



## Etiquette when Requesting a Letter of Recommendation

**Choose well.** Request recommendations from those who know you, since they will be better equipped to write a compelling recommendation for you.

Ask your potential recommender, "Do you feel you know me well enough to write a letter of recommendation for me for this particular position/program/school/scholarship/etc.?" rather than saying, "Will you write me a recommendation?" Asking if they feel comfortable writing one is a better approach and gives them a way out if they don't.

Identify what function your recommender should have. Who can write the best recommendation for you for *this particular* position/program/school/scholarship/etc.?

It is appropriate to ask a teacher for a recommendation addressing your academic accomplishments and experiences, and when applying to colleges, for scholarships, academic internships, and special programs.

**Start early.** Ideally, give the person about three weeks, but never less than two weeks to complete the recommendation. Most teachers are very busy and have numerous recommendations to write, so you want to be courteous. Plus, rushing them might lead to a recommendation that isn't as polished, specific or as positive as it could be.

Consider doing one or all of the following:

- Give your recommender an early deadline. Either let them know that you will pick up their recommendation early in order to send it as part of a complete application packet, or ask them to send the recommendation by a certain date.
- You want to give your recommender enough time to write a letter that includes specifics about your personal characteristics or accomplishments rather than "glittering generalities."
- Follow up in person at least one week before the letter is due to check in and see if your recommender needs any additional information from you
- Ask to be notified by email once the recommendation has been sent, if possible

**Provide full information.** Often, teachers will need some specific information from you in order to write an effective recommendation. Help us help you. **If you are requesting a recommendation from an EMHS staff member, please provide the following information:**

- The name of the position/program/school/scholarship/etc. *and* a description or brief relevant information about it.
- A short statement of why you are interested in *this particular* position/program/school/scholarship/etc. and how it *specifically* fits into your short or long-term goals.

- The name and title of the person who will receive the completed letter, if known. “To Whom It May Concern” is impersonal, and the inappropriate use of Miss, Mrs., Ms., Mr., Dr., etc. can be offensive.
- The date by which you need the recommendation, and if you will pick up the recommendation personally, or would like it to be mailed, emailed, faxed, or submitted online. Provide the address or website where the letter is to be submitted. If you will pick up the recommendation personally, it is standard practice for recommenders to provide your letter in a sealed envelope with his/her signature over the seal.
- If you expect the person to mail the recommendation, be prepared to provide a stamped envelope.
- A complete Letter of Recommendation Questionnaire from Naviance.
- Your up-to-date resume, which includes specific items (e.g., volunteer experiences, leadership, courses taken, etc.) (*Optional because most of this information will be provided in the Letter of Recommendation Questionnaire*)
- Ask your recommender if he/she would like a copy of your most recent transcript (You will need to submit a Transcript Request through the EMHS website under Academics → Request a Transcript for an unofficial transcript.)
- Provide the name(s) of others who will be writing recommendations on your behalf. This information helps the recommender adjust his/her comments in important ways.

All information provided should be correct, complete, up-to-date, and free from typos, misspellings, etc.

**Waive your right to read the letter.** It is highly recommend that you do so. This reassures the reader that the instructor has written a candid letter. Studies have shown that confidential letters carry far more weight. In addition, writers are far more comfortable writing a complete, candid letter when they know the applicant will not have access to the text. If you fear that the letter writer might not do justice to your achievements or might include negative information — well, that's a good sign you should not be asking that person for a letter of recommendation.

**Be gracious.** You need to say thank you and send a personalized thank you note to the individual who wrote your recommendation. (A handwritten note is often more deeply appreciated than an email.) That way, they will be more inclined to write you another recommendation if asked again. Finally, let your recommender know if you got the job, the scholarship, admitted, etc. It is nice to let us know if our efforts were fruitful!

*\*Adapted from the University of Irvine and Peterson’s*



# Letter of Recommendation Request

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date Needed \_\_\_\_\_

*I waive my rights to this letter of recommendation.* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Initials*

1. Indicate the name of the position/program/school/scholarship/etc. *and* a description or brief relevant information about it.

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2. Provide a short statement of why you are interested in *this particular* position/program/school/scholarship/etc. and how it *specifically* fits into your short or long-term goals.

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3. Provide the name and title of the person who will receive the completed letter, if known.

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4. Provide the address, website or email where the letter is to be submitted or indicate if it should be submitted with your Common Application or through Naviance. Or you may indicate if you will pick up the recommendation personally. (If you expect the person to mail the recommendation, be prepared to provide a stamped envelope.)

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5. Attach a complete Letter of Recommendation Questionnaire from Naviance.

6. Attach your up-to-date resume (*Optional because most of this information will be provided in the Letter of Recommendation Questionnaire.*)

7. Ask your recommender if he/she would like a copy of your most recent unofficial transcript. If yes, you will need to submit a Transcript Request through the EMHS website under "Academics → Request a Transcript".

8. Provide the name(s) of others who will be writing recommendations on your behalf for this particular position/program/school/scholarship/etc.

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