

Letters of Recommendation & Brag Sheets

PGHS Counseling
August 2025

Senior Shorts Information Series

Objectives

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| Objective 1 | Define Letters of Recommendation (LOR), its purpose, identify when students need one, and provide guidance on how to successfully request them. |
| Objective 2 | Define Brag Sheets, their purpose, and tips for how to complete a brag sheet that reflects you, your strengths, and future goals. |
| Objective 3 | Introduce the PGHS Google Brag Sheet, how to find it, and how to successfully use it. |

Letters of Recommendation

(Letter of Reference)

- A Letter of Recommendation is a letter written by someone who can recommend the student's work and academic performance.
- The Letter of Recommendation should give a picture of the candidate's personal characteristics, performance and experience, strengths, capabilities, and academic promise.
- The recommender should be someone who has experience with the student.
- Many colleges and universities require a counselor Letter of Recommendation. **Your grade-level counselor, Mrs. Rice, will write your counselor letter.**
- The college selection committees rely on these letters to assist in making final admissions decisions. LOR provide a more complete picture of the student.

The background of the slide features a dark, monochromatic image of a film reel and its associated mechanical components, including gears and a film strip, creating a technical and cinematic aesthetic.

Do you waive your FERPA rights to view
your Letter of Recommendation?

What does that mean!?????

- It is simply asking if you waive the right to read your LOR before or after it is submitted to the colleges.
- Selecting to waive your FERPA rights lets colleges know that you are not reading your recommendations, which can help them trust that the letters are honest and candid.

Selecting a Recommender

- Request Letters of Recommendation from:
 - At least one teacher who teaches a core subject: English, mathematics, science, or social studies
 - A teacher who teaches the subject you plan to study or major in
 - Who has a positive impression of you as a student
 - Has taught you recently or has current experience working with you
 - For example, a teacher who has taught you in class but is also an advisor for a club or activity you participated in
 - **Your grade-level school counselor, Mrs. Rice, will submit your counselor letter**
 - *Subject Area Teacher specifically requested on the application*
- You will need to provide your Recommenders a Brag Sheet to support them in writing your letter or recommendation.

Requesting a Letter of Recommendation

1. Confirm you need a Letter of Recommendation (LOR) for your school(s).
 - *Please note that Community Colleges, the UC, and the CSU do not require LOR.*
2. Confirm the deadline(s) your Letters of Recommendation must be submitted.
3. Step 1: Ask your teacher(s) in person or via email to ask if they will write you a letter of recommendation.
 - Many teachers prefer students request in person and send a follow-up email with the Brag Sheet after the teacher has confirmed they are available to write the letter.
4. Step 2: **Add your recommenders on your Common App, Coalition App or school application portal.** The teacher will then receive an official notification and will be able to upload your letter.
5. Ensure you request your letter at least two weeks before the deadline.
 - Account for breaks, holidays, and weekends.
 - I.E. if you request a Letter of Recommendation during the October Break, the two week notice would being the first day school is back in session.

ALL STUDENTS APPLYING ON
THE COMMON APP MUST
ADD MRS RICE AS A
COUNSELOR.

- Counselors are required to upload the PGHS School Profile and student transcripts for all students, even if a counselor LOR is not required.

Brag Sheets

- A brag sheet is a document that lists a student's accomplishments, experiences, and other information that assists recommenders in writing a strong letter for admissions officers to learn more about the student.
- Is less formal and contains more 'personality' than a resume.
- Provides the student an opportunity to personally highlight their accomplishments, extracurriculars, and goals as suggestions to a letter writer of what they might showcase in the letter.
- Can be an opportunity for the student to organize their thoughts and ideas for their college applications.
- Is a key tool recommenders use to write an individualized Letters of Recommendation.

PGHS Brag Sheet

- Is a fillable Google Doc
- Located on the PGHS webpage
- Can be shared with all recommenders
- Can be used for college applications, resumes, scholarship applications, and personal references for job applications.

