

ASKING FOR REFERENCES FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

CULTIVATE ACADEMIC RELATIONSHIPS

What does this mean?

- Actively participate in class.
- Speak with teachers during office hours.
- Demonstrate to your teachers that you are a professional student.

CONSIDER WHO TO ASK

Does this teacher know my strengths and experiences within the classroom?



- Have I always acted professionally and ethically in this teacher's course?
- Can this teacher comment on my academic development?
- Have I done well in this teacher's course?

GIVE THE WRITER PLENTY OF TIME

You want your recommendations to be well-considered. This cannot be done two days before your application is due.

- Ask approximately **one month** before your recommendation is needed.



PREPARE INFORMATION FOR YOUR REFERENCES

The best references are the most specific to you and the position you are applying for. Include:

- Information about the opportunity for which you're applying
- Why it's important to you
- Your activities and qualifications for the position
- A detailed explanation of how and when to submit the recommendation

SEND AN EMAIL

Sometimes it can be difficult to ask in person, so you can send an email.

- **BUT**, make sure to keep it short and to the point.



WHAT TO INCLUDE

Refresh her/his memory: Think of a positive interaction you had. Tell her/him which semester and class you were in.

Explain why you are asking her/him:

Be specific. What skill, strength or experience can that teacher speak to?



- **Offer to meet with her/him to discuss details.** Offer to meet with your teacher during office hours to discuss your request.
- This is when you could give your teacher your additional information you've prepared.
- **Make sure you THANK HER/HIM!!:**
- Not only should you thank your teacher for considering your request, you should also thank her/him after it's written. Handwritten thank-yous are always appreciated.

Give your teacher a way out: You are asking for a **strong** recommendation, so if this teacher can't provide it, you need to know. Do not ask, *can you write me a recommendation letter?* The answer is yes, but you want more than that: *Would you be able to write me a strong letter of recommendation for my [scholarship] applications?*

Dear Mr. Snape,

My name is Sarah Scheufele, and I took your Potions class my first year at Hogwarts. I frequently attended your office hours, as your class was challenging but enjoyable. I also enjoyed participating in the ethical discussions you proposed in class and felt they challenged my critical thinking skills.

I am currently in the process of applying for LLCC Foundation scholarships, and I am gathering letters of recommendation. Because I felt I grew as a student in your class and demonstrated my ability to engage in academic discussions, I chose to ask you. I hoped you could speak to my willingness and excitement about learning.

Would you be able to write a strong recommendation letter for my scholarship application? They are due March 1, 2021. I would be able to meet with you at your convenience if that would be helpful. I would also provide my personal statement, resume, and other materials you'd find beneficial. Thank you for taking the time to consider my request,

Sarah Scheufele
(217)786-4618

Be prepared for your teacher to decline. It's ok. It might mean s/he is too busy to write a well-written recommendation; it might mean your teacher doesn't feel like s/he can write a strong recommendation for you. You want your recommendations to be as strong as possible, so it's better to know now that s/he wouldn't be the best choice.