

College Recommendation Guidelines

I am happy to write letters of recommendation for students who have worked at success in my classes or that I have worked with through journalism, speech and debate, etc. Please speak to me in person prior to fulfilling any written requirements. If I have not spoken with you and I get a request via email, I will not write the recommendation. Carefully read the guidelines and follow the directions.

1. Remember that I am primarily an **academic** reference, even if I know you well. If you are asking me to recommend you on this basis, should have maintained a strong A/B average throughout the year, unless there is a clear exception that would be also worthy of a recommendation. As a member of the team - your trophy count is less important compared to your leadership and furthering the concept of “team”, etc.
2. Despite the importance of #1, a recommendation should not be a summary of your academic achievement in my classroom. Colleges have your data that they can track for improvement, and some even track data on particular classes and teachers. My recommendation should “fill a hole” in your application package. In other words, I need to be able to discuss items beyond classroom performance and test scores. The letter should be anecdotal. So if I ONLY know you as a student in the classroom, I might not be the best choice anyway. Do not assume that an English teacher will be a better reference because we are good writers. Find someone who can speak to you as an individual.
3. Please give me as much notice as possible. With the exception of a “reprint” letter (see below), **I require a minimum of 3 weeks notice for a standard recommendation and LONGER for a major deadline, such as October 15 or November 1.** I spend a tremendous amount of time crafting individual letters and often have multiple requests. I cannot accommodate late requests.
4. Do not hesitate to ask for a reference for more than one school or scholarship. Your letter will be saved, and I can plug in a different school name and address with ease.
5. **You must select and sign the box that says you WAIVE YOUR RIGHT to read the recommendation. If you do not want to waive that right, you must ask someone else. If you asked—and I said yes—then you should trust me!**
6. Use electronic submission whenever possible. Naviance is best.
7. Include the following in a folder or manila envelope:
 - A typed sheet of college titles and mailing addresses—and due dates—and whether they will be on Naviance, another method of electronic submission, or paper submission.
 - For non-electronic submissions: envelopes addressed and stamped. I prefer to mail on my own **unless you can show me in writing that the college does not want me to mail separately**—on this rare occasion, more common with scholarships, you should provide labeled envelopes for me to seal and sign.
 - Any forms required with the recommendation **completely filled out.** Do not expect me to fill in your name, etc **That includes my name, address, etc. this will be the school name and address.**
 - Your resume—this should an email address that you check regularly so that I can contact you if I have a question—and your cell phone # so I can call/text **you** if I am at home writing and have an important question that just can’t wait.
 - Any other relevant material about what the college is looking for in the letter.