

Sample Letter of Recommendation - Undergraduate Student

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To Whom It May Concern:

XXXXXX is an extraordinary young woman. As her AP English Professor, I have seen many examples of her talent and have long been impressed by her diligence and work ethic. I understand that Cheri is applying to the undergraduate business program at your school. I would like to recommend her for admission.

Cheri has outstanding organizational skills. She is able to successfully complete multiple tasks with favorable results despite deadline pressure. As part of a semester project, she developed an innovative collaborative novel with her classmates. This book is now being considered for publication. Cheri not only headed the project, she ensured its success by demonstrating leadership abilities that her classmates both admired and respected.

I must also make note of Cheri's exceptional academic performance. Out of a class of 150 students, Cheri graduated with honors in the top 10. Her above-average performance is a direct result of her hard work and strong focus.

If your undergraduate business program is seeking superior candidates with a record of achievement, Cheri is an excellent choice. She has consistently demonstrated an ability to rise to any challenge that she must face.

To conclude, I would like to restate my strong recommendation for Cheri Jackson. If you have any further questions regarding Cheri's ability or this recommendation, please do not hesitate to contact me using the information on this letterhead.

Sincerely,

XXXXX

What makes an effective letter of recommendation? What format and content is appreciated in admissions offices? And most importantly, what does a good letter look like?

The Introductory Paragraph

Start off with a simple *To Whom it May Concern* (Bonus points for knowing the name of an Admissions Counselor, as it suggests the student has done research into the school's Admissions Office, but it's not necessary). *Dear Admissions Officer* or the standard *Dear Sir or Madam* are also acceptable.

The first line should state who the letter is being written for. Admissions officers should not have to fish for the name of the student; it should be front and center. *I am writing this letter on behalf of (name of student)* is sufficient. *Letter of Recommendation for (Name of Student)* as a header (centered, before or even in place of the salutation) is also a clear way to make that statement.

Next, mention in what capacity and for how long you've known the student, for example: *I have known Student X for two years, when he was a student in my U.S. History class. During that time, I found him to be* (here, insert a few adjectives that best describe the student).

The Heart of the Letter

Examples, examples, examples are key here. Admissions counselors do not want to hear about GPAs, achievements, and extracurricular activities in a letter, as that is information they can get from a transcript or application. They want to learn about students' personal qualities, be it leadership ability, generosity, dedication, or ambition, to name a few common (and effective) adjectives. But with those adjectives have to come specifics, i.e. *why* a student is so dedicated or ambitious.