

Academic / Scholarship Recommendation Request

Student name: _____

Letter to be written by _____ (individual) on or before _____ (date).

The letter of recommendation is for (check one):

- _____ College admission
- _____ Scholarship*
- _____ Other: _____

* List any special personal or family circumstances that have caused financial difficulty: _____

Please identify the individual, group or name of committee to receive the letter: _____

The letter should be returned to Mrs. Sarah Jimenez in the College Counseling Office.

Any questions should be directed to the student's counselor. Please consider the suggestions provided on the reverse side of this form.

Thank you for your time and effort on behalf of this student.

Student Information

Please provide detailed information listed and provide grade when involved.

Please list five adjectives that best describe you:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

• School related clubs, organizations, and activities: _____

• Community clubs/organizations/groups, religious activities, volunteer projects, etc.: _____

• Jobs or work experience: _____

• Awards, honors, accomplishments, positions of responsibility: _____

(See backside.)

How to Write a Strong Recommendation Letter

Effective teacher recommendations can play a critical role in the admission process. Teachers provide insights about students such as their strengths and potential for success. A well-written teacher recommendation can make a student come alive! As you write your letters, or provide guidance to others who may be asked to write letters, here are a few thoughts to consider.

Show, don't tell – Anecdotes are powerful tools. Provide concrete examples of your interactions with the student inside or outside of the classroom that highlight the student's character, academic abilities or stellar qualities. Whether it's a description of how they approached a group project or how their absence impacted classroom discussion or how their eyes light up when talking about a topic that excites them, your stories will convey their curiosity and engagement in a way that little else can.

Write about the student, not about yourself - A recommendation is not an opportunity for you to talk about your achievements or strengths as a teacher. Context is certainly important, so if you've been teaching for 25 years and a particular student is the best you've ever taught, then write that. Otherwise, the recommendation is not a place to share your resume or C.V.

Focus on the classroom - In their zeal to be as supportive as possible, some teachers write letters that are more expansive than necessary – detailing everything from classroom projects to extracurricular activities to family background. As you write, focus on the attributes that you are uniquely positioned to address – the student's academic engagement. Before you write, take a look at a sample Teacher Evaluation form, which asks you to rate your students in several areas. Even if you elect not to check boxes on the form, knowing what qualities matter to colleges can help you hone your descriptions, and help you to write a letter of great impact.

Provide an honest and fair assessment – You will want to think about the following – How does this student contribute to the classroom experience and the learning environment? Has this student gone above and beyond in some way? What potential do you see in this student? Is your class significantly different (in a negative way) when this student happens to not be in class?

Don't be afraid to say no – There will probably be some students for whom you just can't write a positive or effective letter. In those cases, you should say no... gently, but without apology. You might also consider guiding the student to another teacher who might be a stronger advocate. Better to disappoint the student than to write a weak letter that does not benefit the student or the college.

A letter of recommendation helps the selection committee members see the candidate as a person rather than just another applicant. It is best for each letter submitted to provide a perspective of the student different from the other recommendation letters.

Below are some guidelines that may be useful when writing a letter of recommendation. In ALL cases, letters are most helpful when **EXAMPLES** of behaviors and characteristics are included.

The references below are encouraged to provide recommendations that emphasize the perspective of the author's relationship with the student:

- Advisors – character, leadership, service, commitment
- Coaches – commitment, leadership, work ethic, team focus and attitude
- Employers – dependability, work ethic, leadership, initiative, responsibility
- Teachers – academic ability, student achievement and other classroom-related topics.

<u>Character</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
Trustworthy/Reliable	Loyalty to school or organization	Resourceful
Honesty	Helpful to school or organization	Contributes in decisions/ideas
Cooperative	Volunteers willingly	Delegates duties efficiently
Ambitious	Good team member	Dependable
Desirable personality	Responsible in duties	Strong initiative
Respectful	Concern for others	Role model
Attentive		