



# Social Action Project: Writing a Protest Letter

What does social action look like?  
Check out these bold  
& creative **Girls In Action**

### What it is:

A **project** (i.e. writing letters to magazines, girlcotting, petitions, speakouts, etc.) that address a **social** issue (i.e. violence against women, sexist comments, harassment, racism, etc.) in a proactive way (taking **action**, controlling a situation by causing something to happen rather than waiting to respond to it after it happens).

Write a letter to a company or TV network that uses sex or negative stereotypes to sell products.

Below, you'll find a handout with addresses of TV networks and toy companies. When the girls identify a commercial or ad that they feel is hurtful or sexist, encourage them to write a group protest letter, craft an email, or make a call to the company selling the product asking them to adopt a more girl- or woman-friendly approach to advertising.

### Writing a Protest Letter Handout

Don't like something you've seen or heard in the media?

**Tell them about it — Write a letter, send e-mail, or make a call!** Addresses of selected companies can be found on page 84 of this curriculum.



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,  
(Name of company you are fed up with)

I am writing to you to tell you that I think the \_\_\_\_\_ you make  
(product)

is \_\_\_\_\_! Your \_\_\_\_\_ makes girls look like \_\_\_\_\_  
(adjective) (product) (adjective)

and is very \_\_\_\_\_ to girls and to me. Girls are more than that.  
(adverb)

We are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_! I have  
(adjective) (adjective) (adjective)

decided not to buy from your company until something is done about  
(product)

\_\_\_\_\_ and you start showing real girls not just stereotypes of  
(product)

girls. Thank you for reading this postcard.

Sincerely,  
\_\_\_\_\_ (your name)

Place Stamp Here

Examples of products: Ad, magazine, toy, t-shirt  
Examples of adjectives: Horrible, repulsive, awful, terrible, like objects, like things, dumb  
Examples of adjectives about girls: smart, loud, creative, bold, savvy, talented, funny, brave, confident, capable, original, athletic, daring, fabulous

After girls in one coalition group talked about how women are portrayed in the media they began to see stereotypes and patterns in advertisements that they hadn't noticed before. Several members of the group had recently seen a Burger King commercial for the Tender Crisp Bacon Cheddar Ranch Burger, in which a cowboy sings, to the tune of "Big Rock Candy Mountain," lyrics like "the breasts they grow on trees" and "there's a train of ladies comin' with a nice caboose," while Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders and women in skimpy clothes shake and dance in the background. They all agreed that the commercial created a bad image in peoples' minds about women. The girls decided that Burger King needed to know that they were aware of the other messages their company was selling. They wrote to the company, saying: "Your commercial makes women look like things, not real people. We find that your commercial is very offensive to women. We have all decided, as a group, not to eat at Burger King until something is done about this commercial." It made the girls feel good to speak out and do their part to protest this commercial that made women look bad and made them feel bad.

Another girls coalition group discussed recent news coverage of a local lingerie store in a nearby city. The store had live women modeling the lingerie in their storefront windows. The models were all the same size and stereotypically beautiful. The girls in the group talked about their mixed feelings and decided that they would each write letters to the editor of their local newspaper. While the girls did not all agree with each other—some felt the models had a right to make a living this way, while others felt the company policy to showcase live women in lingerie sent a bad message about women to people passing by—they did agree that their opinions and feelings on this issue mattered and that others needed to know how the store's decision affected them. Every girl in the group submitted an electronic letter to the editor with her opinion.