



Teacher Recommendation Letter for Andrew Sveda

It is my honor and pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for Andrew Sveda. I have worked with Drew in several capacities. First, I taught him for U.S. History his junior year, which is a yearlong course that culminates in a research paper on a topic of the student's choosing. I also worked with him as the advisor of the Model UN club, in which he is a prominent member and club leader, and as his advisor for his senior year at Shady Side Academy.

Drew is one of the most capable, independent, and driven students I have worked with in my time at Shady Side Academy. Intellectually curious, exceptionally organized, and passionate about History, Drew was a powerhouse in U.S. History. He was always prepared for class, incredibly diligent in his participation, and for every essay, project, or exam, Drew devoted himself to mastering the content both in terms of details and in comprehending the overarching themes and "big picture". It was quite evident from the beginning of the year that Drew was going to be a superb student when for the first major assignment (the Stamp Act Debate) he was a powerful anchor for his side defending the Stamp Act in the British Parliament. Not only did Drew have complete command of the facts, he also was able to make a persuasive argument to his fellow classmates that continued enforcement of the Stamp Act was the most logical, practical, and legal thing to do for the British Empire. He was also able to do this, and on many other occasions throughout the year, in a way that was not alienating to the other students. Drew never tries to "show off" to his fellow classmates. If anything, his gentle and sincere nature encourages many of his them to seek him out for assistance in group projects, class activities, or simply tutoring them on class material they do not understand.

Driving wedges between people or being a provocateur is not Drew's character. Instead, he tries very much to build coalitions and bring different groups of people together. Whether it is in U.S. History class where he almost succeeded in stopping the Civil War during a class simulation (some differences are just irreconcilable) or as a Model UN delegate that works hard to cobble together blocs of countries for a vote, Drew has a talent for respectfully listening to different viewpoints and making everyone feel like they have been heard. It has served him well in class, in extra-curricular activities, and as a leader in the school community.

As an academic and intellectually engaged student, Drew's success is due to both a sharp mind and an extraordinary work ethic. At every phase of the U.S. History Research Paper process (he chose to investigate the role of religious belief in Reagan's foreign policy), Drew demonstrated exemplary research skills, keen analytical insights, and deft prose. The paper was one of the best in his junior class.

There are few students that teachers feel so strongly about when it comes to college admissions. Andrew Sveda is a young man of integrity, thoughtfulness, and dedicated to academic excellence. I cannot recommend him more highly to be a student (or perhaps substitute adjunct instructor!).

Sincerely,

Michael G. Solomon
Department of History
Shady Side Academy