

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION: WHO KNOWS YOU BEST?

Letters of recommendation give us a more personal view of you as a student and offer insight that can't be gleaned through grades and scores. Hearing about you from someone who knows you well helps us gain additional perspective on how you might approach Penn's academic environment, and what you could contribute to the Penn community!

If you apply to Penn as a first-year or transfer student, you will need to request recommendation letters from two people:

1. your school counselor or college official
2. a teacher in a core subject area

OPTIONAL: another teacher OR supporter in your community who you believe could add a perspective otherwise missing from your application.

NOW, LET'S BRAINSTORM SOME POSSIBLE RECOMMENDERS!

1. LET'S FIGURE OUT WHICH POTENTIAL RECOMMENDERS REALLY SAW YOU IN ACTION!

First, think of a teacher or two who you think knows you well and you have a good relationship with.

TEACHER:	TEACHER:
<p>Check any that apply to your experience with a <i>teacher</i> this year or last year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I felt challenged and supported in their class <input type="checkbox"/> They saw me grow or improve over time <input type="checkbox"/> I contributed to class in a thoughtful or active way <input type="checkbox"/> I had conversations outside of class with them <input type="checkbox"/> I got feedback that made me feel seen or encouraged <input type="checkbox"/> I'm proud of something I accomplished in their class <input type="checkbox"/> They've known me for more than one year 	<p>Check any that apply to your experience with a <i>teacher</i> this year or last year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I felt challenged and supported in their class <input type="checkbox"/> They saw me grow or improve over time <input type="checkbox"/> I contributed to class in a thoughtful or active way <input type="checkbox"/> I had conversations outside of class with them <input type="checkbox"/> I got feedback that made me feel seen or encouraged <input type="checkbox"/> I'm proud of something I accomplished in their class <input type="checkbox"/> They've known me for more than one year

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Now let's explore some additional recommender options beyond the classroom. Is there someone outside of your academic classes who knows you well and can speak to your strengths, character, or contributions? These supporters might include a club advisor, ensemble or show director, coach, employer, or another mentor who's seen you grow and thrive in a different setting.

SUPPORTER:	SUPPORTER:
<p>Check any that apply to your experience with a <i>supporter</i> this year or last year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I felt challenged and supported in their space <input type="checkbox"/> They saw me grow or improve over time <input type="checkbox"/> I contributed to our space in a thoughtful or active way <input type="checkbox"/> I got feedback that made me feel seen or encouraged <input type="checkbox"/> I'm proud of something I accomplished in their space <input type="checkbox"/> They've known me for more than one year 	<p>Check any that apply to your experience with a <i>supporter</i> this year or last year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I felt challenged and supported in their space <input type="checkbox"/> They saw me grow or improve over time <input type="checkbox"/> I contributed to our space in a thoughtful or active way <input type="checkbox"/> I got feedback that made me feel seen or encouraged <input type="checkbox"/> I'm proud of something I accomplished in their space <input type="checkbox"/> They've known me for more than one year

A potential recommender doesn't need to check all these boxes, but this exercise should help you understand if someone might have enough context to write on your behalf.

2. DIVING DEEPER: WHAT IMPACT DOES THE TEACHER/SUPPORTER YOU CHOSE HAVE ON YOUR LIFE?

A. What courses/work/connection did you have with this person and when?

B. Why did you choose this person to write your letter of recommendation?

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C. Describe a learning experience/project that you enjoyed and/or are proud of that this person was involved in?

D. Is there anything you would like them to mention/highlight in your letter?

3. ASSESS THE STRENGTH OF THE RELATIONSHIP

Ask yourself the following for each person you're considering:

RECOMMENDER NAME	KNOW ME WELL?	SAW ME GROW?	CAN SPEAK TO MY CHARACTER?	LIKELY TO BE ENTHUSIASTIC?
	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no



If you answered "Yes" to at least 3 of the 4 questions for someone, they're probably a strong candidate!

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4. FINAL REFLECTION

1. My top choice for a teacher recommender is:

2. An additional recommender I'm considering is:

3. One thing I'll do this week to move forward:

- ☐ Draft a short "brag sheet" **ACCOMPLISHMENTS, INTERESTS, GOALS**
- ☐ Tell your recommender why you chose to ask them and what you hope they'll address on your behalf
- ☐ Ask your recommender(s) early and politely
 - ☐ Thank them! **A NOTE GOES A LONG WAY.**