



## *College Applications*

**Advisory Goal:** Students will be encouraged and given opportunities to be actively involved in their communities.

**Purpose:** To help students complete college applications.

**Time:** 1 advisory period

**Materials:** Paper and Pen/Pencil

**Activity:** Students will read and discuss the included information on college applications.

**Reflection:** Ask the students:

- Did you enjoy this activity?
- Would you like to see more activities such as this one?

**Reflection:** Ask the teacher:

- Was the time appropriate for the activity?
- Did you have all the materials you needed, should other be listed?
- Did the students take part?
- Did the students seem to enjoy and/or get the purpose of the activity?



## Write Those Applications (and do it well!)

### Resume:

You'll probably end up using two different types of resumes:

#### Static “Laundry List”:

This is the document that you brainstorm everything worth mentioning from your years in K-12, including:

- High School, Current GPA, Honors/AP/IB Courses, and any pertinent test scores such as SAT, ACT, or the AP or IB tests
- Extracurricular Activities
- Community Service Activities (no matter how short)
- Potential references
- Personal interests and hobbies
- Awards and Recognition

List out the years you've been involved, an overview of the activity, and any leadership or significant roles you had a part in. Whenever you have an application that asks for your participation in activities, you'll have a portfolio ready to go. Also use this to drive your scholarship search process, and use the various titles and keywords as search terms on search engines. Secondly, you'll want to develop a solid one-page resume that you can easily email to any job shadow or college supervisor that is short and to the point (if you haven't already).

#### Media Resume:

- Making a media resume is an increasingly appealing option as a method of showing the extent of your involvement in an activity and adds a personal touch to your application. Two methods:
  - **Personal website or blog**—Use Google Pages, Blogger.com, etc.
  - **Hosted Website**—Nothing beats **Zinch.com**. It has a great interface for uploading your own recordings, paintings, pictures, and videos, and can present it all in a Facebook-like format. Additionally, it has tools for finding and getting recruitment from colleges and has its own scholarship search program.



## Filling in Your Resume:

**Extracurriculars:** The prevailing thought for high school students is that they must be involved in many activities in order to appeal to a college. Quite the opposite, colleges look for **depth, not breadth**, and would rather see you passionately involved in one activity than passively involved in many.

**Develop Your Theme:** To this end, develop a central theme that conveys your talents, passions, and potential. Convey who you **are**, not just what you've done. Look up previous scholarship winners and analyze their winning entries for their activities and essays. The best way to learn how to apply for scholarships is to find out from the people who actually won them!

## Essays:

The evil "E" word that makes every senior's hair stand up on end! Eventually, you **will** have to do them for college and scholarship applications. Many essays are similar, so your preparation work will not be in vain. Here's a quick action plan:

**Start Early.** Believe me, you will not want to attack any essay you have to write two nights before it is due. Masterpieces take time to develop. On the bus ride to your summer job, consider whipping out an essay prompt and brainstorming ideas.

**Write an outline.** Don't expect the all the details to come out once your pen hits the page! Chunk out the main points that you want the selection committee to know about yourself, and then work from there. Essay introductions are also key, so consider using a unique beginning in order to distinguish yourself from other applicants right away.

**Fill in the details. Craft the details on each activity or idea towards the audience you are writing to.** If you're writing towards a volunteering scholarship, the committee will not want to know the lesson plans that you used or the days of the week that you met. Instead, write about the effect on the community and any ways in which the activity changed you personally. On the other hand, a science or engineering scholarship would be very interested in the specifics of your work, and an external website or exhibit would help to give them more information into your work.

**Check for redundancy.** If there are two or three essays required for one application, try to avoid redundancy in your essays and focus on different activities for each essay. "Outstanding accomplishment" and "obstacle overcome" **do not** mean the same thing, and try not to write about the same activity. Don't have enough room to fit all of your information? Utilize teacher recommendations to focus on portions of your "package", and then explain the other parts.



### **Edit early and often!**

- English Teachers—Approach the one that you think will give you an honest critique of your work, usually this is an AP English teacher.
- Parents—Besides for emotional support, your parents are your best ally in applying for colleges. **They know you the best!** If you're having a difficult time with some essays, it's perfectly fine to ask your parents for some brainstorming help.
- Books—Read about how to write scholarship and college essays effectively. I used the Fiske guide to writing essays, but others might help too. They also give examples of good essays that you can learn from.