

# MAKING YOUR RESUME SHINE Handout 2



## Tips for Getting Noticed by Admissions Officers

When you must compete against hundreds of other applicants for limited seats in a university, it is essential that your resume quickly conveys the academic abilities, passionate interests, and real-world experiences you can bring to the program. Below are general strategies for providing what admissions directors seek in application resumes. Be advised that it's always wise to check with the targeted school first for more specific guidelines that will help you create the most compelling resume possible.

### Resumes for College Admissions

Typically, college applicants are about 18 years old and have only limited experience to discuss on a resume. For this reason, resumes for college admissions should be held strictly to a one-page limit; busy admissions officers may even consider a longer resume a sign of arrogance. If your resume is more than one page long, it is likely that you can condense it into a single page by formatting it more efficiently.

For the most part, college admissions resumes are meant only to be informational; while a business school applicant might present significant professional accomplishments in support of her candidacy, college applicants are simply summarizing all relevant information from the application on a single piece of paper. Still, it is possible for a high school student to craft a more powerful document, one that can go a long way toward producing an image of a mature, "professional" student.

Here are some strategies for optimizing each section of your college admissions resume:

#### 1. **Opening Summary**

This should provide the admissions officer with a snapshot of you as a candidate, highlighting your most relevant accomplishment or qualification. The achievement may relate to your academics (a perfect SAT score, selection as valedictorian, AP credits, etc.), a specific talent (awards for artwork or experience in drama competitions), or athletics (member or captain of a team that won the state championship, four-time All-League recognition, and so on). Whichever you choose, the goal is to demonstrate both your past achievements and your potential for future success.

#### 2. **Education**

In addition to your high school name and location, include any honors, awards, or significant club memberships (National Honor Society, Gold Key Club, French Club). Beware of mentioning too many extracurricular activities: not only will you run the risk of seeming unfocused, but you may be asked to elaborate on your contributions to each group during the admissions interview. To avoid an awkward silence at that time, include only clubs you would feel comfortable discussing at length.

#### 3. **Volunteer Work**

List first any volunteer work that coincides with your future goals (if you know what they are). For example, if you plan to study sociology or psychology in college, then highlight any volunteer work you did at homeless shelters or mental health institutions. Similarly, if you want to be a doctor, don't hesitate to

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mention those summers spent as a candy striper in your local hospital.

#### 4. **Hobbies**

The same advice holds here: any short list of hobbies and personal interests on your resume should begin with activities that relate to your goals. If you're interested in becoming a fashion or interior designer, for example, you could mention that you enjoy sewing or working with fabrics.

Again, though a poor resume will not hurt a college applicant much — admissions officers understand that high school students have little use for resumes — an excellent one can cast him in a favorable light and positively influence the admissions officer's state of mind as she reads his other application materials.

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