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How to Write a Letter of Recommendation With Samples

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How to Write a Recommendation Letter

Writing a recommendation letter is an art which plays a major role in every academician's, scholar's or a supervisor's life. The letters of recommendations, whether for a job position or for a college admission, are read thoroughly.

In fact; these letters are often scrutinized, analyzed and, when needed, discussed.

Thus, writing a letter of recommendation is a big responsibility that needs to be taken seriously. Experts in this field recommend that before one undertakes the task of writing such a letter, one should determine its purpose and whom it is intended for.

One should have a clear idea regarding the kind of information that is expected from him/her in the letter. If need be, one should spend time talking with the letters' subjects regarding their goals, as well as the position they are interested in, prior to writing the letter.

One may also gather notes or memos on the subjects along with their current resume and other information that will aid in writing these letters.

The best letters of recommendation are not only thorough and specific; they are also full of relevant information that makes the entire selection process a lot easier. The writer must also remember that he is putting his reputation on line while giving a recommendation; hence, if he feels that he does not know the subject well, it is best to decline giving the recommendation.

Generally speaking, a letter of recommendation gives an overall picture of a candidate. Therefore, it should include:

1. Personal characteristics
2. Performance and experience
3. Strengths
4. Capabilities and
5. Professional aptitude

Each letter of recommendation should be one page long and have the following three parts: opening, body and closing.

The Opening

The opening of the letter should indicate warmth; sentences like “I am pleased to recommend xxx etc” are typically examples of warm openings. This should be followed by a brief introduction of the writer and how he/she knows the subject of the letter. The opening must also consist of a brief sketch of the subject in terms of his/her (the subject’s) skills and accomplishments. The writer must also describe the type of length, experience and time period during which he/she worked with the subject of the letter. It is also in the opening that one may list noteworthy assignments and responsibilities that may have been completed by the subject.

The Body

The body of the recommendation letter must give specific information about the potential candidate. This information typically includes:

1. Personal strengths- poise, confidence, ability to help others, reliability, patience and creativity etc.
2. Academic abilities –For example: teaching abilities such as the capability to work with students, solve problems, make coursework fun, ability to solve problems and work with peers, parents, and teachers and help in development of curriculum etc.
3. Specific strengths such as any exceptional skills or abilities, including high energy, enthusiasm, excellent communication skills etc. Apart from that, one may also list the candidate’s background if any, in other subjects such as science or a degree or related work experience in related projects, or if he/she has coached or interned in related fields.
4. The Letter of recommendation for a job professional should contain the qualities of the employee and his assistance to the writer’s organization. There should be no exaggeration; just

the truth.

The closing

The letter should end with a reiteration of the recommendation of the subject. If needed, you can also invite the reader to contact you with sentences such as “For all above reasons, I believe that xxx will make an excellent addition to your team, and if you wish to discuss this recommendation further, I invite you contact me at the address above or my number given below.”

Sample of a letter of recommendation

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing this letter to recommend xxx. I have known xxx since the time he was working under my supervision in my office/lab. I first met him two years ago, when he interned with us for a summer. He asked highly intelligent questions that showed his brilliance. He independently worked on the project we were working on at that time and his motivation and independence was nothing short of impressive.

During his tenure with us, he demonstrated the potential to work independently with sheer ingenuity and keenness. He put in long hours and worked quite hard to meet deadlines. He also worked quite well with other interns in the team and everyone seemed to find him tremendously personable.

Xxx often offered to help other members in their projects, and we were all taken with his exceptionally imaginative mind and work ethics. Our team meets were held every week, during which, xxx presented papers and information that was new to all. He also showed remarkable problem solving ability.

To summarize, xxx is the best intern I had worked with in the past 10 years. While I wish he would continue to stay with us, I believe he will be of exceptional advantage to your organization/program. I give him my highest commendation.

Sincerely,

Name, Last name

Designation

Tips

- The tone of the recommendation letter must be formal and business like.
- You should be complimentary, positive, at the same time honest.

- The first time you name the candidate, the full name must be used, along with a title such as Mr., Ms., etc.
- Always type the letter so that it appears legible as well as business-like.

Image Courtesy of Stuart Miles at freedigitalphotos.net

Letter of recommendation for a summer employee

Recommendation for ABC

To whomsoever it may concern,

ABC completed her internship under my supervision. I am extremely pleased to recommend her for a position of summer employee in your organization. During the period from 2011 to 2013, ABC took on various roles and responsibilities. She was quick to complete tasks and excelled at pretty much everything that was thrown at her. In fact, she was one of our most productive interns that our organization has employed in those couple of years.

ABC has always exhibited all the qualities that are necessary in every employee in today's highly competitive marketplace. I must especially highlight her qualities of speed and accuracy and her ability to work under high pressure or in demanding circumstances. Every now and then we would hear staff members say, "Oh, ABC has handled that already!" In a very short span of time, she was able to work independently without any close supervision and was always known to follow directions thoroughly and accurately. She was also adept at multi tasking and was working on numerous projects and assignments simultaneously.

ABC always displayed an upbeat, energetic and an optimistic attitude that made her fun to be around with. She displayed exceptional communication skills and was able to interface effectively with other members of staff and our clients.

As is clear from this letter; I am highly impressed with this organized and talented young woman. Hence I give my strongest recommendation for any role that needs planning, communication, and intelligence. Do feel free to contact me if you need any more information or perspective.

Sincerely,

First Name, Last Name

Email

Phone