Letter to the Editor

Definition:
A letter to the editor is a letter sent to the editors of a publication or periodical about materials that have appeared in the publication or issues of concern to the readership. They may be either positive or negative in viewpoint and often read like mini-editorials. The audience is usually the general public and the tone is persuasive.

Features/Elements:
- Focuses on a relevant subject
- States a clear opinion
- Uses persuasive writing style
- Uses audience-appropriate language
- Contains succinct support and explanation
- Provides insight, commentary and/or suggestions
- Cites all sources

How to write an effective letter to the editor:
- Choose a timely and important subject
- Research the facts
- State opinion clearly and succinctly
- Provide accurate, compelling support for your opinion
- Utilize logical structure
- Cite any sources used

Sources:
Letter to the Editor Rubric

6 The subject is focused and relevant. The letter clearly and succinctly states an opinion, providing accurate and compelling support. Insight, commentary and/or suggestions are provided. Organization is logical, with effective transitions. Language use is concise and fluent, with well-controlled sentences, clear and effective ideas and precise word choice that is appropriate for the audience. Writing style is very persuasive. While there may be a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, an outstanding command of language is apparent.

5 The subject is focused and relevant. An opinion is stated that is clear and fairly concise, providing moderate and relevant support. Some insight, commentary or suggestions are provided. Organization is unified, coherent and transitions are used. Sentences are almost always well-controlled, expression of ideas is usually clear, and word choice is often precise and appropriate. Writing style is persuasive. While there may be a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, a good command of language is apparent.

4 The subject is somewhat focused and relevant. An opinion is stated that is not completely clear and/or not concise, providing little support. Insight, commentary or suggestions are generally lacking. Organization is generally clear. Sentences are usually well-controlled, expression of ideas is awkward at times or unclear, and word choice is appropriate for the audience. Writing style is not very persuasive. A competency with language is apparent even though there may be some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.

3 The subject is somewhat focused but lacks relevancy. An opinion is stated that is not completely clear with little relevant support. Organization is clear enough to follow without difficulty. Sentences are usually well-controlled, expression of ideas is awkward at times or unclear, and word choice may be inaccurate or inappropriate for the audience. Writing style is not persuasive. A basic control of language is apparent even though there may be frequent errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.

2 The letter shows significant problems in one or more areas. The subject lacks focus and relevancy. An opinion is stated that is unclear with minimal or irrelevant support. Organization may not be clear enough, making the writer’s ideas difficult to follow. Sentences may be unclear, expression of ideas may be awkward or unclear, and word choice may be inaccurate or inappropriate for the audience. Numerous errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics demonstrate poor control of language and may at times impede understanding.

1 The letter has severe problems in one or more areas. The subject is unfocussed or irrelevant. The writer may not offer an opinion or provide support. Problems with organization and lack of focus make the letter very difficult to follow. Sentences may seldom convey meaning clearly, expression of ideas may be very unclear and confusing, and word choice may be inaccurate or inappropriate. Severe problems with grammar, usage, or mechanics demonstrate very poor control of language and may significantly impede understanding.

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