

# What is a LETTER TO THE EDITOR?

Letters to the Editor are found in newspapers. They are written by members of the public, as opposed to newspaper staff, and give somebody's opinion about a current issue. Letters to the Editor have a similar structure to other persuasive forms of writing, like an essay.

<b>Salutation</b>
<b>Opening Statement</b>
<b>Opinion/Hypothesis</b>
<b>Argument</b>
<b>Argument</b>
<b>Argument</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>Personal Details</b>

1. Letters to the Editor start with a **SALUTATION**, usually 'Dear Editor' or 'Dear Sir/Madam'.
2. Letters to the Editor are usually written in a response to a previous letter, or in response to a current issue. In the **OPENING STATEMENT**, the writer gives the details of what they're referring to. For example, "In response to Wayne Smith's letter 'Nurseries are to blame for rainforest weeds' (*Cairns Post*, 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2005), I wish to say that I agree with him."
3. Following the OPENING STATEMENT, the writer gives their **OPINION**. For example, "Until there are stricter regulations on the sale of weeds, the Wet Tropics is doomed to deteriorate."
4. Following the OPINION, the writer gives their **ARGUMENTS**. These arguments must be supported by *evidence*. Have another look at the [Types of Evidence](#) and try to include at least two different points of evidence for each of your paragraphs.
5. Finally, your **CONCLUSION** should *re-state* your OPINION as well as *summarising* your arguments. Also, your conclusion also gives you the opportunity to *call for action*. For example, "People of Cairns, it's time you remove exotic weeds from your gardens!"
6. Include your **PERSONAL DETAILS**, such as your *full name, address and phone number*. Most newspapers won't print a letter unless the writer provides their personal details.

## Hints

- It's okay in a letter to the editor to use the *personal pronoun* 'I' eg. "I am sure..."
- Your expression should be *emotive*. If you use strong language there is greater likelihood that you'll impress upon the reader. eg. "I was absolutely appalled that..."
- It's okay to use *rhetorical questions* in a letter to the editor. For example, "How can people in Cairns sleep at night knowing that their household garden is responsible for the devastation of our native rainforests?"