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# WebSource

For the Classroom

College and Career Readiness:

Resume Building...

The Recommendation Letter

## Discussion Questions

- What are recommendation letters used for? Expand the discussion by talking with students about character references and traits that college admissions officers/employers seek to learn more about a job or college applicant.
- Who writes them?
- What information should be included in a letter of recommendation?

## Activity:

### A Recommendation Letter

Students will learn the structure of a recommendation letter.

#### PROCEDURE

1. Explain to the class they are going to practice writing recommendation letters for a classmate. These will be useful in the future when applying to jobs and college applications, if necessary; they can be used as a reference regarding the applicant. For overall direction, brainstorm as a group about some of the attributes one might want to elaborate upon in a recommendation letter, i.e., reliability, dedication, commitment, special talents, responsibility, perseverance, empathy.
2. Have each student take out a piece of paper and pen. First, ask each student to draft a brief summary about themselves and what qualifications they possess. These should pertain to the job they are applying for. This brief summary is going to help the person writing the recommendation letter, so they should be specific in their skills, past experiences and personal qualities, etc.
3. Once students are done writing a brief summary about themselves, have students partner up and exchange summaries. Now it is time for students to write a recommendation letter for their classmate.
4. Explain to the students what information goes into a recommendation letter and how it should be outlined. Create a small outline on the board for students to reference while writing their recommendation letters.

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- **First paragraph** should explain how you know the person you are writing for. Provide your job title and their job title at the time of interaction. You should also include the length of time in which you have known the person.
  - **The body** of the letter should include the skills, qualities, areas of knowledge and any other positive assets of the person in which you are recommending. It may be useful to create a list of strengths the person possesses before writing the letter. In this section, you should provide examples of when this person demonstrated these skills, qualities, etc. Try to be as specific as you can.
  - **In the closing paragraph** of your letter, it is useful to mention that you would hire this person again for a job. You should also end with a positive statement ensuring the positive outcome the company would have if they hired this person.
  - **At the very end of the letter**, provide contact information for yourself in case they would like to reach you to discuss further.
5. Next, provide students a chance to write a recommendation letter for a classmate, using the background material each has drafted. Advisors can copy and hand out the recommendation letter draft chart. When time is up, have students share with the class their letters. Students should exchange letters with their partners and keep these to later use when applying for jobs. They can offer this sample recommendation letter to a teacher, advisor or other individual who might be asked to prepare a recommendation letter on their behalf.



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## College and Career Readiness: A Recommendation Letter Outline

Your Name  
Address  
City/State/Zip  
Date

*Introduce yourself. State why you are writing this letter and on whose behalf.*

*List and describe the skills and attributes of the person you are writing about. Be sure to include shared experiences in which you witnessed his/her talents or heard about them from other trusted sources.*

*Close with a positive statement about this individual: a bright future, you would welcome the opportunity to be a co-worker, supervisor of this person.*

*Provide contact information (email and/or phone) for further questions.*