

STUDENT LOAN

Visit DiscoverStudentLoans.com

[About](#)

[Apply](#)

[Cancel](#)

PLAN FOR COLLEGE

[LEARN ABOUT LOANS](#)

[FOR PARENTS](#)

[CALCULATORS](#)

6 STEPS TO GETTING AMAZING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Share [!\[\]\(b4eeff342f60cc7bcd67d869b4fedca2_img.jpg\) 0](#) [!\[\]\(7cbfaf281ed50ce10ba1259f16ecca5e_img.jpg\) 0](#) [!\[\]\(45e19980741702820171ea460fc10e37_img.jpg\) 0](#) [!\[\]\(d5565f5b32d64844d571aa3a4ff5174e_img.jpg\) 0](#)

In addition to your essays, letters of recommendation are one of the ways colleges can differentiate among students who may look the same on paper. They're also a great tool for students whose test scores may not fully reflect their achievements.

Nearly 60 percent of colleges consider letters of recommendation important to making their admission decisions, [according to the National Association of College Admission Counselors](#). Here's how to make sure you get the best recommendation letters possible.



1. Ask the right people.

Start by making sure you request letters of recommendation from appropriate individuals. Teachers or guidance counselors are good candidates. Asking someone you've built relationships with over your high school career is more important than asking the teacher whose class you aced. These people can talk about how you've grown or matured through the years.

If you have a job or volunteer, you might also ask your supervisor, who along with a coach or club sponsor, can describe the non-academic attributes you can bring to the college, such as leadership skills and teamwork. Do not request a letter from a parent or other family member, whose inherent bias would reduce the validity of the letter and could indicate that you couldn't find another trusted adult to vouch for you.

2. Give more than the minimum.

If the college asks for two to three letters, line up at least three, and consider sending one bonus letter. Sending a letter or two to schools at which they're optional is a good way to show your commitment to the school and to distinguish yourself from other applicants.

3. Get your request in early.

The most popular teachers typically get bombarded with recommendation letter requests from students and may have to start turning down requests once they're stretched thin. Don't ask your teacher on the first day of school, but do give him or her at least a month of lead time to write a great letter.

4. Make it easy for them.

Give your referrer a list of the schools that you're applying to upfront, so that they can tweak the same letter as needed for each institution rather than starting from scratch multiple times. Provide a packet that includes any recommendation forms and special instructions as well as a resume listing your activities and accomplishments that they can easily reference if needed.

5. Follow up politely.

Teachers and counselors get busy, especially around college admissions time. If you haven't confirmed that the letter's been sent, check back in a week prior to the due date to provide a friendly reminder.

6. Say thanks.

Remember anyone that writes you a letter of recommendation is taking aside time to do you a big favor. In today's fast-paced digital world, a hand-written thank you note can go a long way toward showing your appreciation. Once you've been admitted and decided where to go, be sure to let your referrers know and to thank them once again.

Author: Beth Braverman

Topics: [How Tos](#)

Older

[The Do's and Don'ts of Multitasking](#)

Newer

[7 Steps to Writing an Amazing College Essay](#)

[Return Back to Top](#)

Related Posts

[Letters of Recommendation: The Real Icing on Your College...](#)

[Understanding College Admissions](#)

[Scholarship Do's and Don'ts](#)

Popular Topics

[College Costs](#)

[Loan Questions](#)

[Graduates](#)

[Infographic](#)



Up to 100% of college costs covered.

Get at least a 3.0 GPA (or equivalent) and get a cash reward.

[Learn More](#)

Financial Aid Tip



Search for scholarships.

[View Calendar](#)

FAQs

[Financial Aid](#)

[Student Loan Basics](#)

[Repaying Student Loans](#)

[Tax Benefits](#)

Subscribe to Our Blog

[Privacy](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Contact](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Glossary](#)

©2015 Discover Bank, Member FDIC

