

## Indivisible Santa Barbara: QUICK Guide to Writing Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor (LTEs for short) are surprisingly effective when it comes to shaping public opinion. You can practically guarantee that any local LTE mentioning an elected official will be on that official's desk within a day. Also, newspaper editors see your letter, and elected officials care what those editors think.

A good LTE is a lot like a good call or email to an elected official:

- It focuses on one topic only.
- It is clear and concise.
- It is personal. You don't need to sound like an expert. Instead, make the letter personal—if you can, talk about YOUR experience and why it's relevant to the topic of your letter.
- If you're writing to a local paper, describe your issue as a local one, even if the issue is of national or international importance.

Every newspaper has its own limit on how long an LTE can be: typically, no more than 150-200 words. Obey those limits.

If your letter doesn't get printed, that's ok! Most LTEs get turned down, but yours may have helped another LTE on the same topic to get printed. Ultimately, LTE writing is a long game, so keep trying. And if your letter DOES get printed, post it on social media, tag your local elected officials and share it with us!

Here's a sample of a letter you might write, about Ukraine. Note that the letter is personal, and has a local slant.

*I write to support our local Ukrainian community, who have urged us to stand with Ukraine as it bravely holds off Russian invading forces.*

*During my lifetime, the United States has vowed that it would defend democracy in any foreign conflict. So I am sickened to see how the Trump Administration now supports Russian dictatorship and Vladimir Putin as they attempt to force Ukraine to concede territory as part of a phony "peace deal." Any peace with Russia will last only as long as it takes Putin to ready a subsequent attack.*

*I urge our members of Congress—Representative Carbajal, Senator Padilla and Senator Schiff—to support our local Ukrainian community, assert the authority provided Congress under the constitution, and take the necessary steps to restore U.S. support for Ukraine. And I express my gratitude for our local Ukrainian community, for their embodiment of what is best in America.*

Finally, here are some places where you might submit your LTEs:

Santa Barbara Independent: use their form at <https://www.independent.com/submit-a-letter/>.

**Word count:** 50-250 words

**Include in your letter:** Your name, address, and telephone number. (Only your name and city will be printed.)

Noozhawk: use their form at <https://www.noozhawk.com/contribute/submit-a-letter-to-the-editor/>.

**Word count:** up to 200 words (letters that are 150 words or less are given priority)

**Include in your letter:** Your name and a brief description of yourself

edhat:

They do not publish traditional LTEs, but you can send them an op-ed of between 500 to 1000 words in length. This is THE place if you have something to say that's going to take more than 200 words! Your edhat piece should include your name. Paste your op-ed into an email and send it to [ed@edhat.com](mailto:ed@edhat.com).

LA Times: why not? Use their form at <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/submit-letter-to-the-editor>. Make sure you complete all the information required by the form.

**Word count:** typically, up to 150 words

FINAL NOTE: Indivisible National has a terrific guide to how to write LTEs:

<https://indivisible.org/resource-library/how-write-letters-editor-really-get-attention>.