

Lesson 7 The Writing Process: Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor are published in newspapers and magazines. They are written to the editor (the person in charge) to give an opinion about a topic that is important to readers. A letter to the editor tells how the writer feels about a topic. It gives an opinion and reasons to support it.

You will write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper that gives your opinion about a topic that is important to you. First, review the steps of the writing process.

Prewrite: Choose a topic. Collect ideas. Make lists or charts. Organize ideas.

Draft: Write ideas down on paper in sentences.

Revise: Fix mistakes in draft. Add details. Change things around to make the writing better. Rewrite the sentences.

Proofread: Check for final mistakes in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

Publish: Make a final, error-free copy. Share with readers.

Prewrite

What topics in your community do people have strong feelings about? List them below. They could be about school rules, school lunches, things for kids to do in your town, recycling, litter, bike paths, or animal safety. Draw a star beside the topic you like best.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Lesson 7 The Writing Process: Letter to the Editor**Revise**

Answer the questions below about the draft you wrote on page 115. Ask a friend or an adult to read your draft and answer the questions, too. If the answer is “no” to any of the questions, those are the areas that might need improvement. Feel free to make marks on your draft so you know what needs more work.

- Did you state your opinion clearly?
- Did you make your first sentence especially interesting so that readers will want to continue reading?
- Did you support your opinion with reasons? Did you choose reasons that will appeal to your audience?
- Did you include facts that support your opinion?
- Did you use linking words to join opinions and reasons?
- Did you put your reasons in order from least important to most important?
- Did you give your letter a good ending or conclusion?
- Did you write complete sentences and paragraphs?
- Did you use sentences of different lengths and styles?

Read your draft again and underline the sentences that give opinions. Is each opinion supported with at least one good reason? Are there any places that need more facts so that your letter is convincing? Here is how one writer made his letter to the editor stronger and more convincing.

We do not have enough parks in Riverton. Riverton should build a new park.
We have only two parks, while nearby Middletown has five.

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Proofread

It is best to proofread for just one kind of error at a time. Read through your letter once for capital letters. Read it again for end punctuation. Then, read it again for spelling. Here is a checklist to help you as you proofread your revised letter to the editor.

- ___ Each sentence begins with a capital letter.
- ___ Each sentence ends with the correct punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point).
- ___ Each sentence states a complete thought.
- ___ All words are spelled correctly. (If you're not sure, check a dictionary.)

When proofreaders work, they use certain symbols. Using these symbols makes their job easier. They will make your job easier, too.

- **T** three little lines under a letter mean that something should be capitalized. Write the capitalized letter above it.
- If there is a period missing, do this **o**.
- Can you insert a question mark like this **?**
- Don't forget your exclamation points **!**
- Fix misspelled words like **this** ~~his~~.
- Make this mark **(¶)** to show where to indent a paragraph.

Use these symbols as you proofread your letter to the editor. Remember to read your writing out loud. Sometimes, it is easier to catch mistakes when reading out loud. Ask a friend or adult to proofread your writing, too.

