Letters of Recommendation

Please read the two texts on this handout and answer these four questions:

- What **kind** of text is this?
- What are the **essential** features of this kind of text? (Identify at least three.)
- How did the author **employ** these features?
- What was the author's **purpose** in employing them that way? What meaning and effect did the author want to achieve?

Your answers to the first and second questions will be the same for both texts, but your answers to the third and fourth questions will vary.

Text 1

Dear Dr. Koop:

I am writing to support Dr. Harvey's appointment as Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine. Dr. Harvey did his fellowship here and I got to know him well. I consider him highly intelligent, highly motivated, and highly productive (he wrote an extraordinary number of papers for a fellow). He has a thorough knowledge of medicine. He is excellent with patients and is exceptionally pleasant without a shred of egotism, and was highly admired, liked, and respected by his colleagues. I recommend him highly.

Sincerely,
Dr. Charles Lewis, MD
Director, Cancer Center

(Continued)

Text 2

Dear Dr. Koop:

I am pleased to recommend Dr. Sarah Gray for faculty appointment as Clinical Assistant Professor. I have known Dr. Gray for eight years. She worked in research with me for one year and was a fellow in our training program for two years. She is a very good internist and endocrinologist. She is honest and reliable and of highest moral quality. She has good judgment in patient care and is very thoughtful and considerate toward those she is caring for. She is a good clinical teacher and should serve the department well in the capacity of instructing students and residents.

Sincerely,
Dr. Charles Lewis, MD
Director, Cancer Center

Source: Adapted from F. Trix and C. Psenka, "Exploring the Color of Glass: Letters of Recommendation for Female and Male Medical Faculty," *Discourse & Society*, 2003, 191–220.

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