

Do your best to find out from your student who will be reading your recommendation letter. Otherwise, the salutation should read "To Whom It May Concern:"

Here the recommender establishes the kind and the length of her relationship to the student.

Dear Admissions Officer Amy Adams:

It is with great pleasure that I am writing this letter of recommendation for Susie Student. In the past four years, I have taught Susie in a number of visual arts courses in all of which she has excelled. Based on my experience with Susie, I can say without the shadow of a doubt that she is one of the most naturally talented and hardworking art students with whom I have had the opportunity to work. She is exceptionally well prepared to move onto the collegiate level, and it is clear to me that she has a very bright future in the creative arts.

This paragraph focuses on Susie Student's maturity in her creation of art, and offers specific details about her "methodical creative process," which supports the recommender's claim that Susie is mature for her age.

Susie is very mature for her age and she approaches her art with an astute sense of objectivity. She processes constructive criticism well and is always willing to go the extra mile in order to take her work to the highest level of formal and conceptual refinement. Susie has a very methodical creative process; she develops her concepts thoughtfully, creates interesting exploratory sketches, and builds meticulous scale models before she commits herself, with confidence, to the fabrication process. Once Susie begins fabrication, she works with precision and purpose. Her skills of craftsmanship are highly developed and she has an incredibly astute attention to detail. In addition, I have been impressed by Susie's ability to couple her attention to detail with a broader stylistic focus that allows her to consider how effectively her compositions function as a whole. Therein, Susie creates sculptures that are cohesive in form and eloquent in their communication of sophisticated concepts. All in all, Susie is an incredibly well

rounded art student who has found a way to balance all of the aspects of the creative process with apparent ease.

The recommender transitions into a discussion about something intangible, her work ethic. However, the recommender is careful to give specific examples which support her assertion that Susie has a good work ethic, such as her role as mentor in the classroom.

Aside from Susie's natural artistic ability, it is important to touch on her work ethic and her presence in the classroom setting. Susie never settles for second best and she utilizes class time in a productive and determined manner. She arrives to class early and works late when the need arises. Due to this approach, Susie quickly became a role model for her peers in all of my classes. Students observed Susie's commitment to the creative process and they strived to excel as she did.

Though Susie is very talented, she is a humble young woman who never lets her abilities go to her head. She thrives off of the entire creative process both the successes and the challenges. Most importantly, Susie is always willing to help her classmates as they create. She offers both technical and conceptual support to her peers in a kind and caring manner that speaks to Susie's patience and her understanding of the importance of collaborative learning.

Notice that although the recommender is discussing the future which he cannot predict, he does not offer qualifying statements such as "to the best of my knowledge" which might cast doubt on his praise of Susie. Instead, he sticks to direct and affirmative statements.

In looking ahead to Susie's college years, I am certain that she is ready to tackle the rigorous and challenging curriculum of the collegiate level. Susie will not take the path of least resistance, rather, she will push herself to continue to grow and develop as a creative thinker. She will immerse herself in her new community and she will share her energy, enthusiasm, commitment and talent with her peers and her professors. Susie Student is an exceptional candidate and it is with the utmost

A final positive statement of recommendation.

confidence that I recommend her to your college or university. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Offering additional information on request demonstrates not only your desire to support your student beyond the letter, but also allows an Admissions Officer to follow up on the information you offer. This is especially important when it comes to any potentially negative or neutral information in the letter which might benefit from a phone conversation.

Sincerely,

Timothy Teacher