

Building an Extracurricular Resume

High school is about much more than courses and grades. It's also a time to try new activities and explore interests. Exploring, joining, and creating activities helps students build a sense of community. Students develop/improve important life skills like planning, responsibility, healthy competition, and cooperation.

Most high schools provide opportunities to join activities in areas such as:

Fine arts (music, dance, studio art, etc.)

STEM (robotics, engineering, etc.)

Athletics

Student government

Speech/debate

Service/volunteering

Military (JROTC) and other careers (Future Business Leaders of America, Future Educators of America, etc.)

Other special interest areas (books, environmental awareness, LGBTQIA+, foreign language/culture, etc.)

Some extracurricular activities occur outside of school as well, such as community service, part-time work, home responsibilities (caring for younger siblings or an ailing relative, for example), and interest areas (horseback riding, rock climbing, 3-D printing, etc.).

When students apply for college, their extracurricular activities will be an important part of the application. Here are some tips for building an extracurricular resume that has value to your student and to their target colleges:

Consider continuing something you enjoyed before high school. Starting with something familiar is a great way to get started. If your student enjoys soccer, for example, they can try out for their high school team, play on a traveling club team, or participate in/start an intramural league.

Try something new. It's great to stretch a little and take some risks. Will your student like debate? Maybe, maybe not – but it's worth a shot if it sounds interesting.

Expect that some activities won't work out. It's ok if an activity isn't a good fit...trial and error, especially early on in high school, is part of the process. Encourage your student to move on to something different if they don't like the first sport/club, activity they try.



If it doesn't exist, create it. Your student may not have an interior design club at their school, but if it's an area of interest, they can work with school administration to determine how to start the club.

Grow and develop in the activities you love most. Colleges prefer depth over breadth, so building upon the foundation of the activity and demonstrating growth, commitment over time, and/or leadership are important. Titles are far less valuable than what your student contributes. Serving as the Vice President of the Spanish Club is great, but it's most important for your student to be able to articulate what they did in that role, what they learned, and how they added value to the club.

Remember that extracurriculars don't have to have an official organization to be significant. If you repair/build computers at home in your spare time, that has value. If you babysit your younger siblings every day after school, that is definitely an extracurricular activity.

Wondering how to help your student explore meaningful extracurricular activities and build upon them throughout high school? At LGC, our expert educational consultants can assist you family in working through this process strategically. We offer a Maximizing the High School Experience package that provides support in developing a robust extracurricular plan as well as assists with course selection and more. Contact us today for more information.

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