



# HOW TO GET A GOOD LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We at IEFLP require letters of recommendation because we want to help you start learning about the application process. We also want to provide you with practice in honing skills that will be useful in your academic and professional future.

Applications for college, scholarships, awards, and jobs generally require letters of recommendation. Getting a letter of recommendation calls for wise action on your part, for your goal should be to get a *good* letter, a *strong* letter, a *winning* letter. You can guarantee this by following the recommendations listed below.

## 1. The Request

- Ask a someone who knows you well (but who is not related to you). Choose someone who is familiar with as many of the following as possible: your academic background, your skills, your work experience, your character, your volunteer work, your potential. For IEFLP applications, you need to ask a teacher and one other person for letters of recommendation.
- Specifically ask for a supportive letter: For example,  
“ Would you be willing to write a letter of recommendation that would help me be selected for the \_\_\_\_\_ scholarship (program, grant, etc.)?”  
“ ... for admission to (name of college)?”  
“ ...for a job as a \_\_\_\_\_ with (company, district, agency, etc.)?”
- Do give the letter writer ample time—making your request **three weeks** before the deadline is best.

## 2. Essential Information for the Writer

- Specify whether the letter needs to be completed on-line, given to you in a sealed envelope so you can include it with your application, or sent directly to wherever you are applying. For IEFLP applications, you need to send the letters with your application, so the letter should be given directly to you.
- Specify:
  - when you need the letter
  - to whom the letter should be addressed
  - where it should be sent
  - that the letter, if possible, should be on official letterhead
- Provide a stamped, addressed envelope.
- Provide any special directions for the letter of recommendation given by the place to which you are applying.

# HOW TO GET A GOOD LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION (CONTINUED)

## 3. Supportive Material

- Help your letter writer remember you. Remind him/her how long and in what context he/she knows you.
- Remind her/him of any leadership positions you have held (in student government, in sports, in community or sports youth groups, at work, etc.)
- Provide a resume or biographical statement.  
If you are applying for college admission or a scholarship, at a minimum, your letter writer should know your career goals, your GPA, your major or intended major. If you are applying for a scholarship, do share information about yourself that indicates financial need.
- If applying for a job, provide a job description and the list of required qualifications. Then, help your letter writer by describing how your qualifications or experience match job duties and application requirements.
- Do point out to your letter writer anything you especially want him/her to say about you.

## 4. Check for Delivery

One week before the deadline, check to see if the recommendation has been sent. If not, contact the writer to ask if he/she needs any additional information in order to complete the letter by the due date.

## 5. Thank You Letter

Send your letter writer a thank you note. A handwritten note is best, but if you are unable to do that, send an email message. If you are successful in your application, do send an email message letting your letter writer know that you got the job, were accepted to college, or whatever goal the letter of recommendation helped you reach.