

## HELPFUL HINTS FOR WRITING A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Include your affiliation/relationship with the person. Were you a supervisor? Advisor? Professor? It Is Important to Indicate this because a professor may see the academic skills while a supervisor may be able to Identify work habits.

Give honest and factual information. When approached to write a recommendation, ask yourself if you honestly know the person's qualities. If you have not had much contact with the person you cannot give an accurate description. It would be better to decline to write a recommendation than to write a vague, irrelevant, or negative one. However, if you do make negative comments, back them up with facts.

Have the person give you a list of accomplishments and organizations that he/she belongs to, or any other relevant information. It might surprise you to see how much that person has done outside of your contact with them. This can also help you get a more accurate picture of the individual. Having the person give you a copy of his/her resume is an easy way to have this information at hand.

Concentrate on several different aspects of the person. Specifically, Identify his/her skills, attitudes, personal attributes and growth, as well as his/her contributions to and performance within your organization. It is extremely important to Include examples where possible. It is one thing to state that someone had some good Ideas and another to say, "John Integrated reading and writing into a language experience program with an emphasis on comprehension."

The appearance of a letter is a reflection on both you and the candidate and it can also determine whether it will be read or not. Please type your recommendation neatly.

The following eight attributes are listed as important by the American Association for Employment in Education Inc. when evaluating teaching candidates:

- empathy
- native Intelligence
- a divergent, abstract thinking style
- a high level of commitment
- the ability to be a "self-starter"
- a high energy level
- the recognition that excellence Is a journey, not a destination
- the potential ability to lead.

Don't reference characteristics that can be the basis of discrimination such as race, color, national origin, gender, citizenship status, religion, age, appearance, any handicapping condition, marital or parental status, or political point of view.

Beware of the power of words. Some words seem harmless in every day conversation, but carry positive or negative connotations to a prospective employer.

Avoid bland words such as:            nice        good        fairly    reasonable    decent    satisfactory

Powerful words which are important to use include:    articulate            effective            sophisticated  
                                 expressive            creative            efficient  
                                 cooperative            imaginative        assertive  
                                 dependable            mature            innovative

The following list of attributes National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) is often listed by employers as tools on which to base eventual selection. These are excellent points to address:

ability to communicate	flexibility interpersonal
intelligence	skills
self-confidence	self-knowledge
willingness to accept responsibility	ability to handle conflict
initiative	goal achievement
leadership	competitiveness
energy level	appropriate vocational skills
imagination	direction

**BE HONEST! BE ACCURATE! BE SPECIFIC!**  
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