

## GUIDELINES FOR REQUESTING A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

One of the most important pieces of a college or scholarship application is the recommendation of a teacher, counselor, or administrator. College admission offices and scholarship committees take these letters very seriously, and it is critical that you do your best to get the best letters of recommendation possible. Listed below is a step-by-step guide that will help you get great recommendations.

### 1. Research

It is crucial that you know where the letter of recommendation should be sent, how it should be sent, and the date it needs to be received. Some schools/committees want the person who wrote the recommendation to send it directly, while others may want the letter submitted with the entire application packet. Make sure that you know the details!

### 2. Organize

Use the Letter of Recommendation Request form to detail information about yourself. It is important to thoughtfully respond to each question, as it will help the person writing your Letter of Recommendation. Do not leave any questions blank!

### 3. Select Teachers

Determine which teachers you would like to write letters on your behalf. Select 3-4 teachers who you feel know your qualities and skills. A good letter of recommendation tells a story about the student. The story should reflect strengths and how the student has shown growth. Therefore, you need to choose a teacher who knows you well. You also need to make sure that you choose at least one (1) teacher in a core academic discipline (English, Math, Science, Social Studies). You need to select the teacher who knows your work, effort, and who can highlight your positive personal qualities.

Another reason to request letters of recommendation from multiple sources is so that different letters serve different purposes more effectively. One letter may be better for college applications, while another may be a better fit for scholarships. ***With the teacher's permission, you may photocopy the original and use the letter multiple times.***

### 4. Think Before you Ask

Teachers are busy people. Don't wait until the last minute to request a Letter of Recommendation. Don't assume that teachers will write letters during school vacations (you don't want homework during vacations; neither do teachers)! Use the research that you completed in Step 1, and consider requesting the Letter of Recommendation a couple of months before the deadline. Be considerate and respectful of their time.

### 5. Pop the Question

Think about the best time to ask your teacher; just before or after class is not a good time. Ask when they are available to talk for a few minutes. Explain what the letter would be used for, why you want them to write the letter, and ask if they are willing to write a Letter of Recommendation on your behalf.

### 6. Be Ready

Have a folder ready to hand over to the teacher. The folder should include:

- A completed Letter of Recommendation Request
- Updated resume
- Specific form from college/scholarship to be completed (if applicable)

### 7. Thank-You

Express your gratitude by writing a hand-written card. Saying, "Thank-You" is not enough. A hand-written note is very important!

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION REQUEST  
(To Be Completed By Student)**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Today's Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Counselor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ID #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cumulative GPA** (ask counselor if you don't know): \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose of the letter:**  College    Scholarship    Employment    Other:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date you would like the recommendation:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Allow two to three weeks for a staff member to write a letter of recommendation*

**Teacher's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What Class Did You Take From Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_ **When:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What Grade Did You Earn:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Share information about you and your family (Include languages spoken, number of kids in family, education of parents, etc.)**

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2. **Describe one or two major events that you see as a turning point(s) in your development and explain why you view them as such.**

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3. **Describe your specific personal, educational, and professional goals you hope to accomplish in your lifetime. Why and how do you plan to achieve this goal?**

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**4. What is your greatest strength/asset? What are some of your limitations? Are there any obstacles that you have overcome in order to get where you are today?**

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**5. List classes that have impacted you or challenged you. Include Advanced, College Prep, AP or other special courses.**

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**6. List activities, clubs, sports, and/or student government participation. Also list any awards/honors that you have received. Please provide specific information.**

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**7. What do you feel have been your greatest contributions to the David Douglas community. What have you contributed to your friends/family?**

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8. **Describe a situation in which you demonstrated leadership or compassion.**

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9. **Is there anything you wish to add which would help in writing the letter of recommendation? (educational background, special family situation, medical history, family trauma, personal achievements)**

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Please use the following rating system to complete all the items in this **self-evaluation**.

5=excellent ● 4=very good ● 3=average ● 2=below average ● 1=need improvement immediately

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Do you get to class on time?
2. \_\_\_\_\_ If you are absent, do you call a classmate to get missed classwork or homework?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Do you enter the classroom respectfully and ready to work?
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Do you volunteer to answer questions in class?
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Do you listen respectfully when someone else is speaking?
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Do you ask questions in class or after class to clarify what you don't understand?
7. \_\_\_\_\_ How interested and enthusiastic are you in class?
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Do you take responsibility for completing your tasks without having to be reminded?

**What do you need to work on and how do you plan to improve?**

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