

College Application Process: Letters of Recommendation

What is a letter of recommendation?

Letters of recommendation are vital pieces of your college application. While standardized test scores and GPA are important for determining if a school is the right academic fit, a letter of recommendation is an opportunity to personalize your application. Teachers and/or a counselor, who knows you well, can write a letter explaining your academic potential, classroom behaviors, personality, and extracurricular achievements.

How do you know what your school requires?

Each college website will outline the specific requirements for their school's application. Requirements may vary with each school. You can access this information by going to the individual school website, clicking on the admission page, and searching for undergraduate application requirements.

Who should I ask?

Schools will typically ask for: 1 teacher recommendation, 2 teacher recommendations, a combination of a teacher and a counselor, or no letter of recommendation. You should be very thoughtful about who you ask. You should always have at least one core class teacher, preferably from junior year, who can clearly recommend your academic potential in an academic setting. This may not be the class where you had the highest grade, but the class where you have demonstrated active learning, asked questions or sought extra help, and engaged with the teacher. A counselor recommendation can provide admission counselors a more in-depth look at your experiences in high school. Counselors recommendations may highlight overall academic achievements, personal and/or academic hardships, and extracurricular accomplishments.

How do I ask someone for a recommendation?

First, it is vital to understand that writing a letter of recommendation takes time and is typically a task teachers perform outside of school hours. While teachers are happy to support their students, it is important to be mindful of their time. Second, two teacher recommendations are sufficient. Most schools will not review more than two so please limit it to two teachers. Third, it is important when you ask a teacher or counselor to provide a letter on your behalf that you are polite, you explain why you are choosing them specifically, and you ask each recommender what **you** can provide for them in order for them to have the information necessary to complete one.

- **When you formally ask someone for a letter you should always ask them in person.** The best way to ask for a letter, after doing all of your research, is to contact your specific teacher or counselor via email to set up a time to meet to talk further.
 - For teachers: each teacher may request different information. Make sure your resume is complete, you have a copy of your transcripts, and you fill out any additional forms they provide, including the teacher recommendation form if applicable.
 - For counselors: prior to speaking with your counselor, please complete your **resume** and the **counselor questionnaire** located in Naviance under ABOUT ME. Resume (My Stuff) counselor questionnaire (My Surveys)

What is my deadline?

The end of the school year is a good time to ask your teachers/counselor for recommendations. We understand that you most likely do not know where you are applying yet therefore do not have hard deadlines. It is okay to ask a teacher and say that you will follow up with them on the deadline in the fall. Recommendations should always be asked for **at least two weeks prior** to your first application deadline.



Career Concentrations



AT EAST LYME HIGH SCHOOL

What are career concentrations?

Career Concentrations allow students to take courses to help prepare them for a specific career field. Successful completion of a Career Concentration is recorded on the student's official transcript, and the student receives a certificate of accomplishment.

Why Career Concentrations?

- ★ Learn more about an area to see if you like it!
- ★ Build your resume and help potential employers or admissions representatives understand the depth of your interest.
- ★ Be better prepared to enter a career.
- ★ Be better prepared for courses at a technical school or college.

Program Requirements

Each concentration has a minimum credit requirement that consists of both required courses and elective courses.

Students must:

- ✓ Take the correct sequence of courses as outlined in this brochure and the Program of Studies.
- ✓ Earn a 'C' or better in each concentration class. Grades are checked at the end of Quarter 3.
- ✓ Complete the application on Google Classroom in your senior year (code: v6cf64c) - please do NOT enter the Google Classroom until your senior year.



