



Letters of Recommendation

How to stand out from the crowd

Many college applications request one or more recommendations from teachers, counselors, or other adults who know you well. **If the colleges that you are applying to require letters of recommendation**, use the guidelines below. Please don't request them until you know they are needed. Check the college website.

Whom should I ask?

Often colleges request letters of recommendation from an academic teacher (sometimes a specific discipline), and or your counselor. It is best to ask a teacher whom you have had in class for at least a full semester, if possible, and who taught you during junior or senior year. Colleges want current perspectives, from someone who knows you well. It's even better if you get a recommendation from a teacher who has also been involved with you outside the classroom, but unless a college specifically requests it, don't use a coach or someone who can't speak to your academic achievements and potential. You could add them as the recommenders on your common app site.

When should I ask?

Make sure to give your recommendation writers at least 3 weeks before letters are due to write and send your recommendations, but as with anything, the earlier the better. Many teachers like to have the summer to write recommendations, so if you know that you will be applying to a school that requires recommendations, and especially if you are applying under early action or early decision plans, you may want to ask teachers before the end of junior year.

Teacher Recommendations:

For teacher letters of recommendation, first talk to your recommenders **face to face**; then invite them through **Naviance**. Give teachers the specific college names and corresponding deadlines.

Counselor Recommendations:

Counselors require students to **complete their counselor's recommendation questionnaire** in Naviance under the **About Me Tab**.

Helpful tips

- Don't be shy. Teachers and counselors are often happy to help you, as long as you respect their time constraints.
- Provide teachers and counselor with deadlines for each recommendation that you are requesting, especially noting the earliest deadline.
- On the application form, waive your right to view recommendation letters. This gives more credibility to the recommendation in the eyes of the college.
- Follow up with your recommendation writers a week or so prior to the deadline, to ensure recommendations have been mailed, or to see if they need additional information from you. Check submission status in your family connection in Naviance.
- Write thank you notes to your recommendation writers and later, tell them where you've decided to go to college.

Source: www.collegeboard.com