

Getting Letters of Recommendation

1. Ask the Right Teacher

Take the “Am I Asking the Right Teacher?” True or False Quiz! Fill each box with a “T” or “F”:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher has taught me in a class junior or senior year. | <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher agreed to write my letter of recommendation without hesitation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher can reflect on my intellectual growth. | <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher knows me outside the classroom. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher has taught me in a core academic discipline. | <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher can assess my academic and personal achievements and potential. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher would be able to tell a good story about me. | |

Did you have more than 3 “F’s”? You may want to ask a different teacher who passes this test.

2. Make the Request Early

You can ask as early as junior year!

3. Give Your Teacher Some Direction

A. Provide a Clear Deadline

The colleges you’re applying to might have different deadlines, so give your teacher one deadline:

If X = _____, then _____ is the deadline you give your teachers.
(your earliest application deadline) (a couple weeks before X)

B. Giving your teacher a bit of guidance on what they should express about you to admissions officers will only make their job easier. Name three qualities of yours that you’d want your recommendation to express:

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For each quality, provide some proof! Remind your teacher with examples of how you exhibited these qualities. You can cite projects, papers, awards, honors or other accomplishments in or out of the classroom. Write your examples below each quality:

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C. Write Your Own Letter

In a thoughtful and concise letter to your teacher include what you brainstormed in section B and a brief summary of why you want to attend the colleges you’re applying to.

4. Package it Nicely

After a teacher has agreed to write your recommendation, provide them with an organized folder that includes:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A list of all the colleges that need recommendations | <input type="checkbox"/> Any forms for the recommendation from the college |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addressed and stamped envelope(s) for each college | <input type="checkbox"/> A note with the deadline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your letter from section 3C | |

Helpful Tip: Clip the right forms to the right envelopes to keep it simple for your teacher to assemble and send.

5. Extra Tips Checklist

- Send a thank you note to your teacher.
- Double, triple and quadruple check the letter of recommendation guidelines for each application.
- To increase the credibility of the recommendation, waive your right to view the letter.

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