

Make Every Activity Count

Write a Common App activities list that lands

The activities list is prime real estate: ten slots, about 150 characters each, read in seconds. Vague entries waste it. This worksheet helps you write punchy, specific, impact-first descriptions that stand out.

The formula

Strong verb + what you did + the impact, with a number. Cut filler like "responsible for" and "helped with" to buy back characters for detail.

Weak

"Was part of the debate club and helped out at events."

Strong

"Led 20-member debate club; coached novices to 3 regional finals and ran 4 tournaments."

Five rules

1. Lead with a strong action verb (Founded, Led, Built, Raised).
2. Show impact with numbers: people, dollars, hours, results.
3. Cut filler words to buy back characters.
4. Be specific. Name the exact thing you did.
5. Rank slots by importance, not by date.

Draft your top three

Activity 1: role and organization

Description (about 150 characters)

Activity 2: role and organization

Description (about 150 characters)

Activity 3: role and organization

Description (about 150 characters)

Parent tip: Push for numbers. "Tutored kids" becomes "Tutored 12 third-graders weekly for a year." Specifics are what make an activities list believable and memorable.