SESSION 5

LTE Best Practices

W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

What is a Letter to the Editor (LTE)?

A LTE is a response to a recent news article that introduces new information that is relevant to the story. Typically, news organizations require that the letter to the editor be submitted within seven days from when the original article was published.

Characteristics of a LTE

- Typically between 150 – 200 words.
- A response to a recent news article.
- A strong voice from a credible writer.

Tips for writing a compelling LTE

- Keep it focused on **one** subject.
- Be **clear and concise**.
  - Keep the LTE brief to ensure no content is cut by the media outlet.
- Make **references** to the newspaper and the article.
- Offer a **thoughtful** response and point of view that challenges the article, supports the argument in the article with additional evidence and insight or uses the article to posit another strong opinion.
- **Include** contact information.
  - Some newspapers will only print a letter to the editor after verifying the author. Newspapers will not share personal information.

Structure

- **Lede**: Grab the reader's attention with an introduction to what you will be talking about with a connection to the news article.
- **Thesis**: State information in response to the current article.
- **Argument**: Explain why the new information that is being presented in the LTE is relevant to readers.
- **Conclusion**: Circle back to the thesis to reaffirm it.
- **Byline**: Name, title and brief (two-to-three sentences) bio about the author of the LTE and any affiliations.