I'm not a robot

Character letters, also known as letters of recommendation focusing on personal character rather than professional skills, serve as powerful testimonials attesting to an individual's moral standing, integrity, and overall suitability for a specific purpose. These letters offer insights into a person's personality, behavior, and values, providing a nuanced perspective often absent from formal applications or resumes. This guide explores various character letter samples, highlighting their structure, content, and crucial considerations to ensure their effectiveness. Understanding the nuances of crafting a compelling character reference can significantly impact the recipient's success in their endeavors. I. Understanding the Purpose and Importance of Character Letters Character letters differ significantly from standard letters of recommendation. While the latter typically focuses on professional qualifications and work performance, a character letter emphasizes an individual's personal qualities, ethical conduct, and overall trustworthiness. These letters are often requested in various situations, including: Immigration Applications: Demonstrating good moral character is crucial for immigration processes. Character letters from individuals who have known the applicant for an extended period often serve as critical evidence. Adoption Proceedings: Prospective adoptive parents frequently require character references to demonstrate their suitability and commitment to providing a nurturing environment. Scholarship Applications: Some scholarship programs may ask for character references to assess an applicant's integrity, work ethic, and overall suitability for the award. Housing Applications: Landlords might request character references to evaluate a potential tenant's reliability and responsibility. Legal Proceedings: In certain legal situations, character witnesses provide testimony regarding the defendant's personality and behavior. Employment (Specific Roles): While less common than professional references, character letters can be beneficial for positions emphasizing integrity, trust, and ethical conduct (e.g., childcare, social work). The impact of a well-written character letter should not be underestimated. A strong, well-supported letter can significantly bolster an applicant's case, lending credibility and providing a human dimension often missing in other application materials. Conversely, a poorly written or unconvincing letter can be detrimental, potentially hindering the applicant's chances of success. A compelling character letter should be structured logically and clearly, incorporating several key components: A. Introduction: Establishing the Relationship The introduction sets the stage for the letter. It should clearly state the writer's relationship to the applicant, the duration of their acquaintance, and the context in which they know the individual. For instance: "I have known John Smith for the past ten years as his neighbor and friend." Avoid vague statements. Specificity builds credibility. B. Body Paragraphs: Detailing Specific Examples This is the heart of the letter. Instead of general pronouncements about the applicant's character, focus on providing concrete examples illustrating specific traits. For example, instead of writing "John is a trustworthy person," write: "During our neighborhood association's fundraising drive, John took the initiative to manage the finances, meticulously tracking all donations and expenditures. His honesty and responsibility ensured a successful campaign and instilled trust within the community." Each paragraph should ideally focus on a single positive attribute, supported by a relevant anecdote. Read Also: Character Reference Letter Sample & Template – Letter Sample Consider highlighting these traits: Honesty and Integrity: Provide instances demonstrating the applicant's truthfulness and ethical conduct. Responsibility and Reliability: Describe situations showcasing the applicant's dependability and commitment to their obligations. Compassion and Empathy: Offer examples illustrating the applicant's kindness, understanding, and concern for others. Work Ethic and Perseverance: Share anecdotes revealing the applicant's diligence, dedication, and ability to overcome challenges. Maturity and Judgment: Highlight instances demonstrating the applicant's sound decision-making skills and responsible behavior. C. Conclusion: Reiterating Support and Contact Information The conclusion should succinctly summarize the writer's overall assessment of the applicant's character and reiterate their strong support for their application. Provide contact information (phone number and email address) so the recipient can verify the letter's authenticity and potentially ask clarifying questions. A professional closing like "Sincerely" or "Respectfully" should be used. III. Different Types of Character Letter Samples The specific content and focus of a character letter will vary depending on the context. Below are examples illustrating different situations: A. Character Letter for Immigration Purposes This letter requires detailed and specific examples demonstrating the applicant's good moral character over an extended period. It should highlight adherence to laws, community involvement, financial responsibility, and absence of criminal activity. The letter should also emphasize the writer's length and nature of their relationship with the applicant. B. Character Letter for Adoption Here, the focus shifts to the applicant's suitability as a parent or guardian. The letter should detail the applicant's parenting skills, emotional maturity, stability, and commitment to providing a loving and safe environment for a child. Examples of interaction with children, if applicable, should be provided. C. Character Letter for a Scholarship This letter should emphasize the applicant's personal qualities that align with the scholarship's values and goals. It should highlight attributes such as academic integrity, perseverance, community involvement, and leadership potential. Specific examples of the applicant's achievements and contributions should be included. D. Character Letter for Housing This letter should focus on the applicant's responsibility, reliability, and respect for property. It should detail their history of paying rent or mortgage on time, maintaining their living space, and respecting neighbors. Evidence of a stable and responsible lifestyle should be emphasized. IV. Writing Style and Tone Maintaining a professional and objective tone is crucial. Avoid overly emotional language or exaggerated claims. Use formal language, avoiding slang or colloquialisms. The letter should be