

Using Genre Knowledge to Evaluate a Text

On the basis of your analysis of the essential features of a letter of recommendation, what do you make of the one below? Pretend you are considering hiring Dr. Gray. How would this letter affect your decision?

Dear Alfred:

It is a pleasure to write a letter in support of Sarah Gray, MD, one of our urologists who is leaving St. Louis and would join your program. I have known Sarah for approximately four years, becoming socially friendly with her and her husband, particularly over the past year and a half. Sarah is quite close to my wife, and they frequently seek out each other's company. Sarah is a very committed physician who has very good clinical skills, ambition, and a desire to participate actively in the care of children with urologic problems. I get a sense that she is looking to develop a clinical program now that she has chosen to leave the laboratory and concentrate exclusively on clinical medicine.

Although I can't comment specifically on Dr. Gray's clinical skills, I have been impressed with her care of patients with whom we are mutually involved. I believe she is a concerned and interested clinician who offers excellent care and tries hard to communicate with the patients and with the physicians. She is more academic than most clinical physicians and this should be a resource as she becomes involved in her own programs. Although we will miss Sarah, we are sure she will be a great asset to your program and, therefore, we wish her well.

If there are further questions which I can answer regarding Dr. Gray please do not hesitate to call.

Yours sincerely,
Charles Lewis, MD, Professor of Pediatrics
Chief, Division of Urology

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.