

Requesting High School Recommendations at ICS

Teachers desire to do their best on behalf of their students! They want their students to succeed and attend the high school that is best for each student. To make the experience successful for you and your teachers, follow this process.

High schools often request different formats for recommendations: letter, written form, or on-line form. Your teachers will take time and a conscious effort to write a fair recommendation for you. Everything you do to make this process easier will result in a better recommendation. As time is always a factor, do not wait to ask for your recommendations.

1. CHOOSE THE RIGHT PERSON

Often, high schools request English and mathematics teachers to write recommendations. They may also request that a principal or third party submit a recommendation for you. If you have a choice, be sure to find someone who knows you very well and can speak to your strengths.

2. ASK EARLY

English and mathematics teachers receive **many** requests for recommendations. As soon as you know you will be applying to a school that requires recommendations, ask your teachers immediately. A minimum of **three weeks** ahead of time is best.

Do not leave forms or notes in teachers' mailboxes. Instead you, the student, should approach the recommender at a convenient time. Say, "Hi Mrs. Booker. I am in need of a recommendation for (fill in the blank). Would you be comfortable giving me a recommendation?" Never assume that the person will be willing to write a letter. If the answer is no, then be grateful for the honesty, say thank you, and move on.

3. PROVIDE ALL NECESSARY INFORMATION/FORMS NEEDED

If the school(s) to which you are applying has a four-page form, make sure you provide it to the recommender. If the school uses online forms, be sure to tell the recommender that you will provide the school with his or her email address and he or she should expect an email directly from the school. **If the form must be returned by snail mail, provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope. It is extremely important that you provide the due date for the recommendation.** Recommenders may choose to wait to write the recommendation closer to the due date, as they may want more time to get to know your or observe more of your performance in class.

4. PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF

In a short letter, tell the teacher about your unique and outstanding traits, how you perform(ed) in his or her class, what your future goals are, and other things that might help to jog the teacher's memory. Be specific about your traits: reliable, punctual, particular skills, creativity, talent in sports or music, etc.

5. GENTLE REMINDER

Though it is often not necessary, you may check in with the recommender a week before the recommendation's due date and offer a friendly reminder. You do not want to appear pushy or demanding, but you do want to make sure the recommendation arrives on time. Teachers will be writing many recommendations, so express gratitude when you ask.

6. SAY THANK YOU!

Get in the habit of thanking the person who writes your recommendation. A written note of appreciation is best. Also, once you begin hearing from schools, return to the person who wrote your recommendations and let them know what you heard!

7. LETTER HAS NOT ARRIVED?

If the due date rolls around and the school to which you applied has not received the recommendation, politely remind the recommender of your due date and your need. Never assume the letter has not been written. Chances are it may have been lost by the school or in the cyber world!

Sources:

"Advice on the Etiquette of Requesting Recommendation Letters from Your Teachers" from www.surfurk.com

"Recommendation Letter Etiquette: Guidelines for Requesting a Faculty Reference" From Seattle Pacific University Website