

WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

As you learn about nuclear weapons, you will no doubt form some opinions about what needs to be done to eliminate them. You shouldn't keep these opinions to yourself! Why not write a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine? This is one of many ways to make your views known to the public. Below are some tips to increase the chance that your letter will be published.

INCLUDE YOUR AGE!

Newspapers don't often receive letters from young people, so you might like to include your age at the bottom of the letter to increase the chances of it being published.

STEPS

- 1 Read a **variety of newspapers and magazines** to see if they're covering nuclear issues. Pick out any news stories, opinion pieces or other letters to the editor you find interesting.
- 2 Is there anything about them that you disagree with? Is there any aspect of an issue, or any particular **point of view**, that isn't being adequately covered?
- 3 Do some **research**, if necessary, and then start drafting a letter in response. It's a good idea to refer to the particular article at the beginning of your letter.
- 4 Make sure all of your sentences make sense and are easy to read. Short, snappy sentences work well. Read and re-read your letter until it's perfect. It should be **less than 250 words**.
- 5 Ask yourself: Why would an editor choose to publish this letter and not the dozens of others he or she receives on any given day? Try to **make your letter stand out**.
- 6 **Submit your letter** to the paper or magazine. Be sure to include your full name, address and a contact phone number so the editor can verify that you're the author.
- 7 If it doesn't get published, try to **improve the letter** and then send it off to another publication. Be persistent!



SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Editor,

Re “Time to get serious about nukes” (editorial, January 1):
I agree that the risk of nuclear destruction is frighteningly high. However, I reject your prediction that nuclear weapons won’t be abolished in our lifetime.

We’ve already outlawed chemical weapons, biological weapons and anti-personnel landmines. Surely we can muster the political will to abolish the worst weapons of all? I believe that, together, we can generate an irresistible groundswell of popular support for abolition.

There are currently 26,000 nuclear weapons in the world today—that’s 26,000 good reasons to join the movement.

John Smith
Melbourne

A GOOD LETTER —

- Opens with a reference to a news story or opinion piece, or explains what motivated you to write it
- Clearly states what your position on a particular issue is and why you take that position
- Uses statistics, quotes and emotive language to convey arguments that back up your position
- Makes appropriate use of humorous or poignant language to capture the reader’s attention.

VARIATIONS

1

Write an article for your school newsletter.

Why not write an article for your school newsletter? This could contain your opinion about nuclear weapons and information on how you’re working for a world without them.

2

Comment on online news stories.

Many people today read newspapers online rather than in print. Most online papers allow you to post comments on articles. This is a great new way to make your voice heard!