

Recommendations are often key to applying to colleges or for scholarships. Below are some answers to frequently asked questions:*

Who should a student choose to write a recommendation?

1. First, check the college application and see if the college requires a recommendation from a teacher of a specific subject.
2. Choose a teacher from the junior or senior year of high school.
3. Consider contacting a teacher that teaches the subject that relates to your future area of study or the scholarship you are applying for. If you may major in history, approach a history teacher. If you are applying for an engineering scholarship ask your math or science teacher to write the letter.
4. Figure out which teacher (or job supervisor or community person) knows you best and likes you. Which person can comment on the growth you made as you have known them? Who can comment on specific experiences that may highlight your strengths?
5. Who do you think may be the best writer?

When should I ask my teacher to write a recommendation?

1. Ideally, you should ask two months before, but approach the teacher no later than two weeks before the recommendation is needed.
2. Do not approach the teacher between classes or on the run. It is best to try and make an appointment with the teacher so you have time to discuss why you are applying and why you selected that teacher.
3. The teacher may in turn ask the student to complete a few questions to assist them in writing the recommendation. SEHS now has a teacher questionnaire online in Naviance. Some teachers may request you complete this questionnaire, others will have their own form to fill out.

What else should I give my teacher?

1. Teachers may be writing recommendations for many students. You might want to give them your resume with activities and honors in the school and the community.
2. Give them a copy of the college's recommendation form or directions.
3. Consider giving them a copy of your outstanding work in their class as a reference.
4. If you think the teacher can shed light on any "bumps in the academic road" please ask them to discuss why they still believe you can be successful in college.
5. Give them a stamped, addressed envelope for the completed recommendation.
6. Teachers are very busy—set a time when you will either pick up the recommendation (usually for private scholarships) or check on the mailing.

What should I do when asked to sign a waiver stating that you will not look at any recommendations?

It is recommended that you sign the waiver. This demonstrates, that you have confidence that the recommendation will be positive.

Resources used for this article include:

*[The Parents Guide to College Admissions](#) by Marjorie Nieuwenhuis and [Best Answers to the 201 Most Frequently Asked Questions About Getting Into College](#) by Mary Kay Shanley and Julia Johnston