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# Make Your Letters of Recommendation Count

As with all application procedures, when it comes to submitting letters of recommendation, each college has its own requirements. Some (often the larger public universities) simply have too many applications to review—therefore, recommendation letters aren't a part of their process.

The majority of the best-known schools, however, do require at least one letter; most students will need to secure letters from **two core academic teachers** and a **counselor**. Remember that, since admissions readers want to know as much about you at this moment in time, they typically prefer teachers from **junior year**.

If you are a specialist student—an artist or athlete, for instance—applying to a talent-based program, you will probably need a rec letter from a **coach, instructor, or other mentor** in that area of specialty.

It's also good practice to be prepared in the event that colleges take **optional letters of recommendation**. If you have held down a job, volunteer extensively, or devoted countless hours to a particular extracurricular activity, the perspective of **your supervisor or advisor** can lend a unique dimension to your application.

**Whom will you ask?** Answer the questions below to clarify your game plan:

## **COUNSELOR:**

**What counselor is in charge of writing recommendation letters?** (*College counselor? Academic advisor? School counselor?*)

On a scale of 1 - 10 (*not at all to very well*), **how well does that person know me?**

On a scale of 1 - 10 (*1 - very negative; 5 - neutral; 10 - very positive*), **what sort of impression have I made on that person?**

**What can I do before senior year begins to get better acquainted with that person?** (*It could be as simple as dropping by their office during lunch to introduce yourself—don't overdo it.*)



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## **TEACHERS:**

**Who is my favorite teacher?**

**In what class was my academic work strongest?**

**What teacher saw me improve my class performance the most?**

**Who knows me best as a person, and can speak in detail about my personal character? Do I keep in regular contact with any teacher outside of class?**

**Who are my core academic teachers from junior year?**

**ENGLISH/HISTORY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MATH/SCIENCE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If any of the teachers named above were NOT from my junior year, how can they speak to my growth throughout the past year?** *(For example, will your sophomore science teacher have you again during senior year? Did your tenth grade English teacher also serve as your mock trial advisor throughout eleventh grade?)*

## **OTHER:**

**Is there an activity, skill set, or talent into which I have invested a significant amount of energy? If so, who can speak most knowledgeably about the work that I have done in that area?**