

Student Recommendation Checklist:

When teachers write recommendation letters, you can provide information that will increase the odds of a successful application. The committees and individuals responsible for judging applicants will look for evidence (1) that the teacher knows the applicant well, (2) that the applicant has done the "homework" to become familiar with the desired job, scholarship, or university, and (3) that the skills of the applicant are pertinent to the desired job, scholarship, or university.

To increase the odds of success, you gain a definite advantage if you can offer some pertinent information when the teacher writes a recommendation. Take the time to answer the following questions and provide the information to the teacher, along with postage for delivering the letter. (The teacher will probably use department envelopes and letterhead to make the letter as "professional" as possible, so no envelope is necessary--just postage and the address.) If the teacher is retired or does not have access to department letterhead, you should then provide her with addressed and stamped envelopes. For goodness' sake, type the address and return address for professional appearance!

- 1)** What is the name of the university/scholarship/job for which you are applying? Tell the teacher what you know about it.
- 2)** What is the name of the committee member or individual who will be evaluating your application? (It is more impressive if the teacher addresses the letter to a specific person rather than "to whom it may concern," provided he or she uses the correct name. Take the time to discover this information, if you can.)
- 3)** What courses have you taken at the university that might be pertinent to your application?
- 4)** (Optional) What is your overall GPA? Your GPA within your major?
- 5)** What are your hobbies and interests? How are they pertinent to the application?
- 6)** What is your background, i.e., where did you grow up? Where have you been educated? What other jobs have you had?
- 7)** What awards, honors, or scholarships have you received that the recommending teacher might refer to?
- 8)** What is your major field of study? If your major is not directly relevant, have you had coursework or experiences that are relevant?
- 9)** What are your long-term ambitions and goals? How does this job/university/scholarship fit into that plan?
- 10)** Can you think of any information that would be useful for the teacher to know about you? Have you participated in any community service, volunteer work, publications, etc?