

A couple things to consider when asking for a letter of recommendation...

Asking for a letter of recommendation (rec.) can be daunting, but it is usually a very positive part of your college application process. Most teachers are usually very happy to write a rec for you based on what he or she knows of you as a student and/or as a person. *However, do keep in mind teachers are obligated to be **honest** in recommendations.* But you need to do a few things first:

1. Give the teacher all the necessary information.

- When did that teacher have you in class, and for how long? A semester? Two years? Which classes?
- Does the teacher know enough about **you** to write a good rec? Perhaps you should supply him or her with a bio sheet if he or she does not.
- What are some assignments (1 or 2) from the class that you feel indicate your best work or pushed you to be a stronger student? Please tell the teacher why you feel this way. Then the teacher may put these in the letter to illustrate your academic strengths.

2. Take care of all the envelopes and forms.

It's easy to overlook small details, but here's a rule of thumb: if you are asking someone a favor, make it as easy for that person to help you as possible. In requesting a rec., there are several simple things that you can do to make a teacher's life easier:

- Provide stamped envelopes with the school's return address. (Most colleges don't like the rec. returned to you. It compromises candor.)
- Let the teacher know what each envelope is for. Put a post-it note on each envelope (or attached group of envelopes) indicating the due date of the rec.
- Fill out as much of a form as possible.
 - Students always fill out their own names and addresses, but they often don't think about other lines. The ones that say Teacher's Name, School, School Address, classes in which you had the student, years you have known the student, etc., may not seem like much to you, but if a teacher is faced with dozens of recs to write these things can take precious time. Filling them out in advance is a nice thing to do for any teacher who is taking the time to write these things for you.

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3. After you've given the initial information, ask the teacher if he or she needs any more information about you.

Some teachers have specific information they'd like to address in the letters they write, they will usually let you know if they need more info, but you being proactive in this is another polite way to help the person who is doing you a favor by writing the letter.

4. Remind the teacher as the due dates approach.

The teacher won't be offended, as long as you're polite about "checking in" and not pesky. In fact, it will help guarantee that teacher doesn't get so bogged down with other things that your rec. slips his or her mind.

5. Let the teacher know the results!

Teachers are always amazed at the number of recs. written that vanish into a black hole. Teachers take time out of their life to do this for you, the least you can do is take time out of your busy schedule to let them know the results! If a teacher is interested enough in you to take the time to write a rec., he or she is probably interested enough to want to know the results. This is the simplest token of your gratitude you can give to someone who has done you a favor.