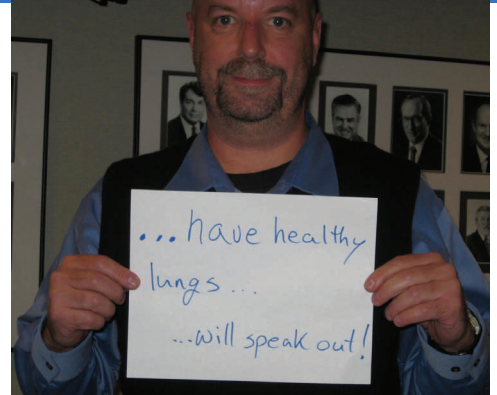


Stay Positive

Don't attack or respond to attacks. Acknowledge an attack only as a vehicle to leverage our positive message.

Keep it Short

Many daily newspapers have a 250-word limit. Columns are now restricted to 650 words, but papers prefer 500. Hit that word count. If you write longer, an editor is simply going to cut it - and you probably won't like how it was edited. Do the editor's work in advance, and you'll likely see your entire piece run.



Avoid Numbers

Overuse of numbers dulls the reader's eye. Use "about one third" instead of 31 percent. Use comparisons: More people are killed in Wisconsin by secondhand smoke than traffic accidents. If you have to use numbers, use them sparingly.

Tell a Story

If you're writing a column, use a personal story as an example. That makes the argument real and personal - and much more likely to be read.

Keep it as Local as Possible

Refer to the local situation instead of using statewide statistics on tobacco. Use local statistics, like your legislative district's Quit Line calls breakdown. The author should be local - and referencing local people or groups is an effective way to ensure papers will use your letter.

Short Paragraphs

You may not have noticed, but newspapers use one and two sentence paragraphs. They do this because the columns are narrow. Large paragraphs turn into large blocks of gray type.

Write Simply

Write as you speak. Write a draft off the top of your head just as you would talk to someone in person. Walk away. Reread it later. Edit it and send it in.

Just Do It...And Encourage Others

The most difficult part of letter writing is getting it done and submitting it to the paper. Letters not written do not get in the paper.