

6.803/6.833 The Human Intelligence Enterprise  
Prof. Patrick H. Winston  
**Assignment: Recommendation Letter**

## Paper

Jackendoff, Ray. "Semantics of Spatial Expressions." In [\*Semantics and Cognition\*](#). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983, Chapter 9. ISBN: 0262100274.

WRT: 1 hour

## Assignment

On a total of one side of one sheet of paper, using 10 pt type or larger, with standard interline spacing and margins, respond to all the following.

There has been a disturbance in the force. Suddenly, you are transported into the body of a distinguished professor of artificial intelligence at a prestigious university just at the time Ray Jackendoff finished his thesis with one of our colleagues as the supervisor. You receive the following email:

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CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
Division of Engineering and Applied Science

Dear Professor You:

We are considering Dr. Ray Jackendoff for a faculty position with the Computer Science Department at Caltech. Your name has been furnished as a reference. We would appreciate receiving your evaluation of the applicant's research accomplishments, potential for further creative work and leadership, teaching and mentoring abilities, and any other information that you feel is pertinent. A comparison with outstanding persons of comparable age and experience would be very helpful.

We recognize the burden that such a request places upon you. However, your opinions will be of great importance in guiding us.

It is the policy of the Institute to treat letters of reference as confidential. However, under some circumstances, should the Institute become involved in litigation with a candidate, state or federal law may require us to disclose these letters. Whenever possible in those cases, the identity of the author would be redacted.

We would appreciate your fastest possible response. It would be most helpful if you would submit your recommendation via an e-mail attachment (.pdf, .doc, .txt) to blah blah. Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Random N. Umber  
Professor of Computer Science

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You are to respond to this letter as best you can, having lost the CV and all the papers except for *Semantics of Spatial Expressions*.

Following your usual practice, you totally ignore requests for information you cannot supply, so you will not say anything, for example, about teaching or former graduate students.

Based on your reading of his paper, however, you do have an opinion on the merits of the appointment.

You know that your opinion will not count much unless you demonstrate a genuine familiarity with the candidate's work. Use all you have learned about packaging to convey that familiarity.