concise and to the point, focusing on relevant information without unnecessary embellishments. Proofread carefully for grammar and spelling errors to maintain credibility. V. Legal Considerations and Ethical Responsibilities Writers of character letters should be aware of their ethical responsibilities. They should only write letters if they genuinely believe they can attest to the applicant's character. Providing false or misleading information can have serious legal consequences. It is advisable to only write about aspects of the applicant's character that the writer has firsthand knowledge of. VI. Examples of Character Letter Statements Here are examples of statements that effectively illustrate specific character traits, suitable for incorporation into a character letter: "During our time working together on the community garden project, Sarah consistently demonstrated her unwavering commitment to the project, even amidst unexpected setbacks. Her perseverance and dedication inspired the entire team." (Perseverance and Dedication) "I have witnessed firsthand David's unwavering honesty. When he discovered a misplaced wallet containing a substantial amount of cash, he immediately reported it to the authorities, demonstrating his strong moral compass." (Honesty and Integrity) "Maria's compassionate nature is evident in her volunteer work at the local animal shelter. She consistently goes above and beyond, dedicating countless hours to caring for abandoned animals. Her kindness and empathy are truly inspiring." (Compassion and Empathy) "Throughout our years of friendship, I have consistently been impressed by Emily's maturity and responsible decision-making. Even when faced with difficult choices, she approaches them with thoughtfulness and consideration, consistently demonstrating sound judgment." (Maturity and Judgment) "As his former supervisor, I can attest to Michael's exceptional work ethic and reliability. He consistently exceeded expectations, completing tasks efficiently and accurately. He is a dedicated and trustworthy employee." (Work Ethic and Reliability) VII. Review and Refinement Before submitting the letter, carefully review and refine it to ensure clarity, accuracy, and professionalism. Ask a trusted friend or colleague to proofread it for grammatical errors and overall effectiveness. The letter should be free of any typos or errors that could detract from its credibility. VIII. Conclusion Crafting a compelling character letter requires careful consideration of the recipient's needs, a clear understanding of the applicant's qualities, and a commitment to providing accurate and detailed information. By following these guidelines, individuals can contribute meaningfully to the success of others through well-written and impactful character references. Have you been asked to write a character reference letter for someone you know who is currently seeking employment? If you have, then you may be wondering exactly what goes into such a letter and what importance it plays in the job candidate's interview process. Well, that's exactly what we will cover in this article! Read this piece from top to bottom or simply jump to the specific section you're interested in: What Is A Character Reference Letter? A character reference letter is a document that is written by someone who knows the job candidate well and can attest to their character. This type of letter is usually written by a friend, family member, or someone close to the job candidate. The character reference letter is important because it gives the employer an idea of what kind of person the job candidate is, outside of their professional qualifications. An employer may request a character reference letter to get a better sense of who the job candidate is as a person. This type of letter can be very helpful in the decision-making process, as it can provide insight into the job candidate's character that may not be apparent from their resume or professional qualifications alone. How To Write A Character Reference Letter So, you've been assigned the very important task of writing a reference letter. Where to start? For starters, you should: #1 Add our contact information Right below the date, add your full name, the company you work for, your e-mail, and your phone number. Once you've done that, then you will have to… #2 Properly address the letter To begin, avoid using the traditional "To whom it may concern". That's way too impersonal! Instead, ask the candidate the name of the person who will be receiving the letter. If they don't have a name, then assign the letter to the team at the company the candidate is applying for, for example: "To the Marketing Team at BlueVista", or "To the Software Engineering team at Techpulse". #3 Introduce yourself and explain your relationship with the candidate Explain where you know the candidate from and for how long you've known them. For example: My name is Roseanna Vang, and I am the Marketing Director at BitCode. I had the pleasure of working with Eleanor Thomas throughout my time as a Senior Marketing Manager at Nexlab in 2019. Eleanor was the Head of Marketing and my direct supervisor at the time. Be thorough about the context in which you've known the candidate. For instance, in the example above, we learn that: Roseanna was under Eleanor's supervision and is now the Marketing Director, meaning Eleanor's mentorship might have helped her grow and progress; Eleanor has maintained a good relationship with her subordinates, given one of them would be open enough to write them a reference letter. Let's take another example from someone who hasn't worked with the candidate: My name is Jean Mcleod and I am a Senior Software Engineer at Ecotech. Angelo Bradshaw and I studied together at UCLA from 2010 to 2014 while undertaking a Computer Science degree. During that time, we have worked closely together on multiple class projects and extra-curricular activities. Here's what we learned from the example above: Jean probably considers Angelo a reliable person, as they have worked together on multiple class projects; Angelo is driven to learn new things, given his interest in joining extra-curricular activities. See? Details matter! Once you've given the context, then you will: #4 Bring in all the good stuff Bring in all the positive things you have to say for this candidate. If you can, try bringing in measurable results, too! Let's pick where we left off on the examples we used above. Example 1: I have witnessed first-hand Eleanor's commitment and dedication to building brand awareness at Nexlab. During the time we have worked together, Eleanor was in charge of leading a creative team of 12 professionals responsible for