

## Documenting your activities/honors

Colleges want to recruit students who have demonstrated they are good citizens who are involved in developing themselves and contributing to their communities. Admissions officers know that students who were involved during their high school years are more likely to also be active on their college campus.

### Ways to report period of involvement:

School-year (use 9, 10, 11, 12)

Year-round (use calendar year, e.g. 2014 or Summer 2014)

### SPORTS/ATHLETICS

#### School teams

- Freshman (FR) , JV, Varsity (V)
- Position(s) (center, goalie, outfielder, etc.)
- Leadership (co-capt., etc.)
- Tournament action
- Team success (League champ, CIF runner-up, state semi-finalist, etc.)
- Personal success (MVP, 1<sup>st</sup> Team All-League, Most Improved, Coach's Award, Scholar Athlete, Arcadia Invitational Long Jump champ, UTSanDiego Prep Athlete of the Week, ABC Holiday Tournament All-Star Team, etc.)
- Duration of involvement (# weeks of pre-season/season/post-season or off-season practice and/or competition)

#### Club teams

- Name of team (with brief descriptor of type program/level: e.g., U15-18, elite, academy, development league, travel team, Junior Olympics team, etc.)
- Position(s)
- Leadership
- Tournament action (frequency – weekly, monthly, summer league, etc.)
- Team success
- Personal success
- Duration of involvement (# weeks of pre-season/season/post-season or off-season practice and/or competition)
- OK to indicate how long you have been playing the sport (since gr 5 or since age 8), but do not go into detail of your pre-high school involvement unless it was exceptional and you continue to be involved in the same sport at a high level.

#### Recreational sports

- Indicate sports you play “for fun” only if a significant part of who you are

#### General

- Mention private lessons, camps, showcases, etc. if pertinent.

### VOLUNTEER/COMMUNITY SERVICE

Name of organization

Organization type (if not clear from name)

Were you required to complete a training program in order to participate? If so, specify “trained volunteer”

General tasks/responsibilities

(e.g., filed and copied paperwork; assisted with event registration; exercised animals and cleaned cages; staffed hydration station at Carlsbad Marathon)

Specific tasks/responsibilities

(e.g., created posters to advertise wristband sales; developed database and mailing list of event participants)

#### Leadership

(e.g., organized and assigned teams for beach clean-up; supervised check-in table volunteers; chaired Clean-up Committee for Escondido YMCA Battle of the Bands)

#### Achievements

Quantify where possible. (Raised \$2,500 for burn victim; collected 1575 cans of food; purchased 18 backpacks with proceeds; signed up 14 new volunteers; \$765 yard sale profits for senior prom; trained 36 ninth graders, etc.)

#### Serial activities

There may be short-term activities that by themselves seem inconsequential (a single 5K run or a beach clean-up or a feed-the-homeless holiday meal) but if it is something you do annually (with friends or family) or something you do with multiple organizations, you should list this as an activity and provide details. (Holiday meal server at Father Joe's Village – every Thanksgiving since grade 6; Charity Fun Runs, 9 – 11 – Annually participate in Celiac Disease Foundation, Race for the Cure, City of Poway, Marine Corps Mud Run, and Big Brothers of San Diego 5Ks)

### **CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS**

As tempting as it is, do not list clubs that you have joined but have no record of active participation. Simply attending meetings is not really considered active participation, sorry!

Name of club (do not use acronyms unless club is well known (like YMCA). Spell out name, abbreviate if necessary.

Briefly describe purpose of club unless it is obvious

(Engineering Club is self-explanatory; Lancers Club is not)

Don't forget to include "outside" groups affiliated with your religion, your community, and your hobbies.

#### Leadership

If you "shared" a position with someone else, say so – there is nothing wrong with being the co-founder or co-chair.

#### Key activities/achievements

Quantify where possible. If asked to provide detail, focus on most significant activities.

If membership is selective, indicate that.

(e.g., selective board that coordinates speakers for Career Week; elected 9<sup>th</sup> grade representative)

### **AWARDS & HONORS**

In general, awards and honors related to your activities (sports, community service, clubs and organizations) are probably best listed along with those activities. Academic awards are generally listed separately for college applications.

Do not list names of organizations that required you to pay a fee to join their organization; belonging to such an organization is not an "honor."

National Honor Society is a legitimate honor; you are selected by your high school. Organizations such as The National Honor & Merit Scholars Society, National Society of High School Scholars and Who's Who Among American High School Students (among others) are direct mail marketing organizations that send students fancy invitations and then require a check in payment for the honor of listing one's affiliation with their organization.

Academic Honors – relate them to your grade in school or number of semesters.

(e.g., Honor Roll, 5 of 6 semesters; Academic Award in Science – 9, 11; National French Exam – Bronze medal, 10; Scholar Athlete, 3 of 3 seasons).