Allied Health - 4 credits

Required: Emergency Medical Technician/UConn ECE OR Human Anatomy & Physiology Honors OR Medical Terminology/UConn ECE **AND** Human Development/UConn ECE

Electives: Principles of Public Speaking/UConn ECE, Probability/Statistics or AP Statistics, Psychology or AP Psychology, Biotechnology, Sociology, Lifetime Fitness, Accounting, English 12/UConn ECE ENGL 1004, English 12/UConn ECE ENGL 1007, AP Language, Special Needs Aide, Concentration specific LTI/CWE*

Broadcasting - 3 credits

Required: Digital Filmmaking I, Digital Filmmaking II, TV Broadcast News, Principles of Public Speaking/UConn ECE

Electives: Animation, Digital Filmmaking Honors, Theater Appreciation, Journalism, Concentration specific LTI/CWE*

Business - 3 credits

Required: Accounting I, Business Management, Entrepreneurship: Passion to Profit

Electives: It's the Law I, Web Design, Principles of Public Speaking/UConn ECE, Economics, Concentration specific LTI/CWE*

Computer Science - 3 credits

Required: Exploring Computer Science I, AP Mobile Computer Science Principles or AP Computer Science A Java

Electives: AP Mobile Computer Science Principles or AP Computer Science A Java (if not used as a required class), Computer Programming Honors, Animation, Web Design, Gaming Concepts, C.A.D. (I or II), Digital Filmmaking, Photoshop, Digital Photography, Yearbook, Concentration specific LTI/CWE*

Education - 3 credits

Required: Birth to 3 Playgroup, Preschool Laboratory 1, Preschool Laboratory 2/CSCC ECE, Human Development/UConn ECE

Electives: Psychology, Sociology, Child Aide, Child Development Laboratory Aide, Principles of Public Speaking/UConn ECE, Special Needs Aide, Concentration Specific LTI/CWE*

Hospitality - 3 credits

Required: Culinary Arts I, Culinary Arts II, Catering & Hospitality Honors, Baking & Pastry Arts

Electives: Accounting, Economics, Entrepreneurship: Passion to Profit, Principles of Public Speaking/UConn ECE, Foods Aide, Concentration specific LTI/CWE*

International Studies - 4 credits

Required: 3 credits of a World Language (reaching Level 4 or 5)

Electives: AP World History, Issues of the Day, Human Rights, Principles of Public Speaking/UConn ECE, AP Environmental, AP Seminar, Concentration specific LTI/CWE*

Manufacturing - 4 credits

Required: C.A.D. I, Introduction to Woodworking, Pre-Engineering, Algebra II

Electives: C.A.D. II, Introduction to 3D Design, Exploring Computer Science I, Engineering, Applied Mechanics/UConn ECE, Concentration specific LTI/CWE*

Performing Arts - 4 credits

Required: 3 years of one performance ensemble area (band, orchestra, or chorus)

Electives: Music Theory, AP Music Theory, Digital Piano, Guitar I, Music Tech, Theater Appreciation, Principles of Public Speaking/UConn ECE, Different Performance Ensemble, Concentration specific LTI/CWE*

Print/Digital Communications - 3 credits

Required: Journalism I or Creative Writing I, Introduction to Graphics, Principles of Public Speaking/UConn ECE

Electives: Yearbook, Journalism II, Print Journalism (III, IV), Photoshop, Digital Photography, Web Design, Animation, Creative Writing II/ECSU ECE, Graphics Honors, AP Seminar, Concentration specific LTI/CWE*

Public Safety - 3.5 credits

Required: It's the Law I, Psychology or AP Psychology, Sociology, Conditioning or Early Bird Physical Education, Human Rights or Issues of the Day

Electives: AP United States Government and Politics, Forensic Science, Emergency Medical Technician/UConn ECE, Principles of Public Speaking/UConn ECE, Human Development/UConn ECE, African-American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies, Human Rights or Issues of the Day (if not taken as a required class), English 12/UConn ECE ENGL 1004, English 12/UConn ECE ENGL 1007, AP Language, Concentration specific LTI/CWE*

STEM - 4 credits

Required: 1 credit in Physics, 1 credit in Algebra II, 1 credit in C.A.D. I/C.A.D. II, Pre-Engineering or Engineering

