

# LTE (Letter to the Editor) & Op-Ed (Opinion Piece) Primer



LTE's and Op-Eds (also known as Guest Viewpoints) are tools we use to raise awareness and educate the public about pressing issues. These publications offer space for ongoing community, and with their wide readership can offer key ways to engage the public and encourage people to take action.

## **Letter writing basics: Who, What, Where, When, Why & How**

**Who** – Identify who you are and why your perspective matters. You can also identify who else is affected by the issue.

**What** – Describe the issue – research credible sources. Make sure your message is clear and direct.

**Where** – Identify the local connection—why does this matter here?

**When** – Describe the relevance of the issue to today, and perhaps impacts for the future. You can also mention past instances when the issue was ignored or dealt with differently.

**Why** – Why is this issue important? This is where you get to really dig into the issue. Make readers feel it by illustrating your issue, bringing in tangible examples, and connecting to emotions.

**How** – How should readers take action and how should the solution be crafted?—ie join a march, comment to an agency, get more info, etc.

## **Writing Tips:**

- Respond to other pieces: When you see an issue in the news, in editorials, or in other op-eds and LTE's, pick up your pen or go to your keyboard and write a response, preferably as soon as you see it. Refer to any item that you are responding to by date published
- Include a hook—be intentional about grabbing the reader's attention
- Plan for the counter-claim—consider arguments from the other side and do your best to counter them without making their arguments for them
- Be brief, don't try to include all the arguments
- Assume your reader is intelligent but un-informed. Speak in common language
- Bring a unique viewpoint not previously stated in other LTE's or op-eds
- Explain technical issues if you can make them understandable, otherwise, skip those points
- Use humor, but only if you are confident that your message will still be clear. Often humor can confuse a message and distract readers from your point
- Be respectful: don't call names or insult the writer or your opponents
- Make sure to offer a call to action – what can the reader do?

## **Before Submitting:**

- Make sure the final letter flows – from introduction to conclusion.
- Be sure you haven't forgotten any important points (having others who are more unfamiliar with the issue read for you is a great way to make sure that you don't have any information gaps)
- Re-read for errors: Don't rely on spell checkers, they're not reliable; they won't catch the wrong word spelled correctly. Is your grammar correct?
- Spell out acs & abbrs (acronyms and abbreviations) the first time you use them; it's ok to use after that.
- Conform with the publication's word limit (see back side for word limits)
- Be sure you've included a call to action and how the reader can do something about the issue

## **How to Submit:**



In Eugene, the primary media are the Register Guard and the Eugene Weekly. Aside from these local print papers, other good publications to submit to are the Oregonian and the Statesman Journal.

### **Instructions for submitting to each of these publications are below:**

\*All publications require the inclusion of your real name and address. The address will not be printed, but your home town will.

#### **Register Guard:**

LTE: 200 word limit, email to [rgletters@registerguard.com](mailto:rgletters@registerguard.com)

Or mail to: Letters to the editor, 3500 Chad Drive, Suite 600, Eugene, OR 97408,

Guest Viewpoint: 500-700 words, email to [bomeara@registerguard.com](mailto:bomeara@registerguard.com)

Or to Anna Glavash, 3500 Chad Drive, Eugene, Ore., 97408.

#### **Eugene Weekly:**

LTE: 250 word limit, email to [letters@eugeneweekly.com](mailto:letters@eugeneweekly.com)

Guest Viewpoint: 500-750 words, email to [editor@eugeneweekly.com](mailto:editor@eugeneweekly.com)

#### **Oregonian:**

LTE: 250 word limit. Email to [letters@oregonian.com](mailto:letters@oregonian.com)

Or mail to: letters to the editor, The Oregonian 1500 S.W. First Ave., Suite 400, Portland, Or., 97201.

Op-Ed: 500 word limit. Email to [commentary@oregonian.com](mailto:commentary@oregonian.com)

Or mail to: Op-Ed Editor, The Oregonian, 1500 S.W. First Ave., Suite 400, Portland, OR 97201

#### **Statesman Journal:**

LTE: 200 word limit. Email to [letters@StatesmanJournal.com](mailto:letters@StatesmanJournal.com) or use online submission form:

<http://community.statesmanjournal.com/email/letters.html>

Guest Opinion: 500 word limit. Online submission form:

<http://community.statesmanjournal.com/email/guest.html>