

10 Tips for Recommenders By Linda Abraham, Founder and President of Accepted.com

#	TIPS	Done!
1	Review a copy of the applicant's personal statement or application essays so that your letter of recommendation can dovetail with - not conflict with or duplicate - the rest of the application.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Ask the applicant to supply you with additional information like a résumé or activity list.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Describe your qualifications for comparing the applicant to other applicants. <i>I have been teaching high school drama for fifteen years and have taught AP English for the last five years.</i> <i>I have personally supervised ten research interns every summer for the last five years plus, I have coached the cross-country and tennis teams at Elite High School for the last five years.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Discuss how well you know the applicant. <i>I had the pleasure of directing plays in which John starred during each of his three years at ABC High School.</i> <i>Over the last three years I coached Jane as she worked her way up from JV to varsity tennis and state champion.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Choose two to three qualities that you observed in the applicant. <i>Jane has a rare blend of steely determination, incredible self-discipline, and great teamwork skills.</i> <i>The combination of tenacity, leadership qualities, and good communications skills found in John is truly unique.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	In discussing those qualities, support your statements with specific instances in which he or she demonstrated those attributes. Be as concrete and detailed as possible. <i>John's discipline and dedication were extraordinary - not only did he never miss a practice; he came early to warm up and always worked out for an additional hour after school.</i> <i>Jane not only participated in every rehearsal; she also made herself available to other actors and actresses for impromptu rehearsals and practices, thus inspiring the rest of the cast to even greater efforts and success.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Try to quantify the student's strengths or rank him or her vis-à-vis other applicants that you have observed. <i>He was in the top 10% of his class.</i> <i>She has the best analytical skills of any high school senior I have ever taught.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Avoid generalities and platitudes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Include some mild criticism, typically the flip-side of a strength. <i>The only fault I have encountered in him is his retiring nature. His modesty sometimes hides a young man of remarkable strength and broad interests.</i> <i>Occasionally, her fortitude and persistence can turn into stubbornness, but usually her good nature and level-headedness prevail.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Close with a ringing recommendation and endorsement of the applicant's ability. <i>I enthusiastically recommend Mr. Doe to your university. This well-rounded student will be a fine asset to your student body.</i> <i>With her exceptional leadership, writing, and quantitative skills, Ms. Smith will be an outstanding credit to the college she attends.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>