Writing recommendation letters is part of my job so you don’t need to be embarrassed to ask. To save time, I have drafted the following. First, I only write letters under the following restrictions:

(1) I only write letters for students who have received a grade of B or better in a course they have taken from me. If you haven’t received at least a B, then the kind of letter I would have to write will probably not do you much good.

(2) I only write letters for students who have taken courses from me in the last five years.

If you satisfy these conditions and want me to write me a letter, then you must:

(1) Tell me when the letter is due.

(2) Give me explicit instructions about what the letter is for, what the letter should contain, and where and how I should submit it.

(3) If there are forms to be filled out, send me those forms or let me know where to get them.

(4) Time: I need at least two weeks, preferably three, to write a decent letter. This is not an absolute requirement but I may write a lousy letter if I don’t have enough time.

If you will need a letter sent to more than one place, please let me know all at once rather than in several letters.

Once I have agreed to write the letter and you have given me the materials and information described above, I should email you when I have submitted the letter. If the deadline is approaching you and I have not told you that I have submitted the letter, write me again and ask what is up.