

# High School Student Resume Tips

## Why have a resume at all?

- It's the quickest way to tell college admissions officers all they need to know about a person. A standard college application doesn't always give a student room to highlight all of his or her accomplishments and experience. A resume will help bridge that gap.
- When the time comes to fill out college forms, it's easy to forget one or two things from the list. A written resume will help remind you of every pertinent detail.
- It can spark a college admission essay topic. Schools want to learn about an applicant through his or her essay. Reflecting on experiences from summer jobs, volunteer work, or school activities may lead to a unique essay topic that will make you stand out.
- Activities and achievements can lead to scholarships. Scholarship committees look for participation in extracurriculars, and some require that recipients must be involved in a particular activity. Identifying areas of interest will help you find the best scholarship opportunities.
- An impressive resume can lead to summer internships, jobs, or study-abroad opportunities.
- With a comprehensive resume, you can organize your priorities when deciding where to apply. University life is full of opportunities, in and out of the classroom, and the choices can be overwhelming. Listing activities and accomplishments can help a student figure out what he or she wants to continue doing after high school, and which colleges will offer the greatest opportunities.

## Tips for Composing Your College Admissions Resume

### 1. Keep it concise.

Pare down the activities you showcase to the most brag-worthy and most representative of you as a candidate. Do colleges need to know that you were on the field hockey team for one semester in Grade 9? Probably not. The standard rule of thumb is to stick to one or two pages.

### 2. Focus on depth and length of commitment.

When deciding which activities and accomplishments make the cut, keep in mind that colleges would much rather see you excited about one or two key experiences than sporadic involvement in 20 clubs. If having an after-school job limited your ability to participate in clubs or sports, make sure your resume plays up your work responsibilities, training, and on-the-job skills.

### 3. Provide detail whenever possible.

The details are what set a resume apart from a list of extracurriculars on a standard college application. For example, when describing your involvement in the French Club make sure to include:

- your role
- school years/hours per week you participated
- specific contributions (e.g. "Organized a successful after-school film series to introduce our community to French cinema and culture")
- leadership roles (e.g. "Treasurer, Grade 12")
- unique details that will make you stand out

#### 4. Highlight things you weren't able to write about in your [college essays](#) or short answers.

Use your high school resume to show colleges something new. If your devotion to photography didn't make it on the application but is a big part of who you are, then showcase your photography cred on your resume.

#### 5. Formatting is key.

Make your resume easy to scan. Divide information into sections with clear headings, bulleted lists, and a consistent font. Use a system of organization that works for you. (Chronological, by importance of activity, or by time commitment are a few options.) Don't forget to [proofread](#)! A poorly written resume can be worse than no resume at all. It should be proofread (more than once) to ensure correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The resume should be in a professional-looking and easy-to-read font, such as Times New Roman or Arial. The formatting should catch the eye of the recipient and bring attention to key items.

#### 6. Photographs

Be careful about adding photographs; some colleges strictly prohibit including these types of identifying characteristics in application materials, so be sure to check your college's admissions website for any restrictions.

#### 7. Be honest and accurate.

Colleges know how to spot inconsistencies in your application materials, and they won't hesitate to call your counselor to verify information that doesn't seem right. So don't tell them that you have practice for the school play for 30 hours per week—unless drama club is somehow your full-time job! When students lie or even stretch the truth on their resumes, it can come back to haunt them later, particularly when it comes to things like GPA and test scores.

#### 8. Include anything else that makes you shine.

A resume is the one chance a student will have to tell college recruiters everything they need to know. If something makes the student unique and interesting, by all means include it. Fluency in a foreign language or proficiency in advanced computer programs may qualify here. A word of caution, however: Don't go overboard. The resume should contain only what a specific school will want to know, according to [The College Board](#).