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Getting Good References for School or Scholarship Applications

When applying for certain scholarships and school admissions, you'll be asked to provide a reference or two to vouch for your qualifications and character.

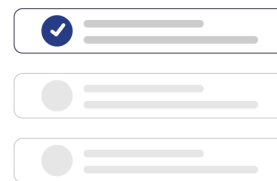
Choosing and approaching your referees (a person who provides a reference) is an important step on your educational journey — in fact, you may draw upon these same people when applying for jobs — so here's a bit of advice on finding good referees.

Who to Ask for a Reference

You should approach people who've known you well for at least a year or more, but are outside your immediate circle.

This means no friends or family members! Teachers, coaches, religious figures, employers — these are the sorts of folks you should approach.

If you've got a strong, professional source who knows you in multiple contexts — say, for example, your science teacher also runs your debate club — that person is an excellent choice. All your references should be an unbiased academic or professional source.



How and When to Ask

Be sure to give your referee plenty of time to respond to your request — no desperate, last-minute emails, please! Give at least two weeks' turnaround time; up to a month might be

better. Some people are asked to provide many references for different students, so be respectful of your referee's time.

Put your reference request in writing, and if possible, give a bit of detail about the scholarship or school you're applying to. This will help your referee draft a personalized, relevant reference letter.

Going the **Extra Mile**

If you can, share as much info with your referee as possible. In addition to sharing the application details, you should include your resumé, cover letter, details about your extracurriculars or volunteer efforts, and any other info that might help your referee draft a strong letter of recommendation.



When your referee agrees to help you, send a thank you note, and let them know you'll remind them 3 days before the deadline. This type of gentle reminder can go a long way — but be respectful, not pushy.

If you win the scholarship, or get accepted to your school of choice, send another note to your referees letting them know. Many referees love hearing this kind of feedback, and it makes the reference process that much sweeter for everyone involved.

Good luck with connecting with referees and with your applications!



This material was adapted from a post by Janet MacDonald of mycampusGPS.ca