crafting engaging and strategic marketing campaigns. For the second half of 2019, Eleanor spearheaded the campaign launch of a new foundation designed to perfectly blend with all skin colors. The marketing team developed a user-generated content strategy for TikTok and Instagram, leveraging customers' different skin tones to showcase the product's efficiency. Over 20K leads entered our waiting list to purchase the product first-hand, and nearly 10% converted within the first week of the product launch! Elanor's leadership and organization skills were essential to sustain a deliverable timeframe for the campaign launch. She held regular 1:1s with everyone on the team to keep track of the campaign status and designed a project management board so everyone would be on the same page. Notice how, in this case, the reader is presented with a challenge Eleanor had to face. Then, they learned about the steps she took and the measurable outcomes. Finally, they learn about what skills were essential for Eleanor's success in facing this challenge. Now, let's see how this framework could be applied to our second example: Example 2: During our final year capstone project, Angelo and I faced a significant challenge in developing a scalable web application for a nonprofit organization. The application struggled with load management during peak times, causing frequent downtimes and hindering the nonprofit's mission. Angelo stepped forward to lead the resolution of these performance issues, recognizing the need for a more robust solution to support the organization's goals effectively. Angelo proposed and led the transition to a microservices architecture, a strategy aimed at enhancing the application's scalability and performance. By breaking down the monolithic system into smaller, independently scalable services, he meticulously orchestrated the redesign over two months. This period involved intensive coding sessions, careful deployment of new services, and rigorous testing to ensure the application's stability and efficiency, demonstrating Angelo's commitment to finding a sustainable solution. The transformation Angelo spearheaded not only salvaged our capstone project but also significantly benefited the nonprofit organization, tripling the application's user capacity and slashing load times by 70%. This overhaul led to increased user engagement and allowed the nonprofit to expand its services. Angelo's leadership, technical acumen, and problem-solving skills were pivotal in achieving these results, illustrating his ability to deliver under pressure and contribute meaningfully to complex projects. Again, the reader is presented with a challenge, a step-by-step guide to the resolution of the challenge, and a measurable result! #5 Craft a statement of recommendation Reinforce the candidate's value and how they can make a great addition to the team. Here's what the closing statement could look like for each of the examples above: Example 1: I am convinced that Eleanor's creative and strategic thinking, combined with her knack for leadership, will serve as a valuable asset to your team. Example 2: I am confident that Angelo's proficiency in software engineering, combined with his exceptional problem-solving abilities, makes him an invaluable asset to any team. His commitment to excellence and his ability to lead through challenges are qualities that I have admired and learned from throughout our time at UCLA. #6 Close with your contact information Finally, put yourself at the reader's disposal to provide any further information on the candidate! Here's how: Example 1: Should you wish to discuss or gain any further insights into Eleanor's time at Nexlab, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at 555-555-555 or . Example 2: If you need any further details about Angelo's achievements and abilities, please don't hesitate to contact me at 555-555-555 or . The Anatomy Of A Character Reference Letter Now, let's recap and break that down into an illustration! What To Include In The Character Reference Letter When writing a character reference letter, focus on the positive qualities of the person you are writing about. Try to provide specific examples of times when you have seen these positive qualities in action. Also, keep the letter concise and to the point. The character reference letter is not the place to go into detail about the person's entire life story. Here are some things you may want to include in a reference letter: How long you have known the person In what capacity you have known them What positive qualities you have observed in them Specific examples of times when you have seen these qualities in action Why do you believe they would be a good fit for the job they are applying for Your contact information in case the employer has any further questions Pro Tip: If you have been asked to write a character reference letter, it is a good idea to ask the person you are writing it for if there is anything specific they would like you to include. This will help ensure that your letter hits all the key points that the employer is looking for. The completed letter should be submitted along with the job candidate's other application materials. Usually, the letter will be sent directly to the employer by the person who is writing it. If you have been asked to write a character reference letter but are not sure how to go about it, the following examples will help you get started. 5+ Examples Of A Character Reference Letter Below are five examples of outlines you can use for inspiration. Remember to add your contact information in the header of the letter so that the employer can easily get in touch with you if they have any further questions. Character Reference Example #1: February 12th, 2025 Nicholas Shaw Edutech | | 555-555-555 Dear Will Holt, I am writing to strongly endorse Hirra Shah for the Financial Analyst position she is keenly pursuing. Over the past 5 years, my association with Hirra, both professionally and personally, has allowed me to witness her unwavering dedication, integrity, and astute analytical skills. In her role as a Financial Analyst with Edutech, Hirra has consistently exhibited a commendable work ethic, complemented by her keen attention to financial intricacies. She played a pivotal role in identifying and rectifying cost inefficiencies, resulting in an annual savings of 15% for our department. Furthermore, her in-depth analysis and forecasting techniques led to a 20% increase in ROI for our key investment projects in the past year. Beyond her technical prowess, what distinguishes Hirra is her genuine commitment to team collaboration and her ability to explain complex financial concepts in a comprehensible