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How important are the letters of recommendation in the college statement? According to William Fitzsimmon, dean of admissions and financial aid at Harvard, they are extremely important. If you're a student, examples of great letters of recommendation can help you understand how to get strong emails yourself from your teachers. If you are a teacher, the examples in this guide will inspire you to support your students strongly as they apply to college. Keep reading for four excellent emails from teachers who will get someone to college, along with expert analysis on why they are so strong. Important note: Are you looking for job letters of recommendation? If so, check out my great post here! First, let's see the role of letters of recommendation in your app. Why are letters of recommendation important? Most admissions officers at four-year colleges, especially private schools, emphasize that their process is holistic. They seek to get an idea of the student as an entire person, rather than focusing on the pieces of who it is based solely on grades and test scores. Because they rarely meet a student in person, letters of recommendation, along with a student's personal essay, play a huge role in highlighting her intellectual and personal qualities. That's why letters of recommendation from teachers, especially those who know their students well, carry a lot of weight in applications. A letter that expresses a strong voice of support, and highlights a student's impressive academic and personal strengths, can have a powerful impact on that student's chances of enrolling. Let's look at some samples of strong letters of recommendation, one from an English teacher, another from a physics teacher, a third from a history teacher, and the latter from a math teacher. Then we will understand why these letters of recommendation are effective. The first example is recommended by Sarah, a senior who likes to write and read poetry. Example Letters #1: Sarah Poet Dear Admissions Commission, I had the pleasure of teaching Sarah in her 11th grade honors English class at Mark Twain High School. From the first day of class, Sarah impressed me with her ability to articulate complex concepts and texts, her sensitivity to nuance in literature and her passion for reading, writing and creative expression, both in the classroom and beyond. Sarah is a talented literary critic and poet and she has my highest recommendation as a student and writer. Sarah is talented in considering the intricacies in literature and the purpose of author's works. She produced an unusual annual dissertation paper on the creative development of identity, in which she compared works from three different periods of time and synthesized cultural and historical perspectives to report on her analysis. When called to give her a dissertation of defense before peers, Sarah spoke clearly and eloquently of her conclusions and answered questions thoughtfully. Outside the classroom, Sarah is devoted to her literary pursuits, especially poetry. She publishes her poems in the literary magazine of our school, as well as in online magazines. She is a shrewd, sensitive, and deeply self-aware individual driven to explore art, writing, and a deeper understanding of the human condition. Throughout the year, Sarah has been an active participant in our discussions, and she has always supported her peers. Her caring character and personality allow her to work well with others in the team, as she always respects the opinions of others, even if they are different from her own. When we held a class debate about gun laws, Sarah decided to speak for a side opposite her own views. She explained her choice by wanting to put herself in the shoes of others, to look at the problems from a new perspective and to get a clearer picture of the problem from all sides. Throughout the year, Sarah demonstrated this openness and empathy for the opinions, feelings and opinions of others, as well as astute observation abilities, all the qualities that make her outstanding as a student of literature and a growing writer. I'm sure Sarah will continue to do great and creative things in her future. I highly recommend it for admission to your undergraduate program. She is talented, caring, intuitive, purposeful and focused in her activities. Sarah is consistently looking for constructive feedback so she can improve her writing skills, which is a rare and impressive quality in a high school student. Sarah really stands out as a person who will impress everyone she meets. Please feel free to contact me if you have any callmeclemons@gmail.com. Sincerely, Ms. ScribeEnglish TeacherMark Twain High School is a thorough, glowing recommendation for a student that Ms. Scribe knows well. What other features make it stand out as a strong rec letter? Ms. Scribe's breakdown has a high opinion of Sarah and her writing and literary analysis skills. One way that it expresses it is through a powerful and specific language. She doesn't just say that Sarah is a good writer. She says she's articulate about complex concepts and sensitive to nuances in literature. She calls her insightful and self-conscious with shrewd powers of observation. These handles don't happen by accident. Ms. Scribe took the time to choose her words carefully, and this effort paid off with a strong letter that captures Sarah's special qualities. Ms. Scribe also maintains her sarah characterization with examples. She describes her thesis and how she answered questions thoughtfully under the pressure of the situation of her defense thesis. She cites the example of the debate on gun laws in order to Sarah's openness to many many point of view. In addition to highlighting her intellectual and personal strengths and supporting them with