

Access College Foundation
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Letters of Recommendation

Most college applications request two or three recommendation letters from people who know you in and/or out of the classroom.

Whom Should I Ask?

English or math teachers usually make good candidates. Other than that, aim for someone who knows you well. It doesn't matter if it's your yearbook advisor or your tennis coach, as long as the person knows you personally and can communicate your strengths.

When Should I Ask?

Make sure to give your recommendation writers plenty of time to complete and send your recommendations (at least one month before letters are due). Before the end of your Junior year is optimum time if you plan to apply under Early Action, which we always recommend. Once the writer has verbally agreed to write for you, use our pre-formatted letter to formally request the letter.

How Can I Get The Best Possible Recommendations?

Talk to your recommendation writers. Use our pre-formatted request letter and provide a copy of your resume to remind them of your accomplishments. The best recommendation letters include specific examples and stories rather than vague praise.

Helpful Tips:

- **Don't be shy. Teachers and counselors are often happy to help you.**
- **Include addressed and stamped envelopes for each school to which you are applying.**
- **On the application form, waive your right to view recommendation letters.**
- **It is important to ask a recommendation writer if they can provide a positive recommendation for you.**
- **Follow up with your recommendation writers after a couple of weeks to make sure they are aware of your deadlines and will be able meet them.**
- **Write thank-you notes to your recommendation writers and, later, tell them where you've decided to go to college.**