Electives: Accounting, AP Mobile Computer Science Principles, Exploring Computer Science I, Biotechnology, C.A.D. I/C.A.D. II, Pre-engineering, Engineering, Applied Mechanics/UConn ECE, Concentration-related WISE project

Visual Arts - 3 credits

Required: 2D Art I, 2D Art II

Electives: Crafts I or II, Ceramics I or II, Advanced Art & Portfolio Development, AP Studio Art, Introduction to Graphics, Graphics Honors, Concentration specific LTI/CWE*

World Languages and Cultures - 4 credits

Required: 3 consecutive years of a primary world language (French, German, or Spanish)

Electives: 1 year of a second World Language -- French, German, or Spanish **OR** Intermediate Mid/13 Proficiency of a separate world language as demonstrated on the 4 sections of the AAPPL exam or a 3 or higher on an AP exam

**LTI/CWE - Learning through Interest/Cooperative Work Experience as approved by school counselor and cooperating teacher.*

Class of 2027 Junior Year Checklist

Use this checklist as a guide to assist with the post-secondary search process!

To complete by the end of the school year:

- ☐ Meet with teachers for senior year course selection
- ☐ Attend junior planning meeting with your school counselor
- ☐ Carefully select classes that align with your future goals
- ☐ Update resume on Naviance
- ☐ Ask teachers if they are willing to write letters of recommendation
- ☐ Consider taking the ACT or SAT in May or June, if necessary
- ☐ Register for NCAA clearinghouse if you are considering playing Division I or II Athletics
- ☐ Start to think about college essay prompts

Explore

- ☐ Visit colleges/technical schools
- ☐ Seek out Volunteer opportunities
- ☐ Look for internships related to your interests/Job shadow
- ☐ Investigate ROTC websites
- ☐ Talk to a military recruiter
- ☐ Complete/Review Career Interest Profiler and Career Cluster Finder on Naviance
- ☐ Use Naviance to explore majors/careers/colleges you might be interested in
- ☐ Career Exploration
 - Career One Stop – <https://www.careeronestop.org/>
 - My Next Move – <https://www.mynextmove.org/>
 - My Skills My Future – <https://www.myskillsmyfuture.org/>
 - Occupational Outlook Handbook – <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

To do over the summer:

- ☐ Visit, visit, visit
- ☐ Test prep/Khan Academy
- ☐ Draft college essay
- ☐ Decide if you are going/need to take the ACT or SAT in the fall
- ☐ If you are interested in programs that require a portfolio or audition, start to compile necessary components

What to anticipate for the fall:

- ☐ Senior planning meeting with your counselor
- ☐ Take ACT or SAT, if needed
- ☐ ***Follow up with teachers*** if you requested letters of recommendations
- ☐ Complete School Counselor Letter of Recommendation form, if needed
- ☐ Finalize essay
- ☐ Apply to colleges or jobs
- ☐ Complete portfolio or audition, if your program or application requires it

(see back)

2026 SAT		2026 ACT	
Test Dates	Registration Deadlines	Test Dates	Registration Deadlines
*March 14, 2026	February 27, 2026	February 14, 2026	January 9, 2026
*May 2, 2026	April 17, 2026	April 11, 2026	March 14, 2026
*June 6, 2026	May 22, 2026	June 13, 2026	May 8, 2026
		July 11, 2026	June 5, 2026
Anticipated 2026-2027 Test Dates		Anticipated 2026-2027 Test Dates	
August 15, 2026	TBD	September 19, 2026	August 14, 2026
September 12, 2026	TBD	October 17, 2026	September 11, 2026
October 3, 2026	TBD	December 12, 2026	November 6, 2026
November 7, 2026	TBD		
www.collegeboard.org		www.act.org	

* ELHS is a test site

- **Google Classroom** – East Lyme School Counseling Page
 - East Lyme Counseling Office - Class of 2027
 - **Classroom Code: 3zyjf6k**
- **Career Concentrations** – pick classes in a particular career path to receive a certificate upon graduation
 - visit A200 or the school counseling website for details

