

Tips for Letters of Recommendation

Whether it is required for a college application or a scholarship opportunity, a letter of recommendation plays a crucial role in painting the complete picture of YOU. While grades, entrance exam results, and extracurricular activities all describe the type of student you are, the letter showcases your accomplishments, personal attributes, and skills.

WHEN TO ASK

- The earlier you ask, the better!
- One month before your earliest application deadline, especially when asking a teacher or counselor who might be writing many letters of recommendation.
- Early decision applications might require a recommendation at the start of your senior year.

WHOM TO ASK

- Often colleges request letters of recommendation from a teacher, your school counselor, or both. If you're considering a specific major, you might consider getting a recommendation from a teacher of a related subject.
- A counselor's recommendation broadly showcases the student's potential, while a teacher's recommendation provides a more specific focus on academic performance.
- If it can be any teacher, core subject teachers, such as your English, math, science, or social studies teachers, make good candidates.
- In some cases additional recommendations may come from a coach, work supervisor, or community member, but be sure to follow the specific guidelines provided by the college regarding letters of recommendation.
- It is recommended to ask a teacher from your junior year or a current teacher if they have known you long enough to form an opinion.
- It is best not to go back too far, as colleges want current perspectives on their potential candidates.
- A teacher who can speak to your potential outside the classroom as well is a great bonus!

HOW TO ASK

- Ask in a way that allows a teacher to decline comfortably if he or she does not have time to do a good job.
- For example: "Do you feel you know me well enough, and have enough time, to write a letter of recommendation for me?"
- On the application form, waive your right to view recommendation letters. This gives more credibility to the recommendations in the eyes of the college.