



**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 a strong, positive letter is not possible. (For example, "Would you feel comfortable writing a college letter of recommendation for me?")
3. Ask 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. In the fall, 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, available in Mrs. Dunnington's office, requires you to list your recommendation letter authors (and obtain each teacher's signature), and is due to the College Office by October 6. Recommendations cannot be submitted online without the permission granted from this form.
 - The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) gives the student the right to review recommendations at the school where the student 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.
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 the teacher's signature). Teachers will complete recommendations online for each school that uses the Common Application.
6. Schools that do not use the Common Application (some state schools, Georgetown, MIT, etc.), may have a different way of requesting teacher recommendations. For example, the college's application may provide a place to list your teacher's names and email address. This will prompt an email with a specific link to go directly to each teacher to submit it online through the college's own system. *It will be important for students to be aware of how each school likes to receive recommendations.*
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.