Tips for Completing Your Brag Sheet

- Provide Concrete Examples
 - **Show, don't just tell.** Include additional details that illustrate how the characteristic, trait, or adjective describes you.
- Proudly share your accomplishments
 - It might feel uncomfortable (or a little liberating!) to talk about the wonderful things about yourself, but sharing the information helps your recommender write a letter that reflects the true you!
- **Be organized and use proper grammar.** The Brag Sheet is another opportunity to show your academic skills.
- Remember, you are young. You do not need to be Doogie Howser to have valuable experiences, contributions to your community, and characteristics that will enhance any college campus. Share your personal experiences with sincerity and honesty.

Additional Directions

- After you make a copy of the Brag Sheet, be sure to rename it with your last and first name.
- Read the questions carefully. If the questions ask for examples or 'why' provide additional information. Remember to **show, not just tell!**
 - For example: Creative. As a future math major, people are often surprised to learn that I am in an improv group that performs in our town. As someone who is drawn to the certainty of mathematics, I find it fun and exciting to be creative and think of clever, humorous responses to my troupe's prompts.
- While the brag sheet is a less formal, personal document, follow directions and use proper grammar and punctuation.
- Delete questions you choose not to answer.

Missed Opportunities/Areas for Growth

- Not providing enough details or examples to truly show your personality and strengths.
- Copying and pasting your PIQs instead of answering the Brag Sheet questions.
- Inserting links into the document instead of answering the questions.
- Adding underdeveloped answers such as,
 - I want to be a millionaire.
- Not providing accurate LOR request deadlines on the Common App.
 - Students applying EA/ED have accidentally selected the Regular Decision dates on the Common App.

1. List your academic strengths (see page 4 for examples of strengths) and give at least one example of how you demonstrated that strength. Be specific, i.e., problem-solving, writing, creative-thinker, collaborative, resilient, etc.

Academic Strength	How have you demonstrated this strength?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

2. What types of courses interest you?

2a. Why do you find these courses interesting?

3. What is/are your proudest academic accomplishment(s)?

3a. Why are you proud of this accomplishment?

FUTURE PLANS

1. What are your career goals?

2. What major do you plan on selecting?

3. What interests you about that field of study?

List the colleges and universities you plan to apply to:

PERSONAL

1. Provide 3-5 characteristics/words (see page 4) that you or others use to describe you.

Characteristic	Why does this word describe you?
1.	
2.	
3.	



* Please note that all tables/boxes expand to the amount of text that you write. You are not limited to the small space in the blank template.



Completing the PGHS Brag Sheet

- The PGHS Brag Sheet is located on the PGHS website. You can find it under the SENIORS tab or in the College and Career section.
- [MASTER PGHS Brag Sheet \(Live Link ★\)](#)
- You will be directed to make a Copy when you use the link.
- Please delete 'copy of MASTER' in the title and **rename the document as your LAST NAME, FIRST NAME PGHS Brag Sheet.** **For example, Rice, Margaret PGHS Brag Sheet**
- After your recommender confirms they will write you a LOR, share the PGHS Brag Sheet with your recommender.
- Save the Senior Brag sheet in your Google Drive. You will be able to use it for other recommenders, to complete scholarship applications, and to create a resume.