manner. This blend of analytical acumen and interpersonal skills makes her a standout financial professional. I am genuinely confident that Hirra Shah will be a significant asset to your team, driving both efficiency and innovation. Should you wish to further discuss or gain insights into Hirra's competencies and achievements, please do not hesitate to contact me at 555-555-5555 or Warm regards, Nicholas Shaw Character Reference Example #2: February 12th, 2025 Gloria Wilson DataSphere | | 555-555-555 Dear Cecilia Luna, I am writing to strongly recommend Keisha Jones for the Human Resources position she is pursuing. I have had the privilege of working alongside Keisha for the past 5 years. Throughout this period, Keisha has consistently embodied the principles of professionalism, empathy, and dedication. In her previous HR role, Keisha was instrumental in revamping our recruitment process, resulting in a 40% decrease in time-to-hire and a 20% increase in new hire retention during her first year. Her meticulous attention to detail combined with a deep understanding of organizational dynamics ensures that every team member feels acknowledged and empowered. Keisha's true strength lies in her ability to mediate and manage interpersonal relationships within the workplace. With a knack for problem-solving, she reduced internal conflicts by 60% through the initiation of team-building activities and open dialogue sessions. Her genuine compassion, paired with her sharp insight into strategic planning, makes her a valuable asset in any HR setting. I wholeheartedly believe that Keisha Jones would be an outstanding addition to your HR team, bringing with her the expertise and soft skills essential for the role. If you need further details or wish to discuss Keisha's achievements and abilities, please don't hesitate to contact me at 555-555-5555 or . Warm regards, Gloria Wilson Character Reference Example #3: February 12th, 2025 Marnie Reid AI Optima | | 555-555-555 Dear Rafael Hall, I am writing to endorse Mark Thompson for the Account Manager position at CloudFrontier. Over the past 5 years, I have worked closely with Mark in both professional and personal environments, and I have been consistently impressed with his proficiency, dedication, and aptitude in managing accounts. Mark possesses a rare blend of technical skills, interpersonal skills, and client-centric dedication. In his role as an Account Manager with our company, he has seamlessly balanced client needs with organizational goals, consistently exceeding both client and company expectations. His proactive approach led to a 30% increase in client retention and a 25% growth in upsell opportunities during his time at AI Optima. Furthermore, Mark's natural ability to establish trust and build lasting relationships positions him as a standout in the realm of account management. He possesses the intrinsic ability to understand client needs, foresee challenges, and proactively offer solutions, ensuring the client's trust is never compromised. I am confident that Mark Thompson will be an invaluable asset to your team and bring tangible results in the Account Manager role. If you wish to discuss further or require additional insights into Mark's competencies, please do not hesitate to connect with me at 555-555-5555 or . Warm regards, Marnie Reid Character Reference Example #4: February 12th, 2025 Simon Kelley Lumiar Elementary School | | 555-555-555 Dear Minna Rigs, I am writing to recommend Tessa Stafford for the teaching position she is pursuing at Bright Education. Having known Tessa for the past 5 years, I've observed her in various capacities, both in professional educational settings and outside of them. Tessa consistently radiates attributes of patience, innovation, and an unwavering passion for education. In her teaching role at our school, Tessa not only showcased an excellent command over her subject matter but also demonstrated an innate ability to understand and cater to the unique needs of each student. Under her guidance, her class witnessed a remarkable 25% improvement in standardized test scores, and she successfully bridged learning gaps for underperforming students, leading to an 80% pass rate improvement for that specific group within a year. What truly distinguishes Tessa is her holistic approach to teaching. Beyond just academics, she instills in her students critical life values, resilience, and curiosity. Her innovative teaching methods, combined with her genuine care for students' well-being, position her as an educator par excellence. I am confident that with Tessa Stafford joining your team, your institution will not only achieve academic excellence but also nurture well-rounded individuals. For further discussion or additional information regarding Tessa's abilities and achievements, please do not hesitate to contact me at 555-555-5555 or . Warm regards, Simon Kelley Character Reference Example #5: February 12th, 2025 Jenna Dunn Salute Medical Care | | 555-555-555 Dear Owen Kelin, I am writing to recommend Leroy Lucero for the nursing position he is seeking at MedClin. Over the past 5 years, I have had the privilege of working alongside Leroy and observing his dedication, compassion, and outstanding clinical abilities. In his nursing role at our facility, Leroy has consistently demonstrated exemplary patient care, often going above and beyond his duties. His diligence and thorough approach have directly contributed to a 20% reduction in patient recovery times within his care ward. Furthermore, under his leadership, patient satisfaction scores in his department increased by 15%, showcasing his commitment to ensuring patients feel cared for and heard. Beyond his technical proficiency, what truly distinguishes Leroy is his deep empathy and ability to connect with patients of all backgrounds. He has this innate talent of blending analytical thinking with a heartfelt commitment to his patients' well-being. Such qualities not only make him an exceptional nurse but also an essential team member in any medical setting. I am confident that with Leroy Lucero as part of your team, your facility will witness enhanced patient care and a strengthened nursing department. For additional insights or to discuss Leroy's achievements and skills further, please don't hesitate to contact me at 555-555-5555 or . Warm regards, Jenna Dunn Notice how all of these examples share a few common traits. First, they speak to the person's abilities as a professional, using measurable outcomes when possible. This allows the hiring manager to see the specific value they bring to the table as an employee. Second, they speak to the person's character and values. This allows the hiring