

**THE ETIQUETTE OF THE ASK:  
Some Pointers About Teacher Recommendations  
From the College Office**

1. Ask the teacher **in person**.
2. Ask in such a way that the teacher is free to decline your invitation if he/she feels a strong, positive letter is not possible. ("Would you feel comfortable writing a college letter of recommendation for me?")
3. Ask the teacher as soon as possible. You do not need to have a finalized list before you ask. Teachers simply need to know to write a letter for you.
4. Complete the College Office's **Online Recommendation Release Form** (the yellow form) in order for Common Application Teacher (and Counselor) Recommendations to be submitted online. This form requires you to list your recommendation letter authors (and obtain each teacher's signature), and is due to the College Office by October 4. Recommendations cannot be submitted online without the permission granted from this form.
  - The Buckley Amendment gives the student the right to examine his or her recommendations at the school where he or she finally matriculates. Students have the option to waive this right of access. While this is a choice, we strongly encourage students to waive their right of access. Admission offices will weigh more seriously what writers say if the student has waived his or her rights.
5. For Common Application schools, you will not need to provide your teacher with any forms or envelopes, simply list the teacher on the Online Recommendation Release Form (and get his/her signature). Teachers will complete recommendations online for each school that uses the Common Application.
6. For schools that do not use the Common Application (some state schools, Georgetown, MIT, etc.), you will need to provide each school's individual Teacher Recommendation Form (including a clearly noted deadline) along with a stamped, addressed envelope to the teachers writing for you. Make sure you fill out the student section of the form before giving it to the teacher.
  - Give the teacher a form and stamped, addressed envelope for each letter you want sent. The return address should be the teacher's name. Envelopes should be regular business size (4-1/8" x 9-1/2"), preferably with a "pull-and-seal" closure. Make sure to provide enough postage.
  - If a non-Common Application school gives the option for teachers to submit materials online through that school's own system, you should ask your teacher recommenders which method they prefer – sending a hard copy or submitting it online through that school's system.
7. **When you hear from the colleges, make sure you inform the teachers who wrote for you and thank them for their help. Remember that they have something invested in your college process, too.**
8. Above all, remember that writing a good letter of recommendation requires a significant amount of time, time that is above and beyond the call of duty. Make sure that you stay on top of deadlines and paperwork, so that you do not make unnecessary work for the teacher and so that the writing of the recommendation is as uncomplicated as possible.