Joshua Todd
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Griffin, Georgia 30224
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Dear college applicant,

Though letters of recommendation require a great deal of my time, I enjoy writing them for my students. I see these letters, on which I spend approximately one to two hours each, as a gift that I can give to students I respect and admire.

In order to assist me in writing the most effective letter possible, I ask that you honestly provide information about yourself on the attached form. I know modesty and humility often prevent us from being as truthful as we could be; however, your modesty in this situation will not help me--or you. Keep in mind that I expect you to brag and explain the most glowing (yet truthful) details about yourself and your love of learning.

My letters are effective because I am specific in my references to students' knowledge, performance, potential, and intellectual curiosity. I won't praise a student for his or her assertiveness unless I can support that comment with an anecdote or example from my experience with that student. I am also precise in tying the student's skills and qualities to the college, program of study, or scholarship for which he or she is applying. Most important, I believe, is that I deal forthrightly with students' weaknesses. I believe in being honest because I insist that colleges and scholarship committees want to hear about real human beings--not academic automatons.

My letters are very personal reflections about my students. Unless I have first-hand experience about an activity you were involved in (such as participation in swim team, involvement in the academic team, or membership in the English Honor Society), I will not usually include that information in my recommendation. As an academic teacher, I do not often write about extracurricular activities. Therefore, please make sure that another recommender will handle that part of your school life.

If you still want me to write a letter of recommendation for you (now that you know about my letter-writing philosophies), I will be pleased to do so—but I impose one more condition. In exchange for my letter of recommendation, I request that before you graduate you write thank-you notes, not only to me but to all those who help you through the college application process this year. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Joshua A. Todd

Request for Letter of Recommendation from Mr. Todd

Name: _____

GPA _____ and class rank _____/_____ as of _____

SAT total _____ verbal _____ math _____ writing _____ ACT comp. _____

1. Describe some learning experience that you have pursued on your own with no outside motivation; explain what it reveals about you as person and a thinker.

2. Of what accomplishment are you most proud? Describe why in detail.

3. Which two or three extracurricular activities are most important to you? Why do you participate in these activities, and what do you gain from them personally?

4. What three adjectives best describe your strengths, and what three most accurately describe your weaknesses--as a student and a person? Choose the most important two (one strength and one weakness) and provide one anecdote to support each adjective.

5. Why do you want to attend this college or receive this scholarship, and why should you be chosen from among the applicants? What do you want the admissions office or scholarship committee to learn about you from my letter of recommendation? On which elements of your life would you like me to focus?

6. What question have I failed to ask? Have you won any academic or other awards? 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?

Request for Letter of Recommendation from Mr. Todd

College or Organization _____

Address _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Person or Office _____

Due date (at least two weeks from date of request) _____

College or Organization _____

Address _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Person or Office _____

Due date (at least two weeks from date of request) _____

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