

How to: Write a Letter to a Government Official

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Identify the Issue

Before you do anything else, you need to identify what issue you will discuss in your letter. Think about some of these questions: what is the issue, who does it impact, what do you want done about it?



Find the Right Official

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Depending on the issue you are pursuing, there will be a different type of government official who has the responsibility or jurisdiction to solve it. For an issue in your city or community, this would be a city councillor, or municipal government official. Issues that involve a whole province are dealt with by provincial government officials, and lastly country wide issues are the responsibility of the federal government.



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Get Contact Information

If you are sending your letter electronically, you will need an email, but if sending a physical copy, you will need a postal address. This might involve doing some research on government websites.



Research to Collect Factual Evidence

Using the internet, books, or any other sources of credible information, gather facts about your topic of discussion. This will not only make your argument stronger, but will also give the official a better impression of you.

Use this link to help decide if a source is credible:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wpjr35uNnWE>



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Write the Letter

Write the actual letter that will be received by the government official. Ensure you follow criteria such as:

- try to keep your letter to one page
- provide accurate information that is backed up by facts
- avoid making political or religious comments in your letter
- use proper format and grammar
- kindly ask for a response somewhere in your letter

For a more comprehensive list of formatting and writing criteria, visit:
<https://www.peacemakers.ca/research/Canada/FormsOfAddress.html>

For an example letter to the US government visit:

http://pai.org/silentpartner/documents/letter_govt_official.pdf



Review and Edit

By using a variety of resources, edit your written work to ensure that there are no spelling, or grammar errors. You could ask a friend to check it, or use online resources. Here is a great list of methods to use when editing your writing:

<https://www.unr.edu/writing-speaking-center/writing-speaking-resources/editing-and-proofreading-techniques>



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Send The Letter

Through the postal system or using email, send your letter to the government official. Make sure you have followed all the criteria for a good letter and have revised your letter before sending it.

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Follow Up

If the official doesn't respond after a while, or you just want to ask about what progress has been made regarding the issue, send a follow up letter or email to the official. Use the steps above as a guide on how to write the follow up letter if unsure.

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