

# MOCK LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Getting into college requires a number of things including good grades, test scores, a well written college admissions essay (personal statement), an exceptional application, and outstanding letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation help colleges see you from a perspective that may not be evident on your application. Some of the things that colleges want to see in your letters of recommendation include: your intellectual purpose, motivation, maturity, integrity, independence, originality, initiative, leadership, capacity for growth, special talents, and enthusiasm. Typically colleges want letters from teachers or counselors who know you best.

You will be writing a letter of recommendation *about yourself* to get into college. You will pretend you are a teacher named John Q. Teacher. The purpose of this activity is to help you see that getting into college requires more than just good grades. Involvement in extra-curricular activities that help you demonstrate some of the characteristics listed in the first paragraph should be included. To prepare for the writing assignment, please fill out the *Student Data Sheet for a Letter of Recommendation*.

What you may discover, while writing the letter of recommendation, is that you do not stand out among your peers. This should be a wake-up call to you. If your letter makes you sound very average, you need to get involved in activities that give you a chance to demonstrate your best attributes. Colleges, scholarship committees, and employers want letters that make it clear that they would be foolish not to choose you. Use powerful adjectives when describing yourself.

## Due Date:

A typed final draft of your letter of recommendation is due on \_\_\_\_\_.

## Paper Set-up:

- 12 point font
- Single spaced
- No more than one page long
- Written from the third-person perspective (i.e. “Susan is an astute leader.” vs. “I am an astute leader.”)

## Paper Organization:

- Date
- Greeting: To Whom it May Concern
- Paragraph #1: States how the teacher knows the student
- Paragraph #2: States how the student compares to other students
- Paragraph #3: States growth and/or maturity that has been demonstrated
- Paragraph #4: States one or more of the following: intellectual purpose, motivation, integrity, independence, originality, initiative, leadership, special talents, or enthusiasm.  
Be sure to provide examples of how these qualities are demonstrated.
- Paragraph #5: Summarizes what was stated in paragraphs 2-4 and states a prediction about the student
- Closing: Sincerely, John Q. Teacher

SAMPLE

May 11, 20\_\_

*(press enter 5 times)*

To Whom it May Concern:

*(press enter 2 times)*

I have had the pleasure of knowing Juan Ramirez as a member of our Scholars program and as a student for the last four years. The Scholars program seeks to recruit students who are positive, determined, and who accept responsibility for their actions. Juan is all of these things and more. From the first day as a freshman, I knew he would be going places.

*(press enter 2 times)*

In my 14 years of teaching I have had encountered numerous students with talent. Juan, however, is at the top of my list. While other students may be happy just getting by, Juan is not. He regularly comes in early and stays late to ensure that all of his assignments exceed expectations. He seeks out advice even when it means additional work is required. He also has realistic goals that will take him far beyond his current situation.

*(press enter 2 times)*

As one of eight children, Juan has taken on a part-time job to help make ends meet at home. When his grades dropped a bit, Juan tenaciously sought out help. Juan is not a quitter. Being from a single parent family has not been easy for Juan, but he has demonstrated incredible maturity while balancing school, work, home life, and community service activities. His grades have continued to rise in spite of his challenging circumstances.

*(press enter 2 times)*

His commitment to others and leadership ability is evident in the type of community service he chooses to participate in. After a fire devastated his community, Juan put together a fundraising campaign to raise money for families affected by the fire. Juan also contacted Habitat for Humanity and lobbied to get them involved in the rebuilding effort. Juan was quick to lend a hand and utilize his talents as a carpenter when rebuilding his neighbor's house.

*(press enter 2 times)*

When I think about all the qualities I respect in an individual – determination, integrity, leadership, hard work, and tenacity – I think of Juan. I am confident that this will not be the last time you see the name Juan Ramirez in print. I highly recommend Juan for your university. He will enrich your campus just as he has enriched ours. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at (951) 928 – 8498.

Sincerely,

*(press enter 4 times)*

*(sign John Q. Teacher here in black ink)*

John Q. Teacher,  
Scholars Instructor

# STUDENT DATA SHEET FOR A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Personal Information				
Name of Applicant as it Appears on Applications:				Today's Date:  / /
Address:	City:	State:	Zip Code:	Phone Number:
School Information				
Name of School:		Current Grade Level:  <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <sup>th</sup>		
Grade Point Average:		Rank in Class:		
Community Service				
List Your Community Service Activities				Total Number of Community Service Hours:
Clubs/Activities/Sports				
List the clubs/activities/sports that you are involved and the responsibilities.			Grade Level(s) Involved	
			<input type="checkbox"/> 9 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <sup>th</sup>	
			<input type="checkbox"/> 9 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <sup>th</sup>	
			<input type="checkbox"/> 9 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <sup>th</sup>	
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			<input type="checkbox"/> 9 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <sup>th</sup>	
			<input type="checkbox"/> 9 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <sup>th</sup>	

Employment Experience		
Position Held	Job Responsibilities	Hours Per Week

College Plans	
Intended College Major(s):	Intended Future Career(s):

Awards and Honors	
List any awards or honors you have received.	Grade Level(s) Received
	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <sup>th</sup>
	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <sup>th</sup>
	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <sup>th</sup>
	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <sup>th</sup>

Special Talents or Skills	Strengths

Descriptive Words					
Three words that I would use to describe myself:			Ask a friend to write three words to describe you:		

Life Challenges
Have there been any life challenges that you have overcome? If so, please describe on the lines below.

Other Important Information That Might Be Useful to Know

Who or what is this letter for? Fill in the information in the appropriate column(s).		
Name of College	Name of Scholarship	Name of Job