



MASQ Writing Process

Updated: February 10, 2020

I. Campaigns

MASQ will typically send out at least one pre-planned campaign per month via email and telegram. These campaigns cover various events and holidays, such as Christmas or Ramadan. Besides these, breaking news campaigns will be released when needed.

A campaign will have four sections:

Background: The background for why the campaign is being written.

Talking Points: A summary of pertinent points that can be incorporated in your letter.

Sources: Quotes from the Holy Qur'an, Hadith, or statements from Hazrat Khalifatul Masih (aba) that are relevant to the campaign. Always try to incorporate at least one in your piece.

Notes: Logistics to be mindful of, such as submission deadline.

II. Submitting for Editing and Approval

Before starting, recite the prayer of the Promised Messiah (as) for writing.

You should not mimic these points verbatim but instead use them to guide your writing. It's better to focus on one or two of them, and expound upon them in detail.

Besides reading the links we provide, do your own research to make sure you grasp the topic.

The word limit for letters-to-the-editor varies among newspapers, but the average is 150 words. Try to keep the limit. If you go substantially over, check the newspaper's requirements. In any case, shorter is typically better.

Submit to submissions@muslimwriters.org and we will send it back within 24 hours. Pay attention to the respective edits.



III. Submitting to Newspapers

You should be assigned a group of newspapers to submit to, but this can change depending on the situation. Focus on submitting to the assigned newspapers. Our assignments are in place for a number of reasons to give our members the best chances of publication. **Find the contact info here:** <https://muslimwriters.org/newspaper-contact/>

If you are not given any direction in this regard, you are free to submit to all the newspapers in your state and national ones. Most newspapers require exclusivity — although typically only larger ones enforce it. So on those frequent occasions that a newspaper contacts you and asks if you've submitted elsewhere, you could simply rescind your submission from the other locations.. At all times exercise discretion and prioritize your and the majlis' integrity. Seek help from your regional coordinator.

Send emails to newspapers individually; never send a mass email. The subject line should read: *Letter to the Editor*. Copy the text of your finalized piece in the **body** of the e-mail (newspapers don't open attachments!). You can also add "If any feedback, readers can contact me at..." In the signature, include your name, address, and cell as well as *Member, Muslim Writers Guild of America*.

IV. Getting Published

Newspapers may e-mail or call you back confirming publication, but expect that they won't. Since newspapers generally publish their editions in print and on the web, you can find your piece online. We recommend setting a [google alert](#) with the key words being your *name* and *letter to the editor*. You can also do so manually by googling the same key words and refining the search settings.

Please keep track of your publications. Monthly reports sent to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih (aba) include the publication numbers for MASQ, and we wish to present the most accurate reporting for our beloved Imam. Additionally, you should see your hard work come to fruition! Share the publication link on MASQ USA telegram group.



General Writing Tips

As a member of MASQ, we recommend that you use an online resource or book (like *Elements of Style*) to learn more about grammar and style. Still, the best way to improve is through practice and regular writing. A few basic tips **particularly relevant to writing letters-to-the-editor** are as follows:

1. Revise and rewrite.
2. Be simple; it's not about complex words but big ideas.
3. Cut needless words: mindless introductory phrases (*It is important to keep in mind the fact that*); redundancies (*previous experience*).
4. Write with nouns and verbs, not adjectives and adverbs.
5. Shun the passive voice and forms of the verb *to be*. Use active verbs.
6. Vary the length of your sentences and paragraphs.
7. Make your point at the start. Use the rest of your piece to support it.
8. In a short piece, do not end with a summary. When you've finished, just stop.
9. If you need help starting, think of writing as a formal dinner-table conversation
10. When appropriate, conclude with a call to action.

