

This reference letter format shows a typical reference letter. A reference letter should provide information on your connection with the person you are recommending, why they are qualified, and the skills they have.

The following reference letter format is appropriate for an employment reference, as well as a reference for graduate school.

## **Reference Letter Format**

### **Salutation**

If you are writing a personal letter of reference, include a salutation (Dear Dr. Smith, Dear Mr. Jones, etc.). If you are writing a general reference letter, say "To Whom it May Concern" or simply don't include a salutation.

### **Paragraph 1**

The first paragraph of the reference letter explains your connection to the person you are recommending, including how you know them, and why you are qualified to write a reference letter to recommend employment or graduate school.

### **Paragraph 2**

The second paragraph of the reference letter contains specific information on the person you are writing about, including why they are qualified, what they can contribute, and why you are providing a reference letter. If necessary, use more than one paragraph to provide details.

### **Paragraph 3**

When writing a reference letter referring a candidate for a particular job opening, the letter will include information on how the person's skills match the position they are applying for. Ask for a copy of the job posting and a copy of the person's resume so you can target your reference letter accordingly.

### **Summary**

This section of the reference letter contains a brief summary of why you are recommending the person. State that you "highly recommend" the person or you "recommend without reservation" or something similar.

### **Conclusion**

The concluding paragraph of the reference letter contains an offer to provide more information. Include a phone number within the paragraph, include the phone number and email address in the return address section of your letter, or in your signature.

Sincerely,

Writer Name

Title