team to gauge the cultural fit for this person so they can feel confident they'd not only blend in but actively add to the company's culture. Third, they use specific examples to define each. They don't just say something like, "Leroy offers exemplary patient care." They go beyond that to provide examples of how that exemplary care translates in the workplace ("His diligence and thorough approach have directly contributed to a 20% reduction in patient recovery times within his care ward."). Pro Tip: Want to level up your character letters without spending a bunch of extra time? Leverage AI! Tools like Hubspot's Paragraph Writer help remove the burden of starting with a blank page. Use them to take care of 80% of the baseline content so you can bring 100% of your energy to personalize your reference letter and add your magic touch! Final Thoughts On Reference Letters A character reference letter can significantly increase a job candidate's chances of getting hired. By taking the time to write a thoughtful and well-written letter, you can help your friend or colleague get the job they're applying for. Keep the following tips in mind when writing a character reference letter: Be sure to include how long you have known the person Mention what capacity you have known them in Include an example of their positive character traits Explain why you believe they would be a good fit for the job (include measurable metrics and outcomes if you can!) Provide your contact information in case the employer has any questions Submit the letter along with the job candidate's other application materials When in doubt, the letter you write should be positive and always truthful. With these tips in mind, you'll be on your way to writing a great character reference letter in no time! So your colleague's just landed a final interview, or your friend is up for their dream job. Now, they've asked you to write a character reference to help them seal the deal. No pressure, right?Character references are commonly requested during the final stages of the hiring process. They're documents that give employers insight into a candidate's soft skills, values, and personality – things that matter just as much as technical know-how.If you've been asked to write a character reference for a friend or colleague, this guide will walk you through it step by step. Discover tips to write a powerful reference letter, and use our helpful templates and examples to guide your writing. What's a character reference?A character reference – sometimes called a "personal reference" – is a letter that highlights a person's traits, values, and personal strengths. Unlike a professional reference, which speaks to someone's skills or performance in the workplace, a personal reference focuses on who they are as a person.Typically, a character reference will endorse positive qualities like honesty, empathy, resilience, adaptability, and the ability to work well with others. Your goal is to give the hiring manager confidence that the applicant will be a positive addition to their team.Character reference vs professional referenceHere's a closer look at the key differences between both types of references:Character referenceProfessional referenceFocuses on personal traits, ethics, and soft skillsFocuses on work performance, achievements, and technical skillsOften written by a friend, mentor, coach, teacher, or someone outside the workplaceUsually written by a current or former manager, team leader, or work colleagueUseful for entry-level candidates, those switching careers, or roles requiring strong valuesUseful for demonstrating job-specific experience and capabilitiesBoth types of references are valuable, but in different ways. If you've been asked to write a character reference, it means the employer is looking to understand the applicant's personality and how they might fit into the company's culture.Selecting a character referenceIf you're the one asking someone to write a reference for you, choosing the right person is key. Consider these key factors to help you pick the best person for the job:Your relationship with them: While it might be easy to ask a friend or family member to be your reference, a hiring manager might see their endorsement as biased. Think about people who know you well but can offer a more objective opinion, such as a coach or former teacher. Their status and position: A reference from someone with a leadership role – especially in your industry – can carry more weight. Look for character references that can give you that edge, such as an industry mentor or a former business contact. How well they know you: Your referee should be able to speak confidently about your values, attitude and behaviours. Don't ask someone who doesn't know you personally or hasn't worked closely with you.Their opinion of you: This might seem obvious, but it matters. Your reference should genuinely like you and speak of you in a positive light. A strong endorsement reads clearly – and so does a lukewarm one.How to write a character reference for a jobSome employers may give you clear guidelines or a template to use, while others will be more flexible. But if you're starting from scratch, here's a simple step-by-step guide:Step 1: Look through the job descriptionBefore writing, ask the applicant for a copy or link to the job ad. Take note of any traits, values, or soft skills the employer is looking for – these are the qualities you'll want to highlight.For example, if the job description mentions adaptability and communication skills, you can describe a time when the applicant kept their team motivated during a challenging group project.Tip: ask the person if there's anything specific they'd like you to include. They may know which traits or skills are particularly valuable in their industry or role. Step 2: Introduce yourselfIn the introduction paragraph of your character reference, start by saying who you are, your relationship with the applicant, and how long you've known them. You can also include details that boost your own credibility, such as your qualifications and the position you hold in your company.Example: "My name is Sarah Bennett, and I've known Jake for over five years. We met through a community volunteer program where I served as a team leader, and Jake quickly became one of our most dependable volunteers."Step 3: Describe the person's skills and qualitiesIn the body of your letter, focus on the key traits or qualities that make the person stand out – 3 is a good rule of thumb. Pick positive qualities that align with the job description or that you've personally seen them display.Example: "Jake is incredibly dependable, with a strong sense of responsibility. He