

**Activity 20 Communications**
Write a letter to a government official about the benefits of FBLA.

See the details of how to format and write a letter to government officials.

OPEN THE LETTER IN AN OFFICIAL MANNER.

If you are writing to an elected official, show respect for the position by using the title of the office, and the official's full name. In any other letter, use the familiar term "Dear," the title Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss, or Dr., and the official's full name.

**Example:**

January 5, 2008

Title [Name of Representative or Senator]

House of Representatives [OR] U.S. Senate

Office Address

Washington, D.C. 20515

EXPLAIN THE PURPOSE FOR YOUR LETTER.

Let your reader know immediately what your letter is about. Tell him/her why you are concerned or pleased that a particular decision is being considered.

**Example:**The proposed increase in the gasoline tax will make the cost of transportation unreasonably high for commuters in the metropolitan area.

SUMMARIZE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE/DECISION BEING CONSIDERED.

State the general impact that you expect to occur if a particular decision is made.

**Example:**The creation of a peer-counseling program at our high school will help reduce the number of teen pregnancies in our community.

EXPLAIN YOUR POSITION ON THIS ISSUE.

Describe in detail why you feel the decision made will lead to the impact you foresee.

**Example:**This will provide opportunities for our high school students to discuss pressures they experience with their peers at this critical time in their lives.

DESCRIBE WHAT ANY CHANGES WILL MEAN TO YOU, AND TO OTHERS.

Describe specifically the positive or negative effects the decision will have on you personally and on those you represent. The more people affected by the decision, the more convincing you may be.

**Example:**This program will help provide career opportunities for teenagers in our community.

IDENTIFY OTHERS WHO MAY BE AFFECTED BY THIS DECISION.

Tell the official which, and how many, people will be affected. Statistics can be very helpful here.

**Example:**A recent study showed that 80% of minors who smoke obtain cigarettes at stores that do not ask for any identification. Increased enforcement of the existing laws prohibiting tobacco sales to minors could significantly reduce the rate of smoking among our youth.

ACKNOWLEDGE PAST SUPPORT.

Mention appropriate actions and decisions the official has made in the past and express thanks for them.

**Example:**We appreciate your past support of the bill protecting the rights of emergency medical crews to not be tested for HIV.

DESCRIBE WHAT ACTION YOU HOPE THE OFFICIAL WILL TAKE.

State specifically what action you (and those you represent) hope the official will take--and by what date, if there is a deadline.

**Example:**We hope you realize the best course of action to protect our community's infants and young children is to vote "yes" to House Bill #689b.

IF YOU HAVE WRITTEN A LETTER THAT OPPOSES SOME ACTION, OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE.

**Example:**I believe that rather than increasing the number of police cars patrolling our neighborhood, a cheaper and more effective alternative would be to work with our community to develop a community-policing program.

IF YOU HAVE TIME AND YOU ARE COMMITTED, ASK HOW YOU CAN HELP

**Example:**Our group is more than willing to explore the various options in helping make our community a safer place to live.

CLOSE AND SIGN YOUR LETTER.

Thank the official and sign your full name. Make sure your address, and phone number are included.

CHECK YOUR LETTER FOR SPELLING AND GRAMMATICAL ERRORS.

Correct spelling and grammar won't do the job by themselves, but they can help. Why not give your letter every possible advantage?

LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGNS

So far, we’ve discussed individual letters. A letter-writing tactic that can be particularly effective is a letter-writing campaign, where dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of people write either to the same official (if they’re all in, or somehow represent people who are in, her district) or to many officials about a specific vote, policy, or budget item. This can be extremely effective, especially when the letter-writers are people who don’t usually contact their elected officials.

http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/advocacy/direct-action/letters-to-elected-officials/main