

Impressing Colleges With Your Activities and Honors



Universities are looking for two things from the activities you participate in: Whether you are passionate about learning, and What you will contribute to their larger campus community.

- 1** Passion for learning is called intellectual vitality, and is the trait in students that universities value the most. While high grades get a school's attention, showing an eagerness to learn for the sake of learning alone is how you convince them you are a great student.
- 2** Schools want to build communities of interesting and passionate people. They want to know how **you** will contribute to that community on their campus. The activities you do show the school how you have contributed to your communities in the past, and are an indicator of how you will do so in the future.

3 Steps to Great Activities

There is no single "right" activity which will cause colleges to admit you. Any activity you take part in can be impressive, if you do it correctly. Here's how to impress colleges with the activities you do:

- 1** Show consistent involvement. Pick one or two activities to be your focus; don't try to do everything. By focusing on these activities, you show schools you are able to make a long term commitment, and that you have subjects you are passionate about.
- 2** Look for leadership opportunities. By taking the initiative and demonstrating your capability for leadership, you show schools your maturity, and demonstrate your ability to give back to communities you are part of
- 3** Strive for greatness. It's easy to measure success in some fields; there is only one champion debater or sports team. Even in fields with less direct comparison, however, you should strive to be the best at what you do.



Writing About Your Activities



You need to tell colleges about your activities for them to count. Both the Common App and ApplyTexas have sections devoted to showing off your activities. Use these to describe the activities you have done in detail. Here's our tips for filling out these sections:

- Be specific. If you raised money, say how much. If you lead a club, say how many members it has. Specific details help quantify your accomplishments.
- Don't repeat information. If you say what the activity was in the title, don't repeat that in the description. You have limited space, so make the most of it.
- Don't use acronyms if admissions officers won't be familiar with them.
- Proper grammar matters in essays, but not in activity descriptions. Don't have random misspellings, but you can ignore some grammar rules.
- Don't worry if you don't have enough activities to fill all of the spaces, quality of activities matters more than quantity.
- Show yourself in the best light, but don't lie or stretch the truth. Colleges will find out, and any applications shown to be dishonest will be automatically rejected.