brings a positive energy to group situations and has a knack for communicating with people from all backgrounds."Step 4: Back up your claims with key examplesShow, don't just tell. For each trait you mention, include a brief anecdote or example that brings it to life.If you're stuck for ideas, think back on moments when this person took the initiative to support you or someone else. Did they help you solve a problem or manage a project? Did they show kindness to someone in need?Example: "During our annual fundraiser, Jake took the initiative to organise a small team of volunteers, solving issues on the fly when a vendor didn't show up. Thanks to his quick thinking, the event ran smoothly and we raised more than our target amount."Step 5: Conclude with a strong endorsementWrap up on a strong note by reinforcing your support. Highlight why you believe this person is a great fit for the role and would add value to the company. Finally, leave your contact details and invite the hiring manager to get in touch with you.Example: "I have every confidence that Jake would be a valuable asset to your team. His integrity, reliability and positive attitude make him an excellent choice for this role. Please don't hesitate to contact me at [email] or [phone number] if you have further questions."Step 6: Proofread and editBefore you hit send, take a moment to check for:Spelling and grammar errorsMissing information (like your contact details)Tone of voice – does it sound warm, professional, and sincere?As a final check, read your letter out loud to spot any awkward phrasing.What to know before agreeing to write a character referenceBeing asked to write a character reference is a compliment. But before you agree, make sure you can say 'yes' to all three of these questions:Do you know the person well enough to speak confidently about their strengths?Can you sincerely vouch for them in a positive light?Do you have time to write a thoughtful and tailored letter?If you're unsure or don't feel you're the right person for the job, it's okay to politely turn them down. Simply say: "Thanks so much for asking – I'm flattered, but I don't think I know you well enough to write a strong reference. Would [insert name] be a better option?"Get started with this character reference templateReady to start writing? Here's a basic template with all the key components to include in your character reference:Dear [Hiring Manager's name],My name is [Your Name], and I've known [Applicant's Name] for [X years] through [explain your relationship – e.g., volunteer work, coaching, community group].[Applicant's Name] has consistently impressed me with their [insert 2–3 positive qualities] – qualities I believe would make them an excellent fit for your team.For example, [describe a specific situation that highlights one or more of the applicant's strengths].I have no doubt that [Applicant's Name] would bring [insert positive trait or outcome] to your organisation. Please don't hesitate to contact me at [insert contact info] if you'd like to discuss further.Sincerely,[Your Name][Your Position (if relevant)]Character reference examples for inspirationTo give you some ideas on how to customise your character reference, check out some of our sample letters:Example 1: Character reference for a friendDear Ms Peterson,My name is Charlie Grant, and I've known Olivia Parker for over seven years through our local community theatre group. I've worked closely with her in both creative and leadership roles.Olivia is thoughtful, reliable, and incredibly hardworking. During one production, she volunteered to take on costume coordination in addition to her own performance role, juggling all her tasks with grace and attention to detail.She brings a calm presence and shows up for others – qualities that make her not just a valued collaborator but a great friend. I believe she'd be a fantastic addition to your team.Please feel free to reach me at if you have any further questions.Sincerely,Charlie GrantExample 2: Character reference for a volunteer you've worked withDear Sir/Madam,I'm Jane Hart, the Volunteer Coordinator at Sydney Community Kitchen. I'm writing to provide a character reference for Daniel Nguyen, who has been an outstanding volunteer with us over the past 2 years.During his time with us, Daniel has consistently demonstrated a strong work ethic, a warm and approachable nature, and a genuine commitment to helping others. He volunteered weekly in our food distribution program, assisting with meal preparation, packaging, and delivery to local families. What sets Daniel apart is his empathy and ability to connect with people from all walks of life. He takes the initiative to chat with our beneficiaries and guide new volunteers, showing maturity and kindness beyond his years. His contribution has made a real difference to our community.I have no hesitation in recommending Daniel for this role. He would be an asset to any organisation that values customer service and community engagement.If you'd like to discuss his time with us further, please feel free to contact me on 0412 345 678 or at .Warm regards,Jane HartExample 3: Character reference for a colleagueDear Mr Lawson,I'm pleased to provide this character reference for Mia Reddy, who I worked with for three years at ProQuest Consulting.Mia is professional, trustworthy, and brings a thoughtful, solutions-focused attitude to everything she does. I often saw her go the extra mile for clients – whether that meant taking time to troubleshoot their pain points or develop support strategies for their team.Mia is also a great team player. When fellow colleagues were facing issues or needed guidance, she was always willing to step up. I am certain that she would thrive in your customer-facing role.Please feel free to contact me at 0400 000 000 for further information. Best regards,Michael BrownTips for a powerful reference letterWriting a strong character reference isn't about using big words or sounding overly formal. It's about being thoughtful, honest, and specific. These three tips will help you write a letter that stands out for all the right reasons:Show, not tellIt isn't enough to simply say someone is "hardworking" or "kind" – you need to paint a picture of what that looks like in real life. Hiring managers want to see how the applicant's qualities play out in practical situations, because that helps them imagine the person in their workplace.Don't:Do:"Priya is a hardworking and reliable person.""Priya consistently arrived early to set up for our Saturday community market stalls, often staying late to help pack down without being asked. On one occasion, when a volunteer called in sick, she stepped in to run the front table