

Take Action

Write a letter to your local newspaper

If you feel passionate about an issue that you have learnt about in school, a good way of publicising the issue is by writing a letter to your local newspaper. You could write as an individual or a class.

Do your research

- Buy or pick-up a free copy or read a recent online version of your local newspaper.
- Read recent letters to the editor, take note of the style of writing and length.
- Check if the editor is male or female.
- Find the email address for the letters page or editor. If you can't find it in a recent copy, you can ring the newspaper and ask them politely.

Tips for writing the letter to your local newspaper

- **Opening:** Dear Sir/Madam
- **Be concise:** You can check the average length of a letter in a recent publication, but generally don't go over 250 words. Short letters have more chance of being printed.
- **Break your letter into a few short paragraphs.** Though your letter will be short, breaking it up into paragraphs will help your reader move from one idea to the next.
- **Stick to one point:** Make one or two points emphatically about the issue you care about. If you have more points to make you could think about sending other letters at a later date.
- **Explain:** Explain the issue succinctly, keeping in mind the editor and readers may not know much about it.
- **Make it personal/local:** Write about why it is important to you/your class and how this issue could affect people in the local area.
- **Be polite.** If it is rude, it won't be published
- **Sign off** using "Sincerely," and your name or your class and school's name.
- **Contact details:** Add your address and leave a contact number or address or email address. You can ask that your full address is not published.
- **Type your letter and submit it via email if possible.** Most newspapers prefer you to email them your letter.
- **Proofread:** Proofread your letter and ask someone else to read over it to check for spelling and grammar mistakes and to make sure your points are clear.