

## Letters of Recommendation

So, you want a letter of recommendation? Before you ask any of your teachers for one (especially me), here are a few things you need to consider:

❖ **How well does the teacher know you?**

- If the answer is that he or she has only known you a month or so, think about asking a team coach, a club sponsor, or a teacher from the previous two years. Also, do not be afraid to ask a Math, Science, Physical Education, or even a Socials teacher to write a letter for you. Many of them have been writing reasonable well for years – just make sure you ask them to double-check the mechanics! ☺

❖ **What information have you provided?**

- You need to make sure that you give every teacher you are asking to write a letter a copy of your resume, a description of your involvement and progress (academic and extra-curricular) at school, and specific information about the scholarship for or school to which you are applying. Remember that the more information you provide, the easier it will be for teachers to write fabulous things about you.

❖ **How much time have you given the teacher to write the letter?**

- Personally, I require at least two weeks advance notice. Although I am naturally brilliant, these letters still take time and they must be written during personal hours, so the two-week cushion is necessary.

❖ **Have you filled out the recommendation form to the fullest extent possible, and have you provided a stamped envelope?**

- Most recommendations require a form that includes your name, signature, etc. Make sure that you give this COMPLETED form to your teacher when you make your request. In addition, if the form is supposed to be sealed and mailed separately from your application, make sure that you have also given the teacher a STAMPED and ADDRESSED envelope with your form so that it can be mailed promptly. Also, if the recommendation is required to be confidential, make sure that you do not ask to see it before it is mailed because you are then asking the teacher to do something that is unethical.

❖ **What has your performance and attitude been like for the instructor you wish to write a letter?**

- Teachers, by nature, like students – that is why many of us decided to teach. However, when it comes to writing a letter of recommendation, if you have not performed well in a class, the fact that we like you cannot make up for your performance. If you have made a habit of not turning work in, or of exhibiting a consistently “underwhelming” attitude, be prepared for the instructor to mention this in the letter.

❖ **Do you actually intend to use this letter, or are you merely “shopping” for the best letters?**

- Do not ask a teacher to write a letter unless you actually intend to use it. Again, these letters take time, and to ask a teacher to write one just to see what he or she says is simply rude.

❖ **Did you thank the teacher?**

- Remember that what you are asking the teacher to do is not something that is part of the official job description. In other words, it is a favour. Make sure that you take the time to write a thank-you note after the letter has been written. In my case, you may substitute chocolate. ☺

## Required Information for Letters of Recommendation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student # \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Why do you need the letter/recommendation?

- a. Job application
- b. College/University application
- c. Scholarship application
- d. General reference—could be used for multiple applications

2. Name of job/university/scholarship

3. Describe how you fulfill the requirements of the application? (Complete all that apply)

- a. Personal Attributes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Academics: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Extra-Curricular: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- d. Work Experience: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. How long have I known you? (e.g. course/club and year)

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Is this supposed to be confidential?    YES                      NO

6. If you require more than one copy of the letter, how many do you need? \_\_\_\_\_

7. By what date do you need this completed? \_\_\_\_\_

8. When is the application due? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please attach your resume, application guidelines/requirements, and any other supporting documents to this form.**

I will mail the recommendation under separate cover if necessary and you have provided an addressed envelope, but please verify that I have done so. Otherwise, you may pick up your recommendation in class in two weeks.