all day with a smile."Stay conciseA great character reference doesn't need to be long. In fact, shorter is often better. Aim to keep your letter to one page or less. Avoid listing every positive thing about the person you can think of – instead, choose the qualities that align with the role they're applying for. Focus on up to 3 personal traits that are relevant to the job, and give 1-2 specific examples to back them up. Don't:Do:"Liam is dependable, kind, proactive, enthusiastic, and always willing to lend a hand. He has great time management, excellent communication skills, and works well in a team or independently.""Liam is dependable and proactive. During our local sports club's annual event, he organised volunteers, handled last-minute changes calmly, and made sure everything ran smoothly."Be honestIt's important that your character reference feels genuine. Don't use over-the-top language or make unrealistic claims — hiring managers can usually sense when a letter is trying too hard.Don't:Do:"Tina is the most amazing person I've ever met and would be an asset in any role, anywhere.""Tina is dependable, thoughtful and brings a quiet confidence to team settings. She's not the loudest voice in the room, but her insights are always thoughtful and well received."A thoughtful reference goes a long wayA well-written character reference can mean more than you think. With our step-by-step guide, you'll be well-equipped to write a letter that's authentic and memorable. Whether you're writing for a friend, colleague, or mentee, your words can provide that final advantage to help them land the job. Take your time to really craft your character reference – it might just be a game-changer for their career.FAQsWhat's a character reference?A character reference is a letter that highlights a person's personality traits, values, and soft skills. It's typically requested by a potential employer and written by a friend, mentor, teacher, or colleague outside the applicant's workplace.How is a character reference different from a professional reference?While a professional reference focuses on a person's work performance, job responsibilities, and achievements in the workplace, a character reference is more about their qualities and traits as a person. When might someone ask you for a character reference?Potential employers or hiring managers often request character references in the later stages of the recruitment process. Employers may use them to get a better sense of a person's values and personality beyond their resumé. This is particularly true when a candidate is starting out in their career, returning to work after a break, or changing industries.What should a good character reference include?A strong character reference should include a brief introduction of who you are, how you know the applicant, and how long you've known them. It should then highlight two to three key personal traits of the applicant, supported by specific examples, and end with a clear and confident endorsement of the applicant.How long should a character reference be?A character reference should ideally be no longer than one page. Around 300 to 400 words is usually enough to include an introduction, a few relevant traits with examples, and a closing statement. Avoid overwhelming your reader with too many details.What tone of voice should a character reference have?You're writing to support someone, so it's important to sound warm and sincere. Be supportive but keep your tone professional and clear. It's an honour to be asked to provide a character reference. It means that someone, somewhere, thinks that you're an upstanding citizen. But once that first blush of pride has worn off, you're left with what can be quite a daunting task, particularly if you've never written a character reference before. So, where do you start? To give you a helping hand, we're going to cover everything you need to know to write a character reference you can be proud of. What is a character reference? A character reference is a letter written by someone who knows a job applicant well outside of the workplace. Unlike a professional reference, which describes the candidate's professional work experience and skills, it includes information about the individual's personality, people skills and attributes. Prospective employers can use this information to determine whether a candidate has the right characteristics to perform well in a role and whether they're likely to be a good fit for the organisation and the team. Employers don't commonly ask for a character reference to be included in a job application. However, for graduates without any work experience or for people without professional references, a character reference may be required before a job offer is made. Character references may also be necessary when applying for an academic course or when becoming a member of a professional organisation. What should you include in a character reference? You should only agree to write a character reference if you know the person well enough to do so and you have positive things to say. If you can tick both of those boxes, then you're ready to start writing. A character reference should be written in letter format and include the following: Start the letter with a short sentence explaining why you're writing. For example, "I am providing this character reference for Emily Reid, who I would recommend for any role where teamwork and a positive attitude are required." How you know the candidate Explain how you know the candidate and how long you've known them for. You should be specific and concise. You could be asked to provide a character reference in your capacity as a teacher, academic advisor, colleague, professional mentor or simply as a family friend or a neighbour. The candidate's personal qualities Detail the candidate's skills and positive personality traits that make them a good fit for the role and provide specific examples of when you've seen them in practice. Include soft skills such as organisational ability, leadership skills, empathy, a sense of humour, and anything else you think is relevant. Provide contact details that you're happy to share so the organisation can ask you for more information if necessary. What not to include in a character reference Character references should be short and concise, so you must be selective about the information you provide. You should avoid: Giving too much information about yourself Include your name, profession, relationship to the candidate and how long you've known them for. That should provide sufficient context for the employer. Invite them to get in touch if they want to know more. The candidate's weaknesses It's not your job to