

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FAQs

Question: From what academic subject areas should my letters of recommendation come?

Many colleges expect one Humanities/Liberal Arts recommendation letter (English or Social Studies) and one Science or Math recommendation letter... check with specific colleges for their requirements. If you know what major you intend to pursue in college, one of your letters should be from a subject related to that major. These are in addition to the Guidance Counselor/Division Teacher letter of recommendation that will include information regarding your overall academics, extracurricular, special programs, and community service.

Question: When should I ask Junior year teachers for letters of recommendation, and how much time should I allow for the letters to be written?

Teachers should be approached before the end of Junior year or as early in the Fall term of Senior year as possible. Respect their professional obligations as teachers by giving them 2 weeks to write you a letter of recommendation.

Question: What information should I provide to teachers from whom I seek letters of recommendation?

A "brag sheet" or resume indicating the activities in which you have engaged throughout high school.

A stamped and addressed envelope for each college to which the letter will be mailed or a blank envelope for the teacher to seal and sign over the flap if you intend to mail the letters with your applications.

Question: What makes a quality letter of recommendation?

Many elements contribute to a quality letter of recommendation. Those letters that specifically discuss your individual efforts and achievement in the subject class are more valuable than those letters that generally discuss the nature or scope of the subject class alone. Ideally, the teacher will include comments about individual assignments you completed or class activities in which you were engaged, your character, and other specific anecdotes... this will make the letter more effective and more personalized. Specific and detailed letters help to distinguish you from other college applicants.