

# Writing Letters of Recommendation



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What is a letter of recommendation?

**A statement of support**



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# The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

Please write a **narrative** that **expands** upon  
the **reasons** behind the **ratings** you have  
assigned to this student.



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# The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

**Specific, concrete** examples showing **why** the student deserves the ratings you gave them.

What did the student **do** to earn the ratings?



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# The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

Expand upon the traits you believe are  
strongest in your student.

You won't be able to cover everything!



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# The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

- **Academic achievement**
- **Leadership**
- Joy in learning
- Respect for teachers
- Honesty and integrity
- Self-confidence
- Respect from peers
- Sociability
- Cross-cultural adaptability
- Emotional maturity



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# The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

**You should focus on what **distinguishes**  
this student from the others you teach...**



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# The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

What makes your student outstanding?

How is your student different from  
others?



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# The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

**...especially those academic and personal characteristics that may have a direct impact upon his/her success in an Ivy League pre-medical program and a career in medicine.**



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# The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

How do the stories and examples in your letter show that your student will succeed in a medical university program?

**Specifically**, why do you think your student will be an excellent physician?



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The letter of recommendation  
prompt at WCMC-Q

We are particularly interested in this  
candidate's **intellectual promise** and  
**leadership potential.**



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# The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

How has your student demonstrated  
their intellectual abilities to you?

How has your student shown leadership?

Make sure to discuss these points!



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# The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

You **may wish** to present evidence you have seen of his/her **maturity, integrity, and independence**. This may include references to his/her **motivation, initiative, and enthusiasm**.



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# The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

Discuss these traits if your student is  
outstanding in any of them.



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# The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

Your student may not have done well in your class, but you feel they will succeed due to:

- Maturity
- Integrity
- Independence
- Motivation
- Initiative
- Enthusiasm



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# How do I get the information I need?

- Meet with the student!
- Discuss educational and career goals.
- Gather more specific information.
- Request that they bring a resume, or a paper or exam from your class.
- Look back at your records.



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# What do I do if...

A high-performing student with excellent marks and outstanding leadership potential requests a letter



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# What do I do if...

A student with excellent marks  
requests a letter

The student does not participate in school  
activities, and does not seem motivated to  
study medicine.



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# What do I do if...

A student with average marks  
requests a letter

The student is very active in school activities  
and seems very interested in studying  
medicine.



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# What do I do if...

A student with low marks in your class requests a letter

You feel the student has the potential to do well, but there was a family emergency that affected his or her ability to focus on course material.



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# How do I organize my letter?

## First Paragraph

- Establish your relationship to the student.
- How did you meet him or her?
- How well do you know him or her?
- Be specific!



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# How do I organize my letter?

## Second Paragraph

- Describe your student's strongest trait.
- Provide a **specific, concrete** story or example illustrating the trait.



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# How do I organize my letter?

## Third Paragraph

- Describe your student's next strongest trait.
- Provide a **specific, concrete** story or example illustrating the trait.



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# How do I organize my letter?

## Fourth Paragraph

- Describe your student's next strongest trait.
- Provide a **specific, concrete** story or example illustrating the trait.



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# How do I organize my letter?

## Fifth Paragraph

- Summarize the traits
- Explain your expectations regarding the student's success at Weill Cornell.
- Endorse your recommendation and ask the committee to **take action.**



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Thanks for your attention!

We will now meet in breakout rooms.

Please follow your designated group leader.



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