

Presenting Your Best Self #1: Ten Tips for Your Activities List From Ethan Sawyer, “The College Essay Guy” (www.collegeessayguy.com)

You only get 150 characters. How do you make the most of them?

- 1. State role and organization name in top box; don't waste characters in the lower box.**
Instead of: (top box) School newspaper
(description box) I am the editor for the school newspaper (*And don't repeat words!*)
Try: (top box) Editor of International Column, School Newspaper
(description box) Responsible for brainstorming, revising, and supervising articles by other writers
- 2. Emphasize tangible, measurable impact.**
Whom did your activity help? How many people? How much money did you raise?
Instead of: Raised money for children in Africa
Try: Raised \$3,000 to provide seven uniforms and scholarships for students attending the Joseph Waweru Home School in Kenya
- 3. Use vivid verbs to explain what you actually did (list your tasks).**
Instead of: Worked at a clinic doing different things.
Try: Organized patient diagnosis notes, sterilized tools for surgeries, assisted with x-ray analysis
- 4. To fit in more info: use lists, don't use complete sentences, cut extra words.**
Instead of: I raised money for a school in Ghana in Africa by selling tee shirts and bracelets.
Try: Arranged advertising events, organized fundraisers, and gave presentations at school meetings
- 5. Use the present tense if it's something you still do.**
Instead of: I helped tour visitors around the campus and presented some information.
Try: Give campus tours, providing info on school history, student activities, boarding life
- 6. Aim for variety in your list, making sure your verbs aren't redundant.**
Instead of: Instructing, helping, teaching children tennis (*how are these three different?*)
Try: Instructing in proper technique, while imparting lessons in sportsmanship and integrity
- 7. Include any responsibilities you had to demonstrate leadership skills.**
Instead of: I swim on the swim team.
Try: Responsible for leading swim practices, planning fundraising events; assisting in recruiting
- 8. What if there isn't much to say, or it was a one-time event?**
Explain the significance of the activity. To whom did the event matter and why?
Instead of: Tutored students
Try: Provided support to fourth graders with particularly difficult math concepts
- 9. Avoid extreme language.**
Instead of: to help all those in need (or) to end poverty in the world
Try: to help those in need (or) to aid in the fight against global poverty
- 10. Use bigger words.**
Instead of: Come up with (or) told people about
Try: Developed, brainstormed (or) advertised, marketed