Important Websites	
Naviance	College and Career searching, Resume builder, career inventories
College Board	Access SAT scores, sign up for SAT dates, practice Khan Academy
ACT	Access ACT scores, sign up for ACT dates, practice tests.
Common Application	Apply to 900+ Colleges
Department of Labor	Career search, see trends in the job market, how much will I get paid?
NCAA Clearinghouse	If you are considering playing Division I or II Athletics

Understanding the Common Application

APPLYING TO COLLEGE is a tedious and often stressful process for students and their parents. In addition to finishing their last year of high school, teens may also be juggling the SAT or ACT, college tours if available and applications for numerous schools.

The Common Application, which is accepted by more than 900 schools, including some colleges located outside the U.S., helps streamline one essential part of the admissions process for students.

Through the platform, first-time and transfer applicants alike can apply to multiple colleges at once. So, students only have to fill out details that most schools require, including name, address, parental employment and education and extracurricular activities, one time.

For additional information please visit: <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/common-app> or visit www.commonapp.org

SOME SCHOOLS IN CT WHO USE THE COMMON APP

University of Connecticut, Eastern, Central, Southern, Western CT State Universities

Connecticut College, Fairfield University, Sacred Heart, Quinnipiac University, University of New Haven, Yale University, University of Saint Joseph, University of Hartford, and more

SCHOOLS IN CT WHO DO NOT USE THE COMMON APP

Community Colleges

*check www.commonapp.org for full list of participating institutions throughout the US

WHEN CAN I BEGIN THE COMMON APPLICATION?

On August 1st, the Common Application becomes available for rising seniors to begin their application for fall admission. Summertime is a great time to familiarize yourself with the common application, but don't worry if you don't, when students return to school in the fall counselors will be meeting to help support the application process.

COMMON APP ESSAY

As part of the application, students will be required to write a 650 word essay. This essay is an excellent opportunity for students to personalize their application. Summertime is yet again a great time to begin brainstorming ideas and beginning to get your ideas down on paper. Below are the essay prompts from 2025-2026. Continue to visit or follow www.commonapp.org for the newest information.

Below is the full set of essay prompts for 2025-2026. Common App will also retain the optional COVID-19 question within the Additional Information section.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

FAFSA Fact Sheet

Federal Student Aid recently made changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Here's what to expect:

How do families apply for financial aid?

- Go to StudentAid.gov and create student and parent FSA IDs. Allow **three days** for the Social Security Administration to verify the IDs.
 - Students should NOT use their school email address when creating the FSA ID.
 - Parents without a Social Security Number must create FSA IDs.
- File the FAFSA at StudentAid.gov using student and parent FSA IDs.
- Students and parents are called “contributors” on the FAFSA and each will complete a section, which will be linked through an invitation process.
- If the parent starts their section of the FAFSA first, they will then invite their student to complete their section (and vice versa).
- When the student and parent approve consent, their federal tax information will be securely transferred from the IRS onto their FAFSA.
 - In some situations, families will need to manually input federal tax information.
 - The FAFSA also includes demographic information, parent, and student assets and allows the student to list up to 20 colleges.

Which parent completes the FAFSA?

- If parents file as *married filing jointly*, only one parent FSA ID is required.
- If parents are divorced or separated, the parent who provided the most financial support to the student in the last 12 months completes the FAFSA. If that parent is remarried, also report the stepparent's information.
- If parents are unmarried but live together or are married and file taxes separately, both parents must have an FSA ID.

What happens after the FAFSA is filed?

- The student will get the FAFSA Submission Summary (FSS) three to five days after filing. It confirms the FAFSA was filed, includes their Student Aid Index, and indicates if verification is required.
- If selected for verification, the college will request additional documentation from the student.
- If the student is accepted for admission, each college listed on the FAFSA will send Financial Aid Offers to the student.