specific examples, Ms. Pisets talks about Sarah's goals for the future. She points out that she is talented in writing, poetry in particular, and that she strives to continue to improve as a writer in her future. This letter, by virtue of its wording, length and specificity, shows that Ms. Scribe took time and effort to recommend Sarah thoughtfully and with conviction. The fact that she knows Sarah well and strives to help her application succeed with thoughtful writing adds even more weight to her grades. This letter would be a boon to Sarah's application, especially if she is applying for a study of writing or English. She clearly impressed her English teacher and, in turn, received a memorable, free letter of recommendation for her application to college. The following example is also enthusiastic and detailed. This is for a student applying for an engineering program. Want to build the best college application with the strongest recommendations? We can help. PrepScholar Admission is the world's best admissions consulting service. We combine world-class reception consultants with our data-driven reception strategies. We watched thousands of students wash up in their best schools, from public colleges to the Ivy League. We know which college students want to accept. We want you to go to the schools of your dreams. Learn more about taking PrepScholar to maximize your chances of getting an inch of Sample Letters #2: Stacey Engineer Dear Admissions Committee, It's great fun to recommend Stacey for admission to your engineering program. She is one of the most exceptional students I have encountered in my 15 years of study. I taught Stacey in my 11th grade physics class and advised her at the Robotics Club. I'm not surprised to learn that it currently ranks at the top of an extremely capable seniors class. She has a great interest and talent in physics, mathematics and scientific research. Her advanced skills and passion for the subject make her perfect for your rigorous engineering program. Stacey is a shrewd, sharp, fast man with a high ability to math and science. It brought to an understanding of how things work, whether it's the old computer hard drives in the school library or the forces that keep our universe together. Her last project in the classroom was particularly impressive, a study of frequency sound absorption, an idea that she said was caused by the fact that she didn't want to bother her parents for hours of guitar practice at home. She was a strong leader in the robotics club, wanting to share her knowledge with others and learn new skills. I have students at the club to prepare lessons and take turns our after-school meetings. When it was In turn, she appeared prepared with a fascinating lecture on lunar naoticism and fun activities that got everyone moving and talking. She was our only student teacher who was greeted with well-deserved applause at the end of the lesson. Stacey's personal strengths are as impressive as her intellectual achievements. She is an active, outgoing presence in the classroom with a great sense of humor. Stacey is the perfect person to get the group project rolling, but she also knows how to sit back and let others take the lead. Her cheerful nature and openness to feedback means that she is always learning and growing as a student, an impressive force that will continue to serve her well in college and beyond. Stacey is just the kind of driven, engaging, and curious student who helped make our class a living environment and a safe place to take intellectual risk. Stacey has my highest recommendation for entry into your engineering program. She has demonstrated excellence in everything she puts her mind on, whether it's designing an experiment, collaborating with others, or teaching herself to play classical and electric guitar. Stacey's endless curiosity, coupled with her willingness to take risks, makes me believe that there will be no limit to her growth and accomplishments in college and beyond. Please feel free to contact me at milevamaricfanclub@gmail.com if you have any questions. Sincerely, Ms. RandallPhysics Teacher Mary Currie High School Ms. Randall is clearly as much a fan of Stacey as she is from Mileva Maric. How does she report her recommendation? Breaking ms. Randall corks for Stacey from the start with a statement about the outstanding ranking: Stacey is one of the most exceptional students she has had in 15 years of study. A statement like this is pretty extraordinary and will have an impact in the minds of its readers. Stacey sounds like a special student and she chose her recommendations well. As in the last example, this letter uses strong, specific language, calling Stacey a shrewd and sharp person who has the confidence and good mood to take on intellectual risk. Thanks to its precise and expressive language, this letter helps Stacey about life in the mind of the reader. In addition to the evaluation, Ms. Randall cites specific examples of academic and personal strong stacey. She talks about her successful teaching at the Robotics Club, her leadership in group projects, and her dedicated practice to teach herself to play guitar. Rather than distributing the letter too subtly, Ms. Randall highlights a few basic themes. She links Stacey's love of music with her passion for physics, talking about a frequency-dependent sound absorption project. All the threads tie together in a good, Onion. This letter is a strong voice in support of Stacey's application for an engineering program. Her physics teacher admires Stacey's skills and goals, and she did clearly, that Stacey had her highest recommendation in this letter. The following example also comes from a teacher who is very impressed with his student. The focus is on the student's academic performance in the classroom and his