

■ Brag Sheets: A Guide for Educators

How to use student brag sheets to write stronger, more personalized recommendation letters

What is a Brag Sheet?

A brag sheet is a tool students complete to share their achievements, experiences, and personal reflections. It gives teachers, counselors, and mentors the details they need to write rich, specific recommendation letters. Rather than relying only on memory, you'll have stories and examples directly from the student to draw upon.

Why Brag Sheets Matter

- They make letters more specific and memorable by providing concrete stories.
- They ensure quieter accomplishments or personal growth moments aren't overlooked.
- They save time and reduce guesswork for educators writing multiple recommendations.
- They give insight into how students view themselves—their passions, strengths, and goals.

How to Use Them

When a student provides you with a brag sheet, read through it carefully and highlight phrases, examples, or accomplishments that stand out. Use these as anchors in your recommendation letter. For instance, if a student describes how they mentored younger peers in debate club, you can emphasize their leadership and mentorship in your narrative. The brag sheet is not a script, but a launch point to help you tell their story authentically.

Tips for Educators

- Encourage students to be honest and specific in their brag sheets.
- Ask clarifying questions if something they wrote sparks curiosity—you may uncover a story worth sharing.
- Balance academic achievements with personality and character traits.
- Use student language when it feels authentic—it brings their voice into the letter.
- Connect what they've shared to their future goals when possible.

Final Thought

Brag sheets are not about making a student sound perfect—they're about helping you paint a more complete picture. The best recommendations capture both accomplishments and character. With a thoughtful brag sheet in hand, you can write letters that don't just check a box, but truly advocate for the student's next opportunity.