

Letter to the Editor

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Aoife O'Driscoll 2013

Layout

- ❖ A letter to the editor of a newspaper must be laid out in a specific way.
- ❖ You do not put your address at the top of the letter: you put it under your signature.
- ❖ You do not write the editor's address at the top of the letter.
- ❖ You begin 'Sir' or 'Madam', depending on whether the editor is male or female. You do not need to say 'Dear Sir' or 'Dear Madam'.



The Body of the Letter

- ❖ In your opening sentence, you should give the following:
- ❖ Name, writer and date of the article which prompted you to write the letter.
- ❖ Example: While I can only echo Harry Havelin's (December 9th) sentiment....
- ❖ In response to John Twomey's article, 'Screen Addiction' (April 24th) I would like to take issue with a number of points.
- ❖ If the letter is a general one and is not in response to an article which appeared in the paper, then you should simply address the topic in the opening lines: 'The issue of exam stress is one which affects almost every student in this country'.

Length

- ❖ The following advice is from the *Irish Times*.
- ❖ When writing, bear in mind that short letters are more likely to be published than long ones.
- ❖ Letters that range over several topics are unlikely to appear.
- ❖ Make one point, as clearly as possible, without preamble.



Language

- ❖ Your audience is the general public.
- ❖ Keep the tone reasonably formal throughout.
- ❖ Humorous touches are allowed, but be careful. Not everyone shares your sense of humour.

Signing Off

- ❖ You sign off in the following way:
- ❖ Yours etc.,
- ❖ Michael McCarthy,
- ❖ 'The Orchard',
- ❖ Ballinacurra,
- ❖ Midleton,
- ❖ Co. Cork.
- ❖ Obviously, the name and address are up to you, but the layout is the same: name, followed by address underneath.



Sample

- ❖ For sample letters to the editor, go to www.aoifesnotes.com
- ❖ Leaving Cert English
- ❖ Comprehension Question B

