions and facts combined. Letters to the editor are usually short.

A letter to the editor can generate plenty of community discussion. It can also keep an issue going by preventing it from disappearing from the public eye.

Letters to the editor are a great way to increase awareness or advocate for a cause. The larger the newspaper or magazine, the more competition there is for letters-to-the-editor space. This means a letter will need to stand out in order to get printed.

In your letter, you first need to clearly explain why the issue is important. If you are motivated enough to write a letter to a newspaper or magazine, the importance of your topic may seem clear to you. Remember, though, that the general public probably doesn't share your background or the interest. Explain the issue and its importance. Use plain language that most people will understand.

Second, state your opinion about what should be done. Instead of writing a letter just to "vent," you should try to explain why you support or criticize a certain action or policy. You should also have suggestions about what could be done to improve the situation. If so, be sure to add these as well. Be specific about your suggestions and give reasons for them where possible.

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Third, keep it brief. Generally, shorter letters have a better chance of being published.

[Adapted from: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/participation/promoting-interest/press-releases/main>]

Suggested Topics

- There is a significant amount of garbage left at public parks after events and festivals
- There is traffic congestion in your neighbourhood at the end of the school day
- The public library hours are Monday-Friday from 10am-4pm with no evening or weekend availability
- The local town monument is in disrepair and is not being maintained
- The river that runs through town is polluted and not safe for swimming
- There are many off-leash dogs on local trails, despite a by-law requiring leashes
- The town's summer day camp program requires parents to wait in line at 9am on a Monday to sign up their children

Work Sheet

Task 1: Select a topic for your letter to the editor. Choose from the list of Suggested Topics or a topic of your choice. Write your topic here.

Answer:

Task 2: Draft a letter to the editor in eight (8) to ten (10) sentences. Describe the issue and explain why it is important. Explain your position or perspective on this issue. Offer at least two (2) possible solutions or actions.

Answer:

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Task 3: Using a print or online dictionary, check your draft for spelling errors.

Answer: No written response required here.

Task completed: Yes: ☐

Task 4: Write the final copy of your letter to the editor below or on a computer using a word processing program.

Answer:

Answers

Answers will vary. The learner's letter should be assessed for

- clarity: what is the issue and why is it important?
- potential solutions: what could be done to improve this situation or what could be suggested as a potential action?
- concise language, brevity
- spelling

Performance Descriptors

Levels	Performance Descriptors	Needs Work	Completes task with support from practitioner	Completes task independently
A1.2	obtains information from detailed reading			
B2.3	writes texts to present information, summarize, express opinions, present arguments, convey ideas or persuade			
	manages unfamiliar elements (e.g. vocabulary, context, topic) to complete tasks			
	selects and uses vocabulary, tone and structure appropriate to the task			
	organizes and sequences writing to communicate effectively			
	uses a variety of vocabulary, structures and approaches to convey main ideas with supporting details			

This task: Was successfully completed ☐ Needs to be tried again ☐

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Learner Comments:

Instructor (print):

Learner (print):