

## **Writing Effective Recommendations**

### **Teacher Recommendations:**

Teachers should write letters of recommendations based upon their observation of the student in the class as well as their own personal experiences with the student. Teachers should only discuss the student's involvement with extracurricular activities and sports if the teacher is the advisor or coach for the activity or sport.

Some common points of topic are:

1. Achievement relative to peers
  - a. Top of average class
  - b. Middle of honors section
2. "Qualities of the mind"
  - a. Intellectual curiosity
  - b. Critical thinking/writing
  - c. Consistency of achievement
  - d. Participation
  - e. Independent thinking
  - f. Originality
3. "Qualities of personality"
  - a. Motivation
  - b. Energy
  - c. Cooperation
  - d. Self-confidence
  - e. Responsibility
  - f. Reactions to difficult tasks
4. Co-curricular activities  
\*\* Only if you have directly observed the student as an advisor or coach

Teachers should also be aware of what to avoid when writing recommendations. To ensure a genuine recommendation please avoid the following:

- a. Generalizations
- b. Activity List
- c. Neutrality
- d. Ambiguity
- e. Repetition