

Thank-You Notes That Open Doors

The note after the letter, and the update recommenders love. Free to copy, print, and share.

Two messages, months apart. The thank-you goes out within a week of each submission. The update goes out when results land: where the student got in, what they won, where they decided to go. Recommenders write letters into a void; the update is the part they remember, and it keeps the door open for the next letter, the internship reference, and the job reference after that.

Message 1: The Thank-You (Within a Week of Submission)

Handwritten beats email if the student sees them in person. Either way, keep it specific and short:

*"Dear Ms. Rivera,
Thank you so much for writing my recommendation for [college/scholarship]. I know how many of these you write, and I don't take the time it costs you for granted. Your class is where I [one specific, true thing: learned to defend an argument / found out I actually like lab work], and it means a lot to have you in my corner for what comes next.
With gratitude,
[Student name]"*

- **One note per recommender**, even if they submitted to six places. Mention the programs together rather than sending six notes.
- **Specific beats long.** Two honest sentences about their class outweigh a page of general praise.

Message 2: The Update (When Results Land)

*"Dear Ms. Rivera,
I wanted you to be one of the first to know: I was accepted to [college] and received the [scholarship/award]. Your letter was part of that, and I'm grateful. I've decided to [attend / study X], and I'll make the recommendation worth it.
Thank you again for everything,
[Student name]"*

- **Send it even for the disappointments handled well.** "I didn't get the award, but I'm proud of the application, and I'm grateful for your part in it" builds as much goodwill as good news.
- **Why this matters beyond manners:** the recommenders from high school become the references for internships, transfer applications, and first jobs. The update converts one letter into a relationship.

Free Resources: No Account, No Cost, No Data Collection

Full recommendation guide for parents	collegereadyparent.org/reference-request-kit
Brag sheet builder (the heart of the packet)	collegereadyparent.org/brag-sheet-builder
Essay toolkit for parents	collegereadyparent.org/essay-toolkit

Produced by CollegeReadyParent.org, an independent, parent-built resource. No paywall, no accounts, no lead forms, no student data collection. Sources are cited on every scholarship and state aid page.

Counselors and educators: you may freely copy, print, and distribute this sheet. Questions or corrections: leo@collegereadyparent.org

Recommendation processes and requirements vary by school, college, and scholarship. Always confirm the process with your school counselor and each program before deadlines.