

**4**

## SESSION IV: THE APPLICATION PROCESS (PART I)

## ACTIVITY #3: TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Opening Discussion:*

Students need to know they have some control over their teacher recommendations, depending on who they ask, how far ahead of time they ask, and the kinds of information they provide the teacher. The role play will provide practice that should help build the student's confidence in approaching a teacher.

### *Handouts:*

**Common Application Teacher Recommendation Form**

**Teacher Recommendation Request**

**Who Will Write Your Recommendation Worksheet**

### *Instructions:*

1. Give each student the three handouts.
2. Ask students what surprises them about the teacher recommendation form. Stress that, in essence, a teacher recommendation should answer: Why would a professor want to teach this student?
3. Ask students to identify at least two teachers whom they could confidently ask to write a recommendation—they should write the names on the worksheet.
4. Some schools have a specific procedure for requesting teacher recommendations. If theirs does not, the Teacher Recommendation Request form is something they could use. If a college does not ask for a teacher recommendation, it may be because they do not want additional information; however, if a student is deferred, a strong letter of recommendation could be sent.
5. **IMPORTANT POINT:** Students cannot ask to see teacher recommendations, but they are able to help shape them by giving the teacher good information.
6. **Role-Play:** Ask students to turn to the handout, "Who Will Write Your Recommendation?" and the "Teacher Recommendation Request Form." Allow a few minutes to read those handouts and then pair students and ask them to practice asking a teacher for a recommendation.



## 2012-13 TEACHER EVALUATION

TE

For Spring 2013 or Fall 2013 Enrollment

## TO THE APPLICANT

After completing all the relevant questions below, give this form to a teacher who has taught you an **academic** subject (for example, English, foreign language, math, science, or social studies). If applying via mail, please also give that teacher stamped envelopes addressed to each institution that requires a Teacher Evaluation.

Legal Name \_\_\_\_\_  Female  
*Last/Family/Sur (Enter name exactly as it appears on official documents.)*      First/Given \_\_\_\_\_  Male  
*Jr., etc.*

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ CAID (Common App ID) \_\_\_\_\_  
*mm/dd/yyyy*

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
*Number & Street*      *Apartment #*      *City/Town*      *State/Province*      *Country*      *ZIP/Postal Code*

School you now attend \_\_\_\_\_ CEEB/ACT Code \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT PRIVACY NOTICE:** Under the terms of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), after you matriculate you *will* have access to this form and all other recommendations and supporting documents submitted by you and on your behalf, unless at least one of the following is true:

1. The institution does not save recommendations post-matriculation (*see list at www.commonapp.org/FERPA*).
2. You waive your right to access below, regardless of the institution to which it is sent:

Yes, I do waive my right to access, and I understand I will never see this form or any other recommendations submitted by me or on my behalf.  
 No, I *do not waive* my right to access, and I may someday choose to see this form or any other recommendations or supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf to the institution at which I'm enrolling, if that institution saves them after I matriculate.

Required Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## TO THE TEACHER

The Common Application membership finds candid evaluations helpful in choosing from among highly qualified candidates. You are encouraged to keep this form in your private files for use should the student need additional recommendations. Please submit your references promptly, and remember to sign below before mailing directly to the college/university admission office. ***Do not mail this form to The Common Application offices.***

Teacher's Name (Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr.) \_\_\_\_\_ Subject Taught \_\_\_\_\_  
*Please print or type*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
*mm/dd/yyyy*

Secondary School \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_  
*Number & Street*      *City/Town*      *State/Province*      *Country*      *ZIP/Postal Code*

Teacher's Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Area/Country/City Code \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_ Ext. \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## Background Information

How long have you known this student and in what context? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the first words that come to your mind to describe this student? \_\_\_\_\_

In which grade level(s) was the student enrolled when you taught him/her?  9  10  11  12  Other \_\_\_\_\_

List the courses in which you have taught this student, including the level of course difficulty (AP, IB, accelerated, honors, elective; 100-level, 200-level; etc.).  
  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Ratings** Compared to other students in his or her class year, how do you rate this student in terms of:

No basis	Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered (top 1%)
Academic achievement							
Intellectual promise							
Quality of writing							
Creative, original thought							
Productive class discussion							
Respect accorded by faculty							
Disciplined work habits							
Maturity							
Motivation							
Leadership							
Integrity							
Reaction to setbacks							
Concern for others							
Self-confidence							
Initiative, independence							
OVERALL							

**Evaluation** Please write whatever you think is important about this student, including a description of academic and personal characteristics, as demonstrated in your classroom. We welcome information that will help us to differentiate this student from others. (Feel free to attach an additional sheet or another reference you may have prepared on behalf of this student.)

Copyright © 2012, The Common Application, Inc. Used with permission.



## WHO WILL WRITE YOUR TEACHER RECOMMENDATION? HOW DO YOU ASK FOR A RECOMMENDATION?

- The first step is to make sure that your colleges require teacher recommendations. You do this by carefully reading the applications.
- If recommendations are required, make sure that you have the forms the colleges require and that you know the deadline dates. Address and stamp an envelope for each college that requires a paper version of the teacher recommendation. Make sure you know the email address or URL if it is being submitted electronically.
- Find out if your school has a specific policy regarding teacher recommendations. If there is a policy, follow it. If not, you can use the information in this handout.
- The next step is deciding what teacher (or teachers, if your colleges require more than one) to ask.
- Think of the high school teachers who knows you best and would be enthusiastic about writing a recommendation for you.
  - These teachers should be from academic subjects, preferably from junior or senior year.
  - Teachers whom you have had for more than one class are often good choices.
  - List the teachers to ask: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
- Approach the teacher at least three or four weeks before the deadline date. You can say something like this: I am applying to College XYZ, and that college requires a teacher recommendation. I think you know a lot about my strengths as a student. Would you be able to write a recommendation for me?
- If the teacher agrees, give them all the required college forms, stamped envelopes, and information about yourself as soon as possible. Again, they need at least three weeks notice! TIP: Use the TEACHER RECOMMENDATION REQUEST form in your handouts to provide personal information.
- If the teacher is not sure or says no, don't push it. Ask a different teacher. **YOU WANT SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO WRITE THE LETTER!**
- **WRITE A THANK YOU NOTE TO THE TEACHERS WHO WRITE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOU.**

## TEACHER RECOMMENDATION REQUEST

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address / Phone # (in case of questions) \_\_\_\_\_

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

Course(s) with This Teacher (i.e., English 3): \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you so much for agreeing to write this letter of recommendation for me. I asked you because I think you are a teacher who knows me well and who can accurately evaluate my potential for academic success in college. This information may be helpful to you as you write the recommendation.**

1. I think my academic strengths are...

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

2. I think my personal strengths are...

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

3. I am considering the following college majors because...

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Some of the things I want the college admission and/or scholarship committee to know about me...

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_