

Guide to Letters of Recommendation

The purpose of the letter of recommendation is to provide the scholarship committees with documentation of your skills, abilities, attributes, etc. They want to read the opinion of someone who is familiar with your background and knows you well.

SEEK GOOD LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION.

- *Ask people that know you well.* You should pick people who cannot only write well, but write well about you. If they seem uncomfortable with the idea of writing a letter of recommendation for you, please consider another individual. People who can comment on your personal attributes such as honesty, integrity, initiative, etc. are the best individuals to ask.
- *Choose people who are relevant.* For example, ask a science teacher to write a letter of recommendation for a science scholarship, not your English teacher.
- *Family members should not be used.*

PROVIDE DIFFERENT ASPECTS.

- *Academic Performance:* choose teachers who have known you the longest and are more impressed with your qualifications.
- *Work Ethic:* choose an employer or coach that you have a good relationship with and values your work performance.
- *Community Involvement:* select advisors and leaders from organizations that you have been directly involved in and that know you well.

GOOD LETTERS TAKE TIME.

- *Allow 2-3 weeks.* Provide the writer plenty of time to create your letter. Gently reminding them a few days before the deadline.
- *Provide a resume.* Give a list of your accomplishments to help with the process. Even people who have known you for a long time may not be familiar with all of your accomplishments. This can jog their memory to put more detail in your letter of recommendation.
- *Send a thank you note.* Show your gratitude for the writer's time invested on your behalf.