**Etiquette for Requesting a Letter of Recommendation:**

1. All letters of recommendation requests should be made *in person.*
2. Select your recommenders carefully—will they remember you?  Will they have positive and interesting things to say about you?  (Don't expect them to write a letter if you made few contributions to class, or if you attended infrequently, and so forth). A referee is more likely to write a strong letter if she or he knows your work well, has worked closely with you over an extended period, and has been given time and material with which to produce an honest, well-documented, supportive letter.
3. Students are not entitled to letters of recommendation. Writing a recommendation falls outside the realm of a teacher’s professional responsibilities. While many teachers enjoy writing letters for students, it is important that students understand that writing one letter often can take over an hour—taking time away from our professional and personal responsibilities. A well-written letter is like a well-crafted essay:  both take a substantial amount of time, varying amounts of research or preparation, and extensive editing and rewriting.  The best letters are composed with the student in mind, but are also mindful of the particulars of specific academic programs, grants, or scholarships.
4. Be aware that a quality Secondary School Reports is just as time-consuming and labor-intensive as a letter of recommendation.
5. If you are considering asking for a letter, do so as soon as possible. Try to anticipate that your teachers will likely receive requests for the same deadline from other students.  Demonstrate respect for your letter writer's time by providing her or him with plenty of advance notice. At least a month is preferable. Less than two weeks is unacceptable (and will likely be met with a "No"). If requesting a letter of recommendation from Mrs. Wright, a ***minimum*** *of three weeks* is required for completion.
6. Most recommendation forms have a box to check and sign to indicate whether you waive or retain your rights to see the letter. *Always* waive your rights. Many referees will not write a non-confidential letter. Also, admissions committees will give letters more weight when they are confidential under the assumption that faculty will be more candid when the student cannot read the letter. Don't be paranoid about this: it is completely standard. An ethical letter-writer will warn you before writing a negative recommendation, or she/ he will not agree to write you the letter in the first place. In order to receive a letter of recommendation from me, you *must* waive your rights.
7. Provide all of the necessary information in an organized manner. Always include a self-addressed stamped envelope for each letter.  The return address should be the school’s address, and all envelopes should be *typed* and *stamped*. Include any official forms—be certain to fill out all necessary blanks. If you are using the Common Application, make sure to secure your requests *in person* prior to sending teachers online invitations.
8. Most likely, you will be asking for recommendations throughout your life. Get in the habit now of thanking the person that writes your recommendation. A written note of appreciation is best. Also, once you begin hearing back from schools, return to the teachers who wrote your recommendations and let them know!

**Message from Mrs. Wright:**

Dear Student,

I enjoy writing recommendations (or even secondary school reports!) for my students, provided that I have help with my memory.  In order to assist me, I ask that you answer the attached questions.  I know modesty often prevents us from being as truthful as we could be.  But your modesty will not help me here.  Keep in mind that I expect you to brag and say the most wonderful things about yourself and your love of learning. One note of caution:  unless I have first-hand experience about an activity you were involved in, I will not include that in my recommendation.  Though I will try to mention the extra-curricular activities you are involved in, I may not be able to discuss them in detail. If this is a concern, please make sure that another recommender will handle that part of your school life.

What will help set your recommendation apart from the rest are anecdotes (stories) that are specific to you and your experiences in this class. \*\*Please be aware that composing a Secondary School Report is just as labor intensive as a letter of recommendation. The goal of both is to illuminate your best qualities, and crafting these ideas with detail and specificity (as opposed to making generic comments) takes time and effort. The more information I can provide the Career Center about you in a secondary school report or a letter or recommendation, the better you sound as a candidate. So…the more help you can provide, the better. My effort will equal your effort.

Thanks for taking the time to help me help you. Good luck!

☺ *Mrs. Wright*

P.S. A secondary school report is submitted to the Ms. Wakeman, in the Career Center. I usually do this electronically. If you need a letter of recommendation sent to your desired schools and/or scholarship providers, you must provide me with the envelopes (with addresses and postage already applied) or with specific instructions for any on-line submissions.

***Please fill out this questionnaire with as much detail as possible.***

***Be sure to include the other items listed below, when submitting this form.***

**Letter of Recommendation/ Secondary School Report Questionnaire**

Please fill out this questionnaire with as much detail as possible.

1. **Name:**
2. **ID#:**
3. **List the schools/ programs to which I will be submitting your letters (Use the following format):**

*Kool Kids Kollege, Deadline: January 1st*

*Awesome Hair Scholarship, Deadline: November 30th*

1. On some applications, including the Common Application, you will be asked to waive your rights to see this recommendation. (See Etiquette #6, above.)

**I have waived my right to see this recommendation after I matriculate.**

**Circle one: YES NO**

1. **What are your career goals and/or your intended college major?**
2. **What qualities best describe you? Describe why.**
3. **Do you have a favorite quote or motto?  What is it and why? Please try not to be cliché…there are only so many letters I can write on Carpe Diem…**
4. **Who is your favorite character from a novel, play, or movie? Describe why.**
5. **Choose one of the authors that we read in the class and tell me what you admire about this author or this author's work. (Or tell me about your favorite author.)**
6. **Tell me about a writing piece of which you are particularly proud. It need not be something you wrote in my class. Please attach a copy of it.**
7. **Are there any memorable class discussions in which you contributed or that made you look at life in a different way? If so, be sure to explain how it made you grow as a person.**
8. **Have you experienced any barriers or setbacks in your academic career? If so what were they and how did you overcome them?**
9. **What honors classes have you taken at Fountain Valley?  Do you have any comments about why you chose any of these rigorous classes? Any comments about how you have learned to budget your time?**
10. **Please describe any activities outside of class in which you are involved. Please indicate what years you have been involved in these activities.**
11. **What more can you say about yourself, your love of learning, your love of writing, your love of literature, and/or your relationship with peers?**
12. **What question have I failed to ask?**

**Print out a copy of this questionnaire. Attach (with a paper clip) the following:**

* A copy of your transcript
* Your college essay
* Include any necessary self-addressed stamped envelopes.
* Below, note any special instructions for me…