Copy document

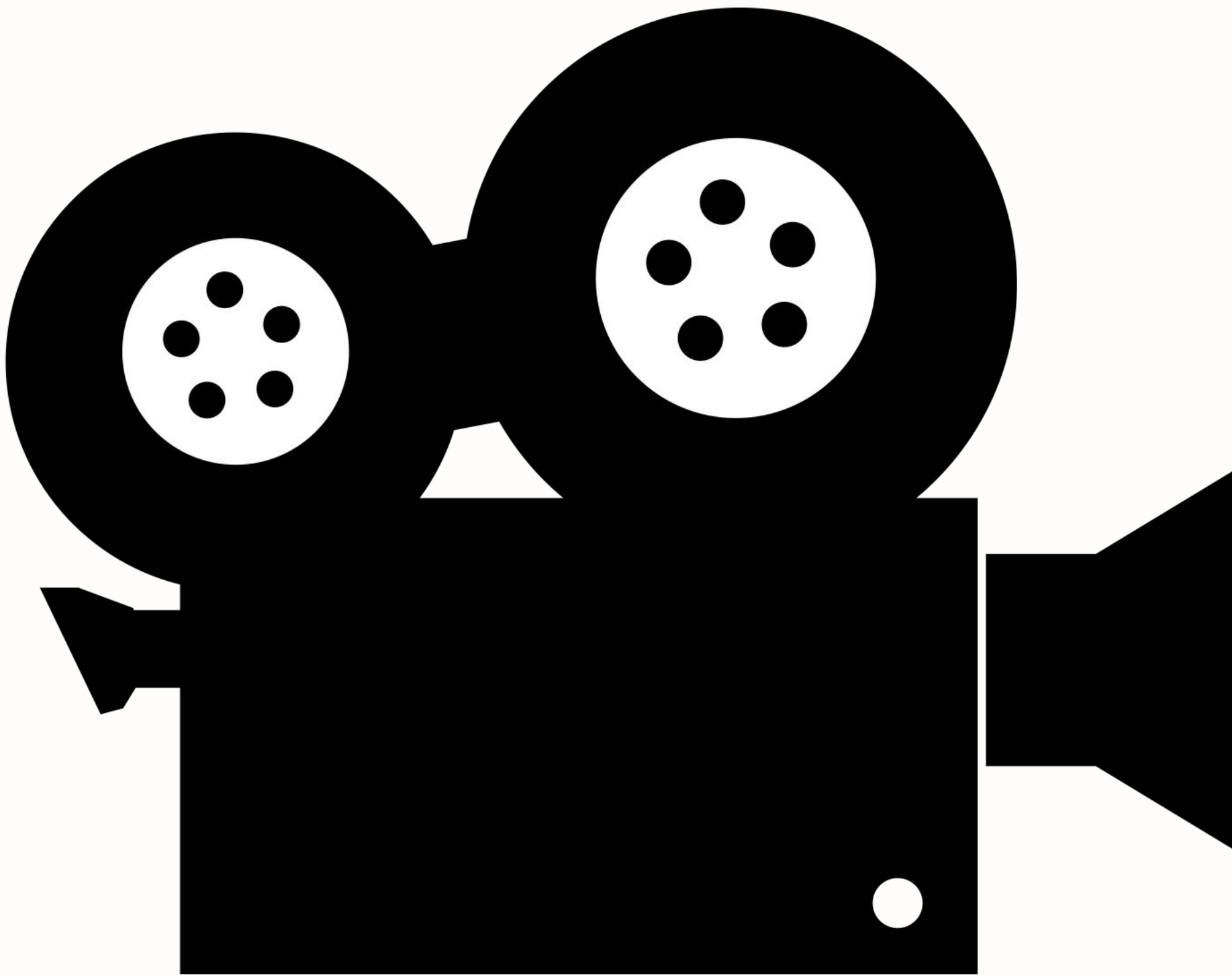
Would you like to make a copy of **MASTER PGHS Brag Sheet**?

Make a copy



When you make a copy of a Google Document, the title auto populates as Copy of Master Brag Sheet. Please delete 'copy of MASTER' in the title and rename the document as your **LAST NAME, FIRST NAME PGHS Brag Sheet**. **For example, Rice, Margaret PGHS Brag Sheet**

Upcoming Events



25 August 2025: Early Action/Early Decision
1st period, Lunch, 7th and 8th period

15 September 2025: PIQs vs Application Essay
1st period, Lunch, 7th and 8th period

22 September 2025: Make the Most of the
Extracurriculars Section
1st, Lunch, 7th and 8th period

29 September 2025: Adding DE to the
Application
1st period PGHS Library

1 October 2024: Applying to College
PGHS Library: 6:30-7:30 PM

Cash for College FAFSA Workshops
PGHS Library: 6:30-7:30 PM



Questions & Answers