

# StandWithUs Northwest

Education is the Road to Peace

## Keys to Good Letter Writing – Letters to Editors

- Use a clear point of view:  
Give the reader a clear “take away.” If the reader can’t remember your point of view five minutes after putting down the paper, you’ve failed.
- Make a simple argument – Keep it under 200 words:  
Don’t try to be a lawyer and look at all sides. Take a side and make your point. Distill your ideas to a pure expression of your beliefs.
- Stick to one idea as far as possible:  
The most frustrating thing about writing for politics is what you have to leave out. Don’t ramble and try to say too much. You’ll lose the reader.
- Write with warmth and understanding; not anger:  
You can’t sell an idea unless you’re likeable. You must establish a connection with the reader.  
Anger convinces no one. The mind rejects the unpleasant and seeks friendlier places to be.
- Educate the reader about something:  
With Google and Wikipedia there is no excuse other than laziness for getting the facts wrong.  
After some research you can educate your reader with something they didn’t know. They like that!
- Above all: be brief

## Final Point

- Let it simmer. It’s a dish best eaten cold.
- You can’t write your letter or op-ed and do final edits at the same time. You’re too close to it and you can’t see your mistakes.
- Best to walk away from it for a time, three hours or more and then read it—as if for the first time.
- Now you can see how it reads and you will know how to fix it.

For a complete list of newspapers in the Washington state area, visit:  
[https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/wa\\_newspapers.aspx](https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/wa_newspapers.aspx)