

Letters of Recommendation

Whom Should I Ask?

Core subject area teachers usually make good candidates, however you can ask any school staff member. Colleges generally prefer recommendations that speak towards your academic abilities. Recommendations from employers, coaches, faith leaders, or neighbors may be useful in terms of scholarship applications, but these types of recommendations are not academic. Make sure the person writing the recommendation knows you personally and is able to communicate your strengths. Please be considerate: school staff are happy to provide you with letters of recommendation, and it is important that you ask in person if possible.

When Should I Ask?

Make sure you give your recommendation writers plenty of time (at least one month before letters are due) as they may be writing for multiple students. Some colleges and the Common Application require you to send an email request to your recommendation writer. In this case, please inform that person that they will receive an email link where they can submit the letter directly.

How To Get the Best Results

Talk to your recommendation writers. Remind them of your accomplishments and let them in on your future plans (a resume or portfolio would be helpful). The best letters include specific examples and stories rather than vague praise. Give them an understanding of why you are applying and possibly what your intended major is.

Make sure your recommendation writers have everything they need to write your letters and submit them on time:

- Deadline information
- Completed brag sheet
- A copy of your complete essays/personal statement
- Name(s) of specific college/university that requires a letter of recommendation
- Addressed and stamped envelope for mailing (if college requests letter to be mailed)
- Ask your recommendation writer to include your full name and birth date on the letter.

Helpful Tips for You

- Be polite! People are usually happy to help you with recommendations if you ask politely and give them enough advance notice.
- Do NOT ask family or close relatives for letters
- On the application form, waive your right to view the recommendation letters
- Make sure your recommendation writer knows your deadline/s. Follow up with that person after a few weeks to make sure they are aware of your deadline
- Write thank you notes to your recommendation writers, and later, tell them where you've decided to go to college

BRAG SHEET

Student Name _____

Date of Birth _____

In order to provide you with a solid letter of recommendation, it is important that you provide information about your academic, extracurricular, and community activities. It is also helpful for you to share any unique talents and/or experiences you may have. Feel free to use additional paper if necessary. Your comments are used for the sole purpose of assisting you in the college application process; all information will be held in confidence.

What adjectives would **others** use to describe you?

What adjectives would **you** use to describe yourself?

What are your talents and strengths? (academic and/or extra curricular)

List an accomplishment you are proud of. How has this influenced your goals for the future? (academic and/or extra curricular)

Has there been a personal circumstance that has affected your life? If so, please describe how this has influence your goals for the future?

Please describe anything on your transcript that you feel does not accurately reflect your ability as a student.

How have you grown personally or academically during your time at VAHS?

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Academic Area of Interest in College:

Names of colleges/universities you are applying to:

ACTIVITIES, EXPERIENCES, AWARDS

	Description Of Activity or Position Held	Years of participation
Extracurricular Activities		
Work Experience		
Volunteer Experience		
Summer Experiences		
Honors/Awards		