present a balanced picture of the candidate. The recipient is only expecting to read about their qualities, so any weaknesses you include will really stick in the mind. The candidate might be the crossword champion of Wales and the West, but if it's not relevant to the position, leave it out. Only the positive qualities that make the candidate well suited to the role should be included. Character reference template The following character reference template will give you an idea of the type of information you should include along with the tone and format of the letter. Dear Joe, I am delighted to be able to write to you to provide a character reference for Emily Reid. I have no hesitation in recommending Emily for any role where a positive attitude and excellent organisational skills are required. I have been Emily's professional mentor at the National Cycling Association for the last three years. In that time, I have seen her develop into a confident and personable individual with a positive outlook. For the last two years, she has volunteered to be the social events organiser at the NCA, which is a testament to her sociability and her willingness to get stuck in. There's no doubt in my mind that she'll bring the same level of enthusiasm and positivity to any role within your organisation and will quickly become a popular member of the team. Please feel free to get in touch if you have any questions. Yours Sincerely, David Howe Tel: 020 9898 4567 Email: davidhowe@email.com The right introduction can open doors. If you ever felt like your resume doesn't properly portray your outstanding soft skills, let us introduce you to a character reference letter. While cover letters are the most popular additional document used in hiring processes, a good character letter can also be used to highlight your personal journey. Trending SearchesSEARCH ALL JOBS We will walk you through everything you need to know about writing a captivating character reference letter, including expert tips and an example to help you get started. Looking for that perfect role? One of these open jobs on The Muse might just be the one » A character reference letter is a document written to attest to a person's character, virtues, and abilities from a personal perspective—all attributes that potential employers value and want to know more about. When Jeremy Yamaguchi, CEO and Founder of Lawn Love, is hiring for his company, he says, "it helps to get a sense of what a candidate is like as a human being beyond their qualifications." In the job market, character reference letters offer valuable insight into a prospective employee's cultural fit. Companies that prioritize cultural alignment may request these letters to ensure the candidate shares their values. "Especially for companies that really value teamwork and a great workplace environment, the character qualities of a candidate matter quite a bit," Yamaguchi says. "Sometimes this can be the deciding factor between two equally skilled candidates." This article focused on its use for job applications, but a character reference letter can also be useful and even requested for academic applications, volunteer positions, and pet adoption processes. While character letters are a smart way to get ahead in the hiring process for any type of position you may be applying for, they're most common in industries requiring high trust and interpersonal interaction, such as education, healthcare, or social services. Character reference letters should carry information that can't be found on your resume. "It provides insight into a candidate's personality, values, and interpersonal skills, which are crucial but not always evident through resumes or interviews," says Naomi Clarke, the head of HR at digital company Flingster. "It helps hiring managers understand the candidate's reliability, integrity, and compatibility with the company culture, providing a more holistic view of the individual." Impactful character reference letters are ones that tell a story. If you're writing one, don't just spell out the person's virtues—showcase them with examples, putting positive traits in a real-world context. "Always be honest and avoid generic statements; personalized anecdotes make the letter more compelling," Clarke says. Hiring managers want to know your journey, how you've grown, what your goals are, and how you act towards them. The letter should paint a vivid picture that shows why you're a great fit for the job you're applying for. The character statement is a mirror reflection of how you can perform in critical situations or have the emotional intelligence to deal with challenges. Though technical skills and experience are important, emotional intelligence can be the difference between average performance and exceptional adaptability, efficacy, and cooperation. If you're new to the field, are applying for an internship, or have taken a long stretch away from working, character reference letters can also help hiring managers to understand who you are and what you can bring that your lack of experience might obscure. Here's what an employer is likely looking for in a character statement: Conflict resolution: Cases where you have effectively solved conflicts showcase good interpersonal relations skills and empathy.Adaptability: Examples of how you adjusted to change or uncertainty demonstrate flexibility and resilience, both signals of high emotional intelligence.Positive influence: Situations where you positively have impacted others or promoted a supportive work atmosphere indicate leadership abilities as well as motivation qualities.Passionate endorsement: A passionate endorsement is often expected when the subject has played significant roles in a work environment and/or other people's lives. The impact of a character letter is directly related to the person who's writing it. Your character reference should be written by someone who: Has known you for at least a yearIsn't related to you (no family members, please!)Knows you well and can speak of you in a positive light Colleagues you consider more than just work acquaintances may be a good idea, as well as previous employers, mentors, or university professors. Depending on your industry, you might be able to ask a client or a customer with whom you have an especially good relationship. When asking someone to craft a compelling character reference letter for you, provide them enough information about the types of roles you're applying for and give them the proper time to do it. The letter itself should be fairly brief. To make their job easier, you can share these steps to hit all the necessary points: Introduction: Briefly explain who you are, how you know the candidate, and