

10 Tips for Writing Your Common App Activities List

You only get 150 characters: how do you make the most of them?

1. State role and organization name in top box, so you don't waste characters in the lower, 160 character box.

Instead of: (top box) School newspaper

(description box) I am the editor for the school newspaper (**And don't repeat words!**)

Try: (top box) Editor of International Column, School Newspaper

(description box) Responsible for brainstorming, revising, and supervising articles by other writers for my column.

2. Emphasize tangible, measurable impact.

Whom did your activity help? How many people? How much money did you raise?

Instead of: Raised money for children in Africa.

Try: Raised \$3,000 to provide three uniforms and scholarships for students attending the Joseph Waweru Home School in Kenya: http://www.exop.org/home_school.html

3. Use active verbs to explain what you actually did (list your tasks).

Instead of: Worked at a clinic doing different things.

Try: Organized patient diagnosis notes, sterilized tools for surgeries, assisted with x-ray analysis.

4. To fit in more info: use lists, don't use complete sentences, cut extra words.

Instead of: I raised money to donate to a school in Ghana in Africa by selling t-shirts and bracelets.

Try: Arranged advertising events, organized fundraisers, and gave presentations at school meetings.

5. Use the present tense if it's something you still do.

Instead of: I helped tour visitors around the campus and presented some information on school history and student life.

Try: I give campus tours, providing info on school history, student activities, boarding life.

6. Aim for variety in your list, making sure your verbs aren't redundant.

Instead of: Instructing, helping, teaching children tennis (how are these three different?)



College Essay Guy

www.collegeessayguy.com

Try: Instructing in proper technique, while imparting lessons in sportsmanship, health and integrity.

7. Include any responsibilities you had to demonstrate leadership skills.

Instead of: I swim on the swim team.

Try: Responsible for leading swim practices, planning fundraising events; assisting in recruiting process.

8. What if there isn't much to say, or it was a one-time event?

Explain the significance of the activity: who did the event matter to and why?

Rather than: Tutored students.

Try: Provided support to fourth graders with particularly difficult math concepts.

9. Avoid extreme language.

Instead of: to help all those in need (or) to end poverty in the world

Try: to help those in need (or) to aid in the fight against global poverty

10. Use bigger words.

Instead of: "Come up with" (or) "told people about"

Try: Develop, brainstorm (or) advertised, marketed

Here's How Your Activities List Should Look:

Important: List them in descending order of impressiveness/importance.

Editor of International Column, School Newspaper

Responsible for brainstorming, revising, and supervising articles by other writers for my column.

Intern at Children's Institute Otis Booth Campus

Brainstormed ideas for after school programs for teens, created surveys, presented data to supervisor

Intern at Department of Cardiovascular Disease

Organized patient diagnosis notes, sterilized tools for surgeries, assisted with x-ray analysis.

Worked as assistant at Ye-In Dental Clinic

Helped with patient registration, sterilized tools for surgeries, assisted with surgical processes.



College Essay Guy

www.collegeessayguy.com

Speech and Debate

Academic All-American Award, NFL Tournament Qualifier ('11, '12), Rupe Scholar, Stanford Invitational Semi-finalist, Harker Invitational Semi-finalist

Korean Compassion: Korean-to-English Letter Translator

Translated letters sent by supporters to impoverished children in Asian and African countries.

Junior Researcher at Benetti Sport Inc.

Conducted surveys to research youth interests, contributed ideas for future products.

Math Tutor at Sippican Elementary School

Using card games and quizzes to simplify concepts, taught basic math skills to third graders.

School Tour Guide - International Guiding Staff

I tour visitors around campus, while presenting school history, student activities, boarding life.

Global Partner for International Orientation

I help new international students with registration and adjustment to the new school environment.

For advice on the UC Activities List, go here:

<http://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/2014/11/23/how-to-write-your-uc-activities-list>



College Essay Guy
www.collegeessayguy.com