volunteer work outside the classroom. The example of Letters #3: William Buff's Story and the social organizer of the Dear Admissions Committee, it's hard to overestimate the meaningful contribution that William has made to our school and the surrounding community. As his 10th and 11th grade History Teacher, I had the pleasure of seeing William make a profound contribution both in the classroom and beyond. His school and community work is motivated by a strong sense of social justice, which he informs through a subtle and complex understanding of historical trends and events. I can safely say that William is one of the most caring and proactive students I have ever taught in fifteen years of schooling. As a child of immigrant parents, William is particularly attracted to understand the experience of immigrants. He produced an extraordinary semester-long research paper on the treatment of Japanese-Americans in the U.S. during World War II, in which he went beyond all expectations for a Skype interview with relatives of his featured subjects. William has a great ability to establish connections between past and present and to ground his understanding of current problems in the context of historical events. He never retreats to a simple answer or explanation, but he is comfortable dealing with ambiguity. William's fascination with American and world history and his ability to analyze in depth made him an exemplary scholar, as well as a motivated activist, driven by the promotion of civil rights and work toward social equality. In sophomore year, William noticed that college planning seminars students attended included little information for first-generation or immigrant students. Always thinking about how institutions can better serve people, William spoke with ESL counselors and faculty about his ideas to better support all students. He helped raise resources and develop a college planning curriculum for immigrants and undocumented students to expand their access to college. He also helped organize a group that linked ESL students to native English speakers, saying his mission was to help ELLs improve their English language and increase multicultural awareness and social cohesion in the school as a whole. William identified the need and worked with students and faculty alike to satisfy him in an extremely effective and rewarding way. Ever a history scientist, he did a lot of research to back up his ideas. William passionately believes in social progress and works for the common good. His personal experience, also his deep understanding of social history, a drive of his advocacy work. He's a talented, intelligent student with charisma, charisma, strong values, and respect for others to make a huge difference to the world around him. I look forward to seeing all the good that William continues to do for his fellow humanity in college and beyond, as well as the excellent work he will be doing at the college level. William has my highest recommendation. If you have any questions, please contact me thethingstheycarried@gmail.com. Sincerely, Mr. JacksonHistory Teacher Martin Luther King, a junior high school letter To Mr. Jackson makes William sound like a pretty amazing student and person. How does he express his admiration for William in this letter? Breaking down, as Ms. Randall did in her letter, Mr. Jackson provides a statement of outstanding ranking for William, calling him one of the most caring and proactive students he has ever taught. Given his long teaching career at the age of 15, it says a lot about William as a student and a man. As in the last example, Mr. Jackson focuses on several basic aspects of William's character. He talks about his love for the story and how it informs his social activity. He comments on his exceptional historical scholarship, as well as his personal qualities of caring for others and working for the good of society. Mr. Jackson also gives an insight into William's personal life, explaining how he has a personal connection to his projects and volunteering as a child of immigrant parents. This letter shows that William is a thoughtful, motivated person who connects his own experience with his learning and desire to contribute to his community. The letter also presents William's exceptional achievements, presenting specific examples of William's research work and his work supporting the academic and personal needs of ELL students. Mr. Jackson expresses his enthusiastic recommendation, highlighting William's love of learning and strength of character. This letter would be both impressive and memorable for the admission officers considering William for admission to their school. The following example is given by a math teacher. Let's see what Mr. Wiles has to say about Joe. Sample Letter #4: Joe hardworking Dear Admissions Commission, It's my pleasure to recommend Joe, who I taught in my 11th grade math class. Joe has demonstrated tremendous effort and growth throughout the year and brought a lot of energy to the class. He has that combination of positive attitude and belief that he can always improve, which is rare in a high school student, but so important to the learning process. I'm sure he will continue to show hard work in everything he does. I highly recommend Joe for entering your school. Joe wouldn't call himself a mathematician. He told me several times that all the numbers and variables make his mind go Joe made, in fact, a struggle to understand the understanding of at the beginning of the year, but his response to this is what really struck me. Where many others have given up, Joe has accepted this class as a welcome challenge. He stayed after school for extra help, received additional tuition at a nearby college, and asked questions in and out of the classroom. Because of all his hard work, Joe