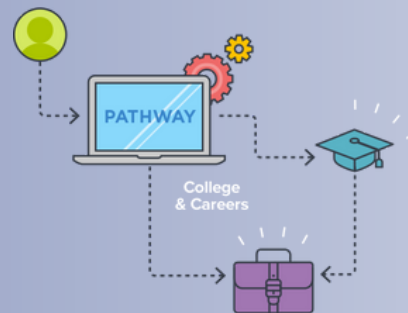


Letters of Recommendation



Grade Level:



11

Domain:



College & Career Exploration

TIME:



30 Minutes

This lesson is designed to help students learn the importance of obtaining a letter of recommendation for college and/or a job application.

Objectives

Students will:

1. Learn about letters of recommendation.
2. Evaluate who knows them well and would make good recommenders.

MEFA Pathway Activities

- My Journal

Materials Needed

- Internet connection

Vocabulary

- Letters of recommendation

Future Ready Skills

- Communication
- Organization

PART 1

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE



Familiarize students with the concept of letters of recommendation.

Explain that as colleges try to assess students' abilities, work ethic, and personality, they rely on the perspectives of teachers, school counselors, and coaches. Most colleges require one or more letters of recommendation and provide guidelines as to who can write the recommendation(s), and how each one should be structured. Review the following tips with students about requesting letters of recommendation:

1. **Ask early.** It's both helpful and courteous to make these requests as early as possible, ideally at the end of your junior year. This shows personal responsibility on your part and gives those you ask plenty of time to plan and write a thoughtful letter.
2. **Share your interests.** Explain to your recommenders what you plan to study in college. This information can help them highlight qualities that you want to emphasize in your college applications.
3. **Meet (don't exceed) the requirements.** If a college asks for two letters of recommendation, only send two. You'll want to show that you can read and follow directions, and that you respect the time of the admissions staff reviewing your application.
4. **Ask people who know you well.** Think about the teachers who are familiar with your academic strengths and abilities and have taught you for a full academic year. You'll want someone who can speak to your participation in class and your work ethic, as well as your ability to learn the subject matter. In most cases, teachers from your junior year core subjects are the best.
5. **Follow the rules.** Follow your high school's policy on how and when to request college letters of recommendation, noting any specific applications or forms to complete or online accounts to update (School Counselor: Share with your students your school's specific policy).
6. **Show gratitude.** Send a (written) thank-you note to everyone who took the time to write you a college recommendation letter. Showing appreciation is courteous and confirms your upstanding character.

PART 2

APPLYING INFORMATION

Now that students have an understanding of how to request letters of recommendation, ask students to discuss and answer the following question:

1. When and in what situations will they need to obtain a letter of recommendation?
2. Who would be an appropriate person to write the letter of recommendation for them?

Students may possibly need to obtain a letter of recommendation for several instances:

- College application
- Job application
- Scholarship application
- Internship application
- Job promotion consideration

Students could ask the following individuals for a letter of recommendation based on the situation.

- School Counselor
- Teacher
- Supervisor
- Coach

After the discussion, have students click on *My Journal* under the *About Me* tab and write a journal entry reflecting on the possible instances in which they might need a letter of recommendation. For those instances, have students identify who they might ask and why.

Note for students: Ask people who really know your talents, strengths, and capabilities. Don't be afraid to ask non-traditional people as well, though you will want to have teachers from your core subjects write your letters of recommendation for college. For example, if you are passionate about volunteering, you might want to ask an organization you volunteer for to write a letter for recommendation for a scholarship application.

EVALUATING INFORMATION

The recommender will want as much information as possible about the student to write a thorough and accurate letter of recommendation. When students request a letter of recommendation in MEFA Pathway, they may want to attach a resume to their email. They can create a resume in MEFA Pathway by clicking on *My Resume* under the *About Me* tab. Here the student can select the information to include on the resume, export the resume as a Word document or PDF, and attach it to the email.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR JOURNAL ENTRIES

CATEGORY	EXCELLENT	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
	4	3	2	1
Description	Offers a vivid, detailed, and insightful description of the experience, setting the stage for deeper reflection.	Provides a clear and detailed account of the experience, including relevant details.	Clearly describes the experience, event, or learning.	Offers a limited description of the experience.
Analysis	Engages in critical thinking, questioning assumptions, and demonstrating a thorough understanding of the learning.	Connects the experience to personal learning and raises some insightful questions.	Attempts to analyze the experience but may lack depth or clarity.	Superficial analysis, lacking deeper thought.
Future Application	Formulates clear, actionable plans for utilizing new insights and knowledge in future learning and experiences	Identifies specific ways to apply the learning to future situations or goals.	Suggests some possible connections to future learning or practice.	Makes no clear connection to future learning/action.