

Write a letter about a local issue

Teacher notes

This activity asks students to brainstorm local issues that could be improved and to draft letters to MLAs highlighting the issue and advocating for a solution. A student guide is included on the third page.

Main activity

Brainstorm

1. As a class, brainstorm on a whiteboard issues or matters that could be improved around your school or in students' local communities.

Group work

2. Split students into small groups of 3–5 people. Direct each group to select one issue from the board to discuss together, using these prompts:
 - What is this issue important?
 - Who does it affect?
 - What could happen if this issue isn't addressed?
 - What are some ideas to help address this issue?
3. Distribute the student guide to each group and ask them to write a letter about their chosen issue together.

Group share

4. Have one person from each group share their letter with the class. Together, discuss other possible solutions for the issues raised.

Reflection

5. As a class, reflect on these issues and solutions using the following prompts:
 - What could become problems with the solutions proposed? (e.g., will they cost a lot of money, will they take a long time, is the issue constantly changing?)
 - How could you find out if other people in the community have the same concerns? If they do, how could you harness that concern to advocate for your issue?
 - Are some issues more important than others, or should some issues be prioritised over others? If so, why (or why not)?



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Student guide

Write a concise, polite one-page letter to Members of the Legislative Assembly about an issue you identified. Your letter should propose a solution and request action is taken.

How to structure your letter

- **Introduction:** State who you are and the purpose of your letter.
- **Body:** Explain the issue, using facts and/or personal experiences. Include why it this issue is important, who it affects, and what could happen if it isn't addressed.
- **Call-to-action:** State your solution to the issue clearly and ask for action to be taken to address it.
- **Closing:** End your letter by thanking your reader for their time, their consideration, or expressing hope that they act on the issue raised.
- **Signature:** Include your school or class name and the date at the bottom of the letter.

Tips for writing

- **Be persuasive!** — You want to convince someone reading this letter that your issue is important. You can do this by making it personal, explaining how it directly affects you, your school, and/or your community.
- **Use paragraphs** — Help the reader understand your argument by building each paragraph around one main idea.
- **Keep it clear and concise** — Focus on one issue and choose your strongest points to include in your letter. More doesn't always means better.

If you would like to send this letter to your local MLAs, you can address them personally. Their contact details are online at parliament.act.gov.au.