

## **Letters of Recommendation**

Most colleges and universities—and many other programs including scholarship applications—require that students provide recommendations to support their applications. If there is a cardinal rule for the recommendation process it is this: **ASK EARLY (Spring of Junior Year)**.

***How many recommendations do I need?*** Typically you will be required to have a counselor letter and two teacher letters. But the answer depends on the application requirements of the colleges to which you are applying. Your School Counselor recommendation is a standard part of your application package, along with your transcript, that is sent from the high school to the college. Apart from that, a college will usually specify how many other recommendations they want and if they want letters from teachers in specific subjects. That number varies from school to school. This is one of the many reasons that it is absolutely essential that students read all application instructions very carefully and early. The most accurate place to check application requirements is on the college website under the Admissions section.

***Should I include extra recommendations?*** You may want to ask someone who is not a teacher to write one more if there is something substantial to be said, or that is distinctly different than what your teachers will say. We strongly suggest speaking with your counselor if you are considering an additional recommendation.

***Who should write my recommendations?*** Be sure to note any requirements in your application instructions. A college may dictate the subject areas from which they want your recommendations. Generally, at least one of your recommendations should be from a core academic teacher and you should generally choose teachers who know you well. Senior year teachers who have only had you in class for a short time are generally not the best choice.

### ***Best Choices:***

- Junior year teachers (but not required)
- teachers whom you have had more than once
- teachers who know you in other capacities (i.e. as a coach or club advisor), and
- teachers in the field in which you intend to major

Ask teachers who have seen the best of you and who can make the most positive remarks. This does not, however, mean that you have to choose a teacher in whose class you received an 'A'. Sometimes, a teacher who has witnessed your efforts in trying to be successful in a particularly challenging class can have more to say about you as a student who can overcome obstacles than a teacher can who saw you breeze through his or her course material.

You should try to avoid overlap in subject area (i.e. don't have two science teachers). Try to have some balance.

**~ REMEMBER TO ASK EARLY ~**

**~ IN PERSON ~**

**~ BEFORE SCHOOL LETS OUT FOR SUMMER ~**