
Letters of Recommendation

As you prepare for entrance into college, you will need to submit items such as SAT scores, essays, and in most cases, letters of recommendation. Colleges use these letters from teachers, mentors, and even local politicians to help them make a better decision regarding your acceptance. Usually schools prefer that you submit at least two letters of recommendation from different individuals.

So how do you go about obtaining these letters?

ASK EARLY

Since most colleges require letters of recommendation, you can imagine that your favorite teacher or mentor is going to be inundated with requests from other students as well. That means they will have to sit down and write a personalized letter for each student. It is a good idea to set up an appointment with your intended teacher and give them at least two weeks to have the letter back in your hands.

APPROACH SELECT TEACHERS

It is best to ask teachers with whom you are familiar with to write your letters. For example, if you have had the same English teacher for most of your high school career, that means they are familiar with you as a student and they would be best suited to write a recommendation for you. Or perhaps you are a volunteer with the peer mediation association at your school, and the advisor is familiar with your skills, then they would be a perfect person to write up a letter for you. Avoid asking teachers you do not know well or teachers who barely know your name and/or work and personality.

ASK YOUR EMPLOYER

If you are a high school student with a part-time job or maybe you are part of the cooperative learning program, then ask your boss for a letter of recommendation. Letters from employers and advisors and mentors from outside the school are just as valuable as a letter from a well-liked teacher within the school.

PROVIDE INFORMATION

When asking a teacher to write your letter of recommendation, be sure to provide them with all the information they will need, such as the school you are applying to, your intended major and anything else you feel would be a valuable addition to your letter.

ASK FOR EXTRA

Chances are, you are applying to more than one school. Instead of asking for separate letters, ask the person writing the letter to make multiple copies. This way you can send one to each school you are applying to.

SAY THANK YOU

Make sure you show your appreciation by thanking the individuals that wrote your letters for you. You can type up a personalized thank you note, or approach them in person with a verbal thank you, however be sure to show your appreciation. You never know when you may need another reference in your future.

Letters of recommendation are an important part of your college application. Be sure to choose your references wisely and show your appreciation. References are not only needed for college but they are helpful once you enter graduate school and even the workforce.