



**Committee for Accuracy in
Middle East Reporting in America**

Top 10 Letter Writing Tips

- 1) **Be Quick.** Try to send your letter within a day or two of the broadcast or article.
- 2) **Be Pithy.** State the point of your letter within the first two sentences. A reader scanning the letter should be able to quickly identify your view of the issue in question.
- 3) **Be Convenient.** State the title, author and date of the article or reporter of the broadcast so the editor doesn't have to search for your reference.
- 4) **Be Concise.** Most publications will not print more than 250-300 words for a letter to the editor. Check to see what your paper's limit is and stick to it. Editors tend to publish letters they don't have to spend time shortening.
- 5) **Be Focused.** While an article or broadcast may contain numerous instances of bias, concentrate on just one or two. Your opening line can refer to the overall skew of the broadcast/article, but then zero-in, e.g. "Your broadcast unfairly disparaged Israel with its numerous factual and contextual errors. One such error was..." It's better to fully explain one point than to inadequately cover five.
- 6) **Be Polite.** Hostile or overly emotional language is counterproductive. Use factual information. A lot of useful information can be found on the CAMERA website.
- 7) **Be Yourself.** Mentioning that you are responding to a CAMERA Alert may lessen the impact of your letter and keep you from getting published.
- 8) **Be Impactful.** Send a copy of your letter not just to the editor, but also to the reporter, foreign editor, publisher...to advertisers/sponsors of the broadcast... to members of Congress if the report was on public radio or television. When writing to a syndicated columnist, be sure to send a copy to the paper the columnist works for, as well as to your local paper if the column appears there.
- 9) **Be Engaged.** Develop a relationship with the editor of the Letters-to-the-Editor page. Follow up with a call to ask if your letter will be published. If the answer is no, politely ask why and what you could do to make your letter more acceptable for publication. If the editor doesn't remember your letter, offer to read it over the phone and/or re-email it. If your letter is published, make yourself memorable by writing a note to the editor thanking him/her for allowing your concerns to be shared with the public.
- 10) **Be Available.** Before publishing a letter, most papers will call to verify that you wrote it. Remember, particularly if you're using e-mail, to include your full name, title (if applicable), address and daytime phone number.