# Advocacy 101

This activity gives you the tools to start speaking up about animal welfare issues. It lays out best practices to encourage you to be proactive, educate yourself about an issue and share your knowledge confidently with others. You will use your mighty pen (or keyboard!) to create a letter advocating for change on the issue you choose.

**Materials:** blank journal for notes, pencil, brainstorming worksheet (page 3)

**Directions:**

**1** Complete the provided brainstorming worksheet on page 3 to help focus on the issue you want to write a letter about.

**2** Educate yourself.
  - What organizations or people are already working on this issue?
  - What is being done to solve it and what else needs to be done?

Being knowledgeable is an important part of being confident. Having lots of notes written down in your notebook will help you ask questions and make statements clearly in your letters. Be sure to gather facts and statistics from reliable sources (the BC SPCA website and publications are a good example).

**3** Decide who should receive your letter.
  - If you want to advocate for your school to stop animal dissection in science class, address your letter to the school as well as to the school board.

  - If you want to reach your provincial government, find out who your Member of the Legislative Assembly is here: Member (leg.bc.ca).

  - To write to your federal representative, find your Member of Parliament here: Current Constituencies - Members of Parliament - House of Commons of Canada (ourcommons.ca).

**BCSPCA**
Humane Education

**4** Get ready to write! Some important tips for writing letters:

- Be personal. An original letter is much more likely to get read than a "form letter," so be sure to use your own words and connect to the issue personally.

- Be concise. Make your points clearly but keep it short, to one page if possible.

- Use polite and respectful language.

- Be clear about what the issue is and how you think it can be resolved with the help of the person to whom you are writing.

- Include questions. Engage in a conversation by asking for a response back.

- Follow up. A polite email to touch base and make sure they received your letter is just right.

- Be sure to include your contact information and your mailing address, so they can see that you are part of their constituency or community.

**Resources:**

Writing a Letter to Your MP | Citizens for Public Justice (cpj.ca)
How to address people properly: Styles of address - Canada.ca
Mail may be sent postage-free to any Member of Parliament at the following address:

> [Name of Member of Parliament]
> House of Commons
> Ottawa, Ontario
> Canada
> K1A 0A6

**Check out these true stories of youth activists for inspiration!**

Anishinaabe teen Autumn Peltier fights for clean water for Indigenous communities in Canada. She is from the Wiikwemkoong First Nation on Manitoulin Island, Ontario, is Chief Water Protector for the Anishnabek Nation and has been called a "water warrior." At thirteen, Peltier addressed world leaders at the UN General Assembly on the issue of water protection.

Anastasia Castro and Charlotte Brady founded the Plastic Free Schools movement on Vancouver Island when they were in high school. They spent a year working with the Victoria City Council to implement their plan to ban the use of plastic bags. They also worked to educate the public at local markets, petition-signing events and school presentations.

Greta Thunberg, TIME's Person of the Year in 2019, is the Swedish teen who spearheaded the Fridays for the Future climate strike movement. From her very first solo school strike in 2018, the movement has grown to include millions of youth from all over the world.

# 💡 Brainstorming worksheet

What animal welfare issue do I want to learn about?
(Examples: puppy mills, exotic pets, international wildlife trade, fur farming, animals in science, farm animal welfare, breed-specific legislation, animals in captivity, products tested on animals)




Why is this cause important to me?




What can I do to make a difference?




Who would I contact to advocate for this issue?