

Teacher Letters of Recommendation – Student Request

Most private, selective colleges require one or two recommendations from teachers and one from your counselor. In most cases large, public colleges and universities do not require letters of recommendation. Please check your college admission website to determine if and how many letters are required.

Student Guidelines

- Confirm that you actually need a teacher letter of recommendation before asking! You should also confirm how many letters are required/accepted by each college. Please do not make extra work for a teacher if a letter is not actually required!
- Request in person four weeks before a letter is needed (prior to deadline). Faculty do not want to write recommendations for students who simply leave notes on their desks or email them. It is best to ask privately rather than in the lunch area or in a classroom full of students. **October 2nd for all Early Applications. December 4th for Regular Decision Applications (Same as the Transcript Request deadline)*
- Provide your teacher a copy of your resume **and** either the student prompts submitted to Mr. Bergman and/or the attached *Student Information/Teacher Letter of Recommendation* form. Do so completely, accurately, and legibly prior to the above deadlines.
- Sign the FERPA waiver, Sync your CommonApp and Naviance accounts and electronically request your teacher through Naviance (instructions below).

Which teacher(s) should you ask?

- Ask a teacher who knows you well. Colleges prefer that you have letters from teachers whom you have had for junior or senior core-level subjects. Sophomore teachers will occasionally write a letter.
- The teacher who gave you the highest grade may not be the one who is likely to write you the best recommendation; it is more important that the teacher knows you well.
- Ask teachers who will write the strongest letters, even if they are in similar subject areas. However, check college requirements for recommenders - some colleges require one from a humanities course, and another from a math or science course.
- Consider asking teachers of courses in which you have overcome obstacles to demonstrate significant improvement and perseverance, even if it was not your strongest subject.

Who sends the letters of recommendation?

Recommendation letters are sent directly from the teachers or counselors who write them (most are sent electronically through Naviance), not from students. School policy prohibits the teacher or counselor from providing you the letter, even in a sealed envelope. The colleges and scholarship organizations want to ensure that the teacher/counselor's writing is a candid appraisal of your ability. Thus, letters must be confidential. Recommendation letters are *not* given to students.

Requesting Letters of Recommendation through Naviance

In order to request Letters of Recommendation electronically through Naviance, your Common App and Naviance accounts must be matched. To do so follow instructions provided in this mailing (or follow tutorial). Most college admissions offices recommend that you waive your access to a letter of recommendation (*FERPA* waiver). It is widely held that letters of recommendation do not have the same credibility with the colleges unless students waive their right of access.

Directions for requesting Teacher Letters of Recommendation through Naviance:

- Log in to your Naviance account
- On the top bar click on **Colleges**
- Click on **Letters of Recommendation**
- Click on **Add Request**
- Select the teacher from the dropdown menu
- Click on **Submit Request**

Please note that colleges must be added to your **Colleges I'm Applying To** list in order to request recommendations.

Again, most of your recommendations will be submitted electronically through Naviance. There are a few selective colleges that ask students to invite teachers/counselors to submit recommendations electronically on their behalf (Georgetown and MIT, e.g.). For these schools you will enter your teacher and counselor emails directly into your application. Please confirm with your recommenders that the email invitation was received.

Outside Recommenders

Some colleges accept additional recommendations from non-Pine View affiliated staff, individuals who can attest to your accomplishments and character in other settings (e.g., coaches, mentors, supervisors, professors, etc.). These "outside recommenders" should be electronically invited through the *Common Application*.

Show gratitude

- Write a thank-you note to your teachers for taking the time to write your letter.
- Please keep your recommenders apprised regarding admissions decisions. We care, that's why we write. At the end of the process, please let us know where you have decided to attend.

Student Information Request/Teacher Letter of Recommendation

College Admissions representatives want specific examples of your strengths as an academic learner and school citizen. Completing this form and sharing it with your teachers will help them to prepare an effective and strong letter of recommendation on your behalf.

Student Name: _____

Instructor: _____

Course(s)/Level/Grade: _____

Background Information

1. Why did you select me to write your letter of recommendation?
2. Which lesson(s) in my class especially intrigued you? Of which class project(s) are you most proud?
3. How would you describe yourself as a learner in my class? How do/did you contribute to the learning in my classroom? Please provide any specific examples.
4. Briefly discuss how any outside or extracurricular activities you have participated in align with your academic interests?

College Plans/Aspirations

1. To which colleges are you applying (please list)? Which colleges require my recommendation?
2. What is the earliest application deadline for which you need my letter? (Include school and date)
3. Which major(s) do you intend to pursue in college, and why?
4. What are your plans for the future? What would be your ideal job, or post-academic outcome(s). What might you want to do after college?

Personal Profile

1. What are three words or phrases you would use to describe yourself?
2. Do you have an approach to life or life philosophy? If so, what is it?
3. Do you believe your academic record (transcript information and test scores) provide an accurate representation of you as a student? Why or why not? (This is an opportunity for you to discuss any circumstances in your life that have had a significant impact on you and/or your academics)

