

**ASKING FOR A RECOMMENDATION LETTER:
Who Can Write A Supportive Recommendation Letter?
What Do I Need To Do?**

This teacher MUST be able to include:

- Good stories that make you stand out from the rest of the applicant pool
- Examples of your potential to succeed in college

Choose someone who can answer the following questions:

- How did the student engage the intellectual material of the class?
- Discuss the student's motivation, participation, interests, and accomplishments in the class. (These are not the grades or accomplishments already listed on the student's college application.)
- How has the student maximized her/his opportunities in your class and/or at school?
- What other intellectual/academic qualities have you observed?
- What was this student's impact on the learning community? What kind of impact will this student have on the university?
- Is this student a good member of the community?
- Why would one want to interact with this student?

Highly competitive colleges and "concentration schools" (e.g. Caltech) recommend the following structure:

- Opening paragraph
 - Describe school setting (public/private; school size; % students going to 4-year schools).
 - Describe length/conditions of acquaintance with student.
 - How does this student compare to other students you have taught?
- Academic achievement
 - Describe your course's level of difficulty.
 - Evaluate student's performance & student's skills in relation to other students in the class.
- Personal traits; other key points you need to say about the student
(2003 NACAC Conference Workshop)

Student Checklist

- Make your request at least two weeks in advance.
- Attach the recommendation form from each school to this sheet.
- Give the teacher a stamped envelope addressed to each school.
- Include additional materials requested by the teacher (personal statement, resume).
- Follow up with the teacher as the deadline for your application nears.
- Write a thank-you note to the teacher after the letter has been sent.