not only raised his grades, but he also inspired some of his classmates to stay after extra help as well. Joe really demonstrated the growth of thinking, and he inspired his peers to take this valuable perspective, too. Joe helped contribute to our classroom environment, where all students can feel supported and able to ask questions. Joe's strong belief in his ability to acquire new skills and improve in practice was probably shaped by his years as a baseball player. He played throughout high school and is one of the team's most valuable players. In his finale for our class, Joe developed an impressive design of calculating and analyzing batting averages. Although he initially described himself as not a mathematical person, Joe reaped the benefits of his immense efforts and found a way to make the issue come to life for him in a way that he was personally invested in as a teacher, it is incredibly fulfilling to witness a student make this kind of academic and personal progress. Joe is a reliable, reliable, good-natured student and friend who supports others in the class and outside of it. He was a pleasure to have in class, and his positive attitude and self-belief, even in the face of adversity, is an extremely remarkable asset. I am sure that he will continue to demonstrate the same diligence, perseverance and optimism that he has shown himself and his peers. I highly recommend Joe for enrolling on your Undergraduate Program. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions fortheloveofalgebra@gmail.com. Sincerely, Mr. WilesMath TeacherEuclid High School While the students featured in the first three examples were top of their class or demonstrated leadership in school, Joe is not top of the achievement in the traditional sense. However, this recommendation is still strong, even if he says he struggled in the teacher's classroom. What does Mr. Wiles focus on to recommend Joe? The breakdown of Mr. Wiles writes a strong letter for Joe, with the same enthusiasm and specific examples as the other three letters. Although Joe may not have received the strongest grades in his math class, he found enthusiastic advice in his math teacher. Mr. Wiles was very impressed with Joe's attitude, effort, and growth of thinking, which he demonstrated over the course of the year and inspired in his classmates. Mr. Wiles focuses on Joe's substantial personal strengths, those that are likely to be impressive for future teachers. Even in a subject that can't come naturally to him, Joe is diligent and perfect. He's not. about asking questions or seeking additional help, and he maintains a strong belief in himself that he can constantly learn, improve, and acquire new skills. This letter, like others, is effective because it is focused, supported and supported by examples. As you can tell from these examples, recommendations can report a lot about a student. Because of this, they can have a powerful effect on a student's chances of enrolling. So what can teachers and students do to make sure they send a strong letter of recommendation that will help their chances? Enthusiasm is key. How to get a strong letter of recommendation Although these letters are about different students with different interests, they share certain fundamental features. First, they sound excited and enthusiastic. Teachers clearly report that they are impressed with these students and want to help them get into college. At the same time, the letters do not overdo it because they have examples to back up their score. Specific examples and stories are key to backing up the score. They also make the letter more interesting and memorable. Instead of just another engineering applicant, Stacey is a student who researched sound absorption to rid his parents of guitar scales. Finally, all teachers discuss their students' personal strengths as well as their academic strengths. They represent a holistic view of what admission officers are looking for, along with their strong vote of confidence in the future success of students. Teachers should include all these functions in their letters, and students should help provide them with raw materials to write about. So she can be even more personalized and supplement the story the student tells in the rest of her app. While recommendations may or may not share their letters with students, there should still be open, two-course communication when a student makes her request. In this way, students and faculty can work together to prepare a deep, enthusiastic, and specific letter of recommendation to send to colleges. Want to build the best college application with the strongest recommendations? We can help. PrepScholar Admission is the world's best admissions consulting service. We combine world-class reception consultants with our data-driven reception strategies. We watched thousands of students wash up in their best schools, from public colleges to the Ivy League. We know which college students want We want you to go to the schools of your dreams. Learn more about taking PrepScholar to maximize your chances of chances What's next? Are you a teacher who makes recommendations for your students? Read all about how to write an outstanding letter of recommendation for your students, as well as what not to include. Are you or a student you work with in a selective school like Harvard? Find out what letter she should get for the Ivy League. Now that you've read these examples of strong teacher recommendations, check out these bad examples. Warning: river letters may appear better than they actually do. Want to improve your SAT score by 160 points or your ACT score by 4 points? We have written a guide for each test about the 5 best strategies you should use to have a chance at improving your score. 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