Writing Letters of Recommendation

The Teacher Recommendation

Yes, They Matter!

Agree to write a letter of recommendation **only** if you can honestly write a supportive letter **and** have the ability to complete it in a timely manner. You can decline to write any letter of recommendation if you feel you cannot fulfill the commitment. If you are not comfortable writing a letter, tell the student, or tell her or him that you are too busy.

**Organize your letter including the following information:**

State your relationship to the student and what makes you an expert to write about him/her

Describe his/her performance in **your** class; Include specific examples of work

Highlight character traits; Illustrate with examples and stories that demonstrate these traits

Discuss his/her growth and predict performance in college

Summarize and provide contact information

**Use anecdotal information – Show, rather than tell!**

**Examples to Include:**

· Ability to communicate · Intellectual curiosity

· Competitiveness · Self-confidence

· Willingness to accept responsibility · Direction

· Initiative · Ability to handle conflict

· Leadership · Interpersonal skills

· Creativity · Goal setting/achievement

· Integrity and ethics · Quality of academic work

**Options for the Completed Letter:**

* Most commonly preferred: Submit online through an online application platform (e.g. Common Application)
* Mail to the college/university in the stamped, addressed envelope provided by the student
* Return to the student in a sealed envelope with your signature across the flap
* Give it to the student’s counselor

**Remember**

· Take recommendation letters seriously

· Type all letters on your school’s letterhead

· Make your letter for each student personal and unique

· ONLY write about the context in which you know the student

· Avoid writing a “laundry list” of student activities and traits

· Provide accurate details about the student

· Avoid sweeping generalizations

· Keep it concise without sacrificing important content

· Proofread all letters

· Keep a copy