

## 1 STEP 1: READ 1-2 EXAMPLES OF THE TYPE OF ARTICLE YOU WANT TO WRITE

### Letters to the Editor (*LTEs*):

Letters to the editor are written in response to an article previously printed by that paper. **LTEs are great for short, concise points and are often 150-300 words.** We recommend checking to see if the paper you are interested in has a word limit to keep in mind before beginning your piece. LTEs are a reaction to an event or newsletter article, and therefore, should be submitted within a couple of days of the article or event they are reacting to. **If possible, reference the article or event your LTE is in reaction to in your piece.**

- Example 1: [“We Energies doubles down on fossil fuels,”](#) in Cap Times
- Example 2: [“Advocates for Cleaner Energy Solution,”](#) in Kenosha News







### Opposite Editorials & Opinion Editorials (*Op-Eds*):


An op-ed is an article that features an opinion on a topic that is likely of interest to the paper’s readership. Op-eds are often selected ahead of time and can be more difficult to publish. To get an op-ed in the paper, we’ll help you pitch the piece to the editor, and you’ll need to include a brief bio in your submission, but op-eds are **longer** than LTEs. That gives you more words (**500-700 words**) to formulate your message.

- Example 1: [“We Energies Plan for More Gas Plants Is a Mistake,”](#) in Urban Milwaukee
- Example 2: [“Clean energy is key to reducing lung cancer deaths,”](#) in the Wisconsin Examiner
- Example 3: [“Milwaukee losing another federal lifeline. Impact will be swift and devastating.”](#) in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



## 2 START WRITING - TIPS AND TRICKS

-  **Make it relevant to readers:** Explain why readers should care about what you are saying in the first or second paragraph. Start by writing down 2-3 reasons you care about it.
-  **Add in a local or personal examples:** Add examples and keep statistics local and stories personal whenever possible. A personal story can help connect on an emotional level with the reader, making your argument stand out. Looking for Wisconsin statistics? [Check out our talking points >>>](#)
-  **Keep it short & focused:** Most readers spend limited time on each piece. Try to keep sentences and paragraphs short, getting to your point as quickly as possible. Focusing on one key message will make your article more concise and easier to understand.
-  **Make a clear ask:** Once your reader is hooked and cares about your topic, outline a policy solution or call to action. You can also make an ask of the reader, for example, “Ask your representative to support clean energy.”
-  **Where relevant, share your connection:** Briefly share your expertise where relevant in your article, it will lend you credibility. Remember, the reader doesn’t know who you are. Would you be more trusting of an article written by a teacher who lives by the plant, or someone hundreds of miles away? On the subject, would you trust a energy expert more or a car salesman?
-  **Use simple language:** Avoid jargon, acronyms, and complex words or sentences. They can confuse readers and distract from your message.
-  **Opening & Closing Strong:** Spend the most attention on the first sentence to grab the reader's attention. Then, prioritize your last sentence. You can make it cheeky or concisely summarize the most critical part of your message. Research shows that readers remember these parts most.
-  **Perfect is the enemy of the good:** Don't let the pursuit of perfection stop you from sharing your voice. Start by openly writing a short paragraph to get the words flowing.

 **3 EDIT** It can help to have someone else take a quick look at your article. Getting another set of eyes helps catch any information that might be confusing to an external reader. Additionally, your LTE or OP-ED is much more likely to get accepted if you submit a polished piece with little to no grammar or spelling errors.

**Contact [cecw@muellercommunications.com](mailto:cecw@muellercommunications.com) if you need any help writing or editing a piece! We’re also happy to proofread before you send it in.**

## 4 SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLE

**Submitting:** You can find the information for submitting your article on the website for your local paper. Submit your article to only one paper at a time.

- LTEs: Most outlets now take LTEs through an online submission portal.

Suggested outlets: [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#), [Cap Times](#), [Wisconsin State Journal](#), [Kenosha News](#), [Racine Journal-Times](#), [Waukesha Freeman \(letters@conley.net.com\)](#)

- Op-eds: These are often submitted to an editor through email. Keeping your email short (3-7 sentences) and include the following points: 1) Make it clear that you are offering your piece exclusively to their newspaper. 2) Share 1-2 sentences about why this is relevant to their audience. 3) Attach your op-ed as a Word or Google doc, list the number of words at the top of it, and include a short bio and a headshot at the end or in a second attached document.

Suggested outlets: [Cap Times](#), [Wisconsin State Journal](#), [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#), [WisOpinion](#), [Kenosha Times](#), [Urban Milwaukee](#)

## 5 AFTER SUBMITTING

**LTE:** After submitting, you are unlikely to hear back, even if they publish it. Check the LTE section of the paper for 9 days looking for your piece.

**Op-ed:** After submitting your article, editors often respond in a few days with a decision and they may have some edits or recommended changes. If you don't hear back, bump the email on day 4 or 5. If they respond, answer back quickly, it will help them prioritize your piece. You can also 'cc us on the email and we can help circle back!

**Rejection:** First, try submitting it to another paper. Sometimes your article will get rejected, not because of the quality, but because they've already accepted multiple other submissions on that topic. A rejection doesn't make your article any less critical, in fact, a lot of letters on one subject will make it more likely for them to publish on that topic and can even influence the stance of the paper in future stories.

**Publication:** Congratulations, you did it! Share your article with our staff at [cecw@muellercommunications.com](mailto:cecw@muellercommunications.com). We can amplify it on Power Wisconsin Forward's newsletter and social media. If your article was targeted at a specific entity (*i.e.* PSC), send it to them. Letting an entity know you gave them negative publicity can be a great way to increase pressure for change.