

## ETS College Recommendation & Brag Sheet Activity

**Objective:** To help students understand why college recommendations are important; how the process to request them works (including completing their brag sheet); helping students to start filling out their brag sheet.

- 1) Show students this [brief \(2 minute\) video](#) that explains the concept of a brag sheet.
- 2) Review “College Essay Guy” handout on why college recommendations are important.
- 3) Review STEPs packet recommendations guide & and give student a printed brag sheet template. Review each section with students and talk about different ideas for each section of the brag sheet.
- 4) Based on timing, give students individual or group time to complete their brag sheets.

## GETTING STARTED: PREPARING TO ASK FOR A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR COLLEGE

So, you've got to get another human's stamp of approval.

**Why bother?** Because some colleges consider letters of rec pretty darn important — above class rank, **extracurricular activities** and, at least when it comes to the counselor recommendation, **demonstrated interest** (dun dun dun!). Check out the results of the 2017 NACAC “State of College Admission” survey:

TABLE 7. PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2017

Factor	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Grades in All Courses	220	74.5	15.0	5.5	5.0
Grades in College Prep Courses	220	73.2	16.8	5.9	4.1
Strength of Curriculum	219	62.1	21.9	8.7	7.3
Admission Test Scores (SAT, ACT)	221	45.7	37.1	12.2	5.0
Essay or Writing Sample	220	23.2	33.2	24.1	19.5
Student's Demonstrated Interest	218	16.1	23.9	28.0	32.1
→ Counselor Recommendation	218	15.1	40.4	26.6	17.9
→ Teacher Recommendation	219	14.2	40.2	26.5	19.2
Class Rank	220	9.1	29.1	34.1	27.7
Extracurricular Activities	219	6.4	42.9	32.0	18.7
Portfolio	219	6.4	11.9	26.9	54.8
Subject Test Scores (AP, IB)	219	5.5	18.3	35.2	41.1
Interview	219	5.5	16.4	28.3	49.8
Work	217	4.1	28.6	36.9	30.4
State Graduation Exam Scores	218	2.3	8.7	18.8	70.2
SAT II Scores	216	1.9	5.6	14.8	77.8

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.

Our buddy Chris Reeves, a member of NACAC's board of directors, has another way to read this table:

*“If you consider ‘considerable importance’ AND ‘moderate importance,’ the teacher letter is also more important than demonstrated interest. The counselor rec even ranks above the essay.”* Basically, if it comes down to you and another candidate—all else being equal—your letters of recommendation can get you in

or keep you out.

[adapted from College Essay Guy](#)