



Writing and using persuasive letters

When to write letters

>Letter-writing is a useful campaign tactic when you are trying to:

- Get people in positions of authority to acknowledge or understand the strength of feeling on an issue
- Draw the attention of a wider public audience to an issue of concern and ask for help to further your cause
- Support or oppose the decisions, policies or views of decision-makers
- Highlight a campaign success and express gratitude to those involved

>Letters may be aimed at decision-makers, opinion formers, local media or members and supporters.

For most campaigns in most situations a larger number of letters will clearly demonstrate to the recipient that you have public opinion on your side.

Postcard campaigns or sending identical letters are best reserved for situations where you can guarantee a large number will be sent, because they don't hold as much weight with politicians as individual letters do.

Tips on writing to different audiences

Letters to supporters

>Where things have gone well, explain the impact of their contribution.

Where things have gone badly, explain the reasons and emphasise that this makes their ongoing support all the more important.

When asking for support on a campaign, explain how much impact will be made as a result. If possible, include a sample letter, briefing or other material that will help them.

Letters to decision-makers, opinion-formers and local journalists

- Be brief
- If your arguments require further explanation enclose a background note but try to limit your core argument to one or two sides of A4
- Keep a record
- File correspondence if it takes place over a period of time and take notes of any important face-to-face or telephone discussions
- Follow-up

Don't expect responses right away, but persist if you do not get an answer within a reasonable period of time.

If you are seeking a meeting, it is worth saying that you will be in touch shortly to discuss possible dates.

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