National Merit - categories include Commended Student, Semifinalist, Finalist, and Merit Scholar

Advanced Placement – refer to letter from College Board for various categories of AP Scholar Awards

Other Honors – refer to the title listed on the certificate or announcement

At highly selective colleges, including the UCs, emphasis is placed on honors and awards beyond the high school

### **Calculating weeks and hours for participation in activities**

In California, most school years are approximately 36 weeks long, excluding holidays and breaks.

When listing amount of time you devote to school activities, you should probably not indicate more than 32 - 34 weeks maximum (to take into account final exams and other testing, etc.).

For those involved in school activities during the summer, including student government, athletics (summer

leagues and pre-season conditioning), and journalism (planning meetings, etc.), don't forget to include that time and check the "summer" as well as "school year" boxes on the Common App activities page.

Athletics: school sports in California are divided into three approximately 12-week season. Many athletes participate in pre-season conditioning for 8-12 weeks prior, and those who advance to playoffs may extend their seasons by 1 – 3 weeks.

For reference:

|                        |     |                     |                                |
|------------------------|-----|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Hours in one full week | 168 |                     |                                |
| Hours in school week   | 120 | Hours in school day | 6 ½ (approx., including lunch) |

### General tips

- Base your resume on accomplishments during high school, not what you did in grade school or junior high. Exceptions might be something like a sport you started in seventh grade and continue to do so consistently now.
- On a college applications where space is limited, use abbreviations to save space but make sure they are easily understandable (VP for vice-president; capt. for captain). In an actual resume, however, avoid abbreviations.
- Emphasize *leadership*. You have a few words to provide your role/position and one line to describe your engagement with each activity. Be as specific as possible yet terse. Avoid full sentences. Start with verbs and try to tell two or three specific things you have done with each.
- Emphasize your *impact* if you made a real difference on your campus or in your community through one of your activities, regardless of whether or not it came with a title or official leadership role.
- If your activity is selective, share that with the admissions committee. In some high schools, making a varsity sports team as a freshman is a true accomplishment. At other schools, there is only a varsity sports team, and everyone participates.
- Consistently list roles, positions, etc., in reverse chronological order (most recent first)
- Avoid use of "th" after grade levels when listing (not 9<sup>th</sup>, but simply 9)
- It is not necessary to use the formal name of a club or activity if it is too long; save space by using a generic or shortened version that is readily understood  
Instead of *Plant a Seed Club*, simplify as Garden Club
- Always begin the detailed description line with an action verb.  
Raised \$2K for Nepalese earthquake relief 11; built 2 raised beds for school's community garden 9
- Quantify your actions/achievements wherever possible for greater impact.  
League champs 2 of 3 seasons or Recruited 23 new donors for blood drive or Honor roll 6 of 6 terms or stage crew 5 productions or won school's 1<sup>st</sup>-ever state singles title or 1 of 7 Orations finalists.
- Use the Additional Information section on the application to share important resume details that you could not fit on the Activities page only if it significant information.

### Common Application

- Instructions say to list activities in order of importance to you. Colleges look to this for a sign of your personal priorities.
- Review all drop-down menu options before selecting the right one to begin each listing; remember there is an "Other clubs/activities" if you cannot find one that fits.
- 1st line: You have 50 characters (with spaces) to identify the activity and indicate your position, honors, etc.

ASB Council – Leadership Conf chair 11, rep 9-11

49 characters

- 2<sup>nd</sup> line: You have 150 characters (with spaces) to describe the details of your activities and accomplishments.  
Organized/chaired 1st-ever regional conference for ASB reps from 17 SD County indep schools (54 attendees) 11; Initiated new student buddy program 10 149 characters

### UC Application

- Many students do not fill in all six sections; don't worry if a section does not apply to you.
- **Coursework other than A-G.** Use this to list any courses you have taken beginning with 9<sup>th</sup> grade, including those outside of school. Examples: a Spanish immersion program or private language lessons; weekend Chinese school; Hebrew classes; a nontransferable/noncredit college course; an online course.
- **Educational Preparation Programs.** Have you participated in programs or activities that have enriched your academic experience or helped you to prepare for college? Such programs may provide information, counseling, tutoring, or other services, or offer academic enrichment, research experiences or special study opportunities, such as study abroad. Select "Other" to specify the program if it is not on the UC dropdown list.
- **Volunteer and Community Service.** Make sure to note leadership positions, formal or informal. Quantify scope and results of your work for greater clarity. Do not list paid work here; use next section.
- **Work Experience.** Don't forget "informal" jobs such as babysitting, helping neighbors, working in a parent's office.
- **Awards & Honors.** Include academic and extracurricular awards here, from 9<sup>th</sup> grade on.
- **Extracurricular Activities.** Your choice what to highlight. However, even if you've focused your high school activities (i.e., sports, performing arts, robotics), it's a good idea to show some extracurricular diversity by including some mention of community service or hobbies or other interests as well.
- The University of California automatically audits 10% of applications to verify information students provide. Make sure that what you report can be documented if requested to do so.