

Letters of Recommendation

Many colleges require letters of recommendation. Generally, they ask for a letter from your counselor and two teachers. We have provided guidelines below to help you in the process of securing your recommendation letters. Other colleges do not require letters and we often get the question as to whether or not one should be sent anyway. Our best answer is to use your discretion. If the letter your recommender is sending is going to reveal new information that is not included in your application or if there is an extraordinary circumstance that needs to be explained then you may want to include it. Otherwise, concentrate on the parts of the application that are required.

Counselor Letters:

If you are requesting a letter of recommendation from your counselor, please come by the counseling office to pick up and complete a few biographical forms. The information you and your parents provide helps your counselor write a stronger recommendation letter! **Remember to allow time for completion.**

Teacher Recommendation Letters:

Some colleges require two or three recommendation letter from teachers/adults who know the student both in and out of the classroom.

1. It is the student's responsibility to request the letter and to follow-up to make sure the letter has been sent. It is our recommendation **to give the teachers at least two weeks to compose and send the letter**. A written "thank you" note, while not mandatory, is a very thoughtful way to express your gratitude for the teacher's extra efforts on your behalf. It is also a great way to follow up to make sure the letter has been sent.
2. Provide the teacher with **addressed and stamped envelopes to each of the colleges** to which you want them sent. Remember, any correspondence the college receives with your name on it is a reflection of you, so either type or use a label when addressing the envelope. A letter of recommendation should be kept confidential. Ideally, the teacher sends the letter directly to the admissions office. The letter should not be returned to the student.
3. While some colleges will require letters from teachers of specific subject areas, others leave it to the student's discretion. Core teachers make good candidates, but more importantly the teacher should know the student personally and be able to communicate the student's strengths.
4. In order to get the best recommendation possible it is a good idea to remind the teacher of your accomplishments by giving the teacher a brief resume along with the envelopes. The best letters include specific examples and stories rather than vague praise.