

Sample Rhodes Scholarship Recommendation



September xx, 20xx

Letter of Recommendation for John Lerner for the Rhodes Scholarship

It is with pleasure that I recommend to you John Lerner for the Rhodes Scholarship. Although I have known Mr. Lerner for a relatively short time, I feel that I have come to know him quite well through the work he has done on a variety of projects that originate in my office of Undergraduate Studies. In particular, I have seen him in his capacity as President of the Liberal Arts Undergraduate Student Council and in the organizational work he did with the Liberal Arts Career Fair. In addition, I have spoken to a number of my staff members who have worked closely with Mr. Lerner and who have nothing but the highest praise for him. All who know him consider him to be a remarkable young man who combines a high level of intellect with outstanding leadership abilities.

Mr. Lerner's intellect and hard work are clearly demonstrated by his perfect 4.0 grade point average. Given the grading system here at Mythic University (where A-minuses are possible and the university-wide average GPA is below a 2.6), receiving all "A" grades is in itself a great accomplishment. In Mr. Lerner's case, however, such a record reflects not only his dedication to his studies but also the depth of his commitment. He is a reflective, analytical young man who readily accepts challenges. The fact that he has already been chosen as a Teaching Assistant in a political science course demonstrates his intelligence and his ability to work with others in a constructive and challenging manner. The faculty members with whom I have spoken have nothing but praise for his abilities, his conscientiousness, and his positive attitude towards everything he undertakes.

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of Mr. Lerner is his farming background and the fact that he had managed to pay his own way to get an education. The work on his parents' farm has given him a perspective on hard work, ethics, and life that few students possess. In working with him, one immediately senses that "his values are in the right place." This background, in addition to his year in Germany and his many co-curricular activities, have helped shape his intellect and his attitudes. He has an amazing sense of responsibility, he interacts extremely well with his peers as well as with people in authority, and he can always be counted upon to carry out tasks to their fullest.

In my contact with Mr. Lerner in his role as President of the Liberal Arts Student Council, I have particularly noted his ability to delegate while always making absolutely certain that assigned responsibilities are indeed fulfilled. He sees projects through to the end and he does not hesitate to take on some of the more onerous tasks himself. This is one of the major reasons why he has gained my respect and that of my staff members. He is insightful, he has excellent judgment, and he has the humility not to set himself above others (even if, at times, this is, in fact, true). Everyone who has worked with him not only likes him immensely but also respects him as a peer. Sometimes it is difficult to remember that he *is* still a student rather than someone with a great deal more life experience.

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Mr. Lerner's many interests (music, international politics, agriculture), his international experience (his year in Germany and travel to other countries), his co-curricular activities, and, above all, his intellectual accomplishments make him an outstanding candidate for the Rhodes Scholarship.

I give him my unqualified and most enthusiastic recommendation. Please contact me if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely yours,
Janet Teacher
Janet Teacher
Professor of French,
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies
and International Affairs

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TO THE RHODES SCHOLARSHIP SELECTION COMMITTEE:

I am writing you in support of the application for a Rhodes Scholarship by John Lerner, an outstanding student with whom I have worked closely during the past two years, and for whose intellect, imagination, and industry I have the highest admiration.

I first met John two years ago as one of thirty-seven students in my senior-level Political Science course on Western European Government and Politics. Very early in the course he stood out from the rest of the class because of his obvious interest in the lectures and his intelligent and informed contributions to class discussions. He had obviously profited greatly from an earlier stay in Germany with a German family, had learned the language well, and had acquired perceptive insights into the complexity of the German political and economic situation, which served him well in analyzing the rapidly developing problems of that just-unified country.

However, I found that John's interest in the West European situation was much broader than Germany, for he was fascinated by the difficulties in the development of the European community and thus chose to write his research and analysis paper on the role played by Mrs. Thatcher in that process. His grasp of the problems that she faced domestically and that she caused in EC negotiations was excellent; his final exam revealed impressive knowledge and understanding of the course; and since he had perfect attendance and was always an eager and enthusiastic participant he received an overall grade of A for the course. His was one of only two As; I considered him to be clearly one of the two best students in that relatively large senior-level class.

During the next academic year John did not take any course with me; however, he came regularly to my office to discuss foreign affairs questions and to ask my views based on my forty years of experience in the United States Foreign Service. I was impressed that he continued such regular contact when he was no longer enrolled in one of my courses and obviously had many other demands on his time.

At the beginning of the current Fall semester, I was very pleased that John decided to take my senior-level Political Science course on Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Politics and Foreign Policies, even though he did not need the course nor the credits for his requirements and was already carrying a full load of courses. I had originally suggested that he might audit the course; but he decided that he would learn more if he did the research and analysis paper and took the exam—all extra workload for him. I consider this another clear indication of his mature awareness that hard work brings great benefit in extra learning and understanding.

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However, I was astounded (and delighted) by his next initiative. After I had announced to the class of 60 students that because of budgetary stringency the Political Science Department had decided not to name a Graduate Assistant to help me with the grading and administration of this course, John came to my office and volunteered to act as my assistant. I explained that there could be no compensation for this quite demanding job, and that he would still have to complete the requirements for the research and analysis paper and the final exam. He explained that he felt that he would gain additional valuable experience in management and administration from working with me in this way, since he knew that I had been organizing and teaching senior-level courses for the 12 years since I came to Mythic University. I informed the Political Science Department of this most generous and helpful initiative; they were as impressed and grateful for the solution as I was.

John has now submitted to me his proposal for a very important project he hopes to complete for an advanced degree from Oxford. I consider his choice of subject to show great imagination, foresight and understanding of one of the most complicated central issues in US foreign policy. His idea is first to analyze the political importance of European Community relations with the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, and then to evaluate the intricate political-economic tensions which the current EC Common Agricultural Policy has already caused to the vital EC relations with these non-European OECD countries, as well as to the developing countries around the world. He then proposes to project the effect that the imposition of more efficient market economies will have on agricultural production and trade in the fertile former Communist satellite countries of Central Europe—Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary—especially if they achieve their central goal of admission to the EC with its artificially high agricultural prices system. Finally, he wants to extrapolate the results that later-stage efficient market economies will have on agricultural production from the traditional great breadbasket countries—Russia and Ukraine—and thus on the world economic and security situation.

I think that his project is clearly set forth and understood, and that its completion will make a major contribution to scholarly analysis of the EC/CAP problem, which has already led to very serious strains among friends and allies in Europe, America, Japan and Australia-New Zealand. An efficient market-driven agriculture in the rich farmlands of the former Communist countries would certainly increase these current tensions by an order of magnitude; and I thus am most impressed by John's perception in identifying his ideas, and by the clarity and thoroughness with which he has organized and set forth his proposed project.

To sum up, I support John Lerner's application with great enthusiasm and have no reservations at all about his ability to be an outstanding representative of the United States as a Rhodes Scholar.

Sincerely yours,

John Teacher

John Teacher

Professor of Political Science