



Watch this YouTube video for an overview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDGVAYx-xQ>

Why do some colleges want letters of recommendation from teachers and counselors?

- Letters of recommendation help admissions committees understand and get to know you. They share how your mind processes information and works through problems.
- They are an opportunity for your teachers and counselor to present their perspectives of you and how you may contribute to intellectual and social communities on campus.
- The letters can be useful to expand upon or support a point of pride mentioned elsewhere in your application or inform the college of experiences that haven't been discussed elsewhere.

How do I decide which teachers to ask?

- Colleges prefer to see junior year teachers as recommenders - your performance is fresh on their mind and these classes are typically more rigorous than those from sophomore or freshman year.
- Select teachers who teach core academic classes. If multiple letters are required, include teachers from a range of subjects.
- Consider teachers who you've had more than once or who serve as an advisor or mentor to you. They can discuss their experience with you in and out of the classroom.
- Which teachers have the most unique information about you to share? Ask those that will write a letter you would be proud to present.

What preparation do I need to do before asking for a letter?

- Fill out the attached questionnaire about your experience in their class for your teacher:
 - While college admissions won't be reading these forms, write them as if they were! Teachers might use similar language - describe yourself in a way you would want colleges to see.
 - Use specific examples and deep thought to differentiate yourself from your peers.
 - This saves your teacher time - you should spend more time on this than they do.
- Ask to set up a meeting with your teacher to discuss the letter of recommendation.
 - Tell your teacher what encouraged you to ask them for a recommendation.
 - Explain you'd like to find some time to share thoughts or stories that demonstrate how you benefited from their class.
 - You can share that from the research you've done on college applications, these questions have been deemed important in letters.

How is the counselor letter of recommendation different?

- This letter covers your entire high school career and can discuss what is not elsewhere in your application. It covers the bigger picture - family, community, and activities.
- Their letter may reference cultural differences or priorities, examples of your leadership outside of the classroom, or indicates your influence on the community.

What preparation should I complete before asking my counselor for a letter?

- Check with your school's counseling office - do they have a form to fill out for your counselor to give them more information about your high school experience? If not, you and your parents can fill out the attached Counselor and Parent forms.
- Ask to set up a meeting with your counselor to discuss the letter of recommendation, review the forms you filled out, and to let them know the schools you're interested in.