Common App Activities Section

**How to Successfully Complete the Activities Section**

1. Remember – IT IS NOT A LIST! Need to provide context. CONCISE BUT THOROUGH is your goal.
2. In description aim to answer: **"So what? What tangible personal quality does your involvement or leadership demonstrate to someone who knows next to nothing about you and how does it give them a glimpse of who you are?"**
3. List activities in order of interest!
   1. They want to know what activities are most significant to you.
   2. Highlight activities in which you have meaningfully contributed or in which you’ve had meaningful experiences. These include jobs and volunteering.
4. Write CLEAR descriptions (150 characters for details/honors/etc. and 50 characters for position/leadership description and organization name)
   1. Start with an action verb.
   2. Be brief (use your Twitter skills) and clear.
   3. Note RESPONSIBILITIES, not just titles or an overview of the organization
5. State role and organization name in top box, so you don’t waste characters in the lower, 150 character 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 for my column.

1. 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 three uniforms and scholarships for students attending the Joseph Waweru Home School in Kenya
2. You don’t have to fill every slot. Eliminate activities that aren’t important. If you can’t come up with a decent answer to the “So What” question, the reader won’t either.
3. You can include a hobby if you spend significant time on it. If an interviewer asked you about it, would you have a good story to tell?
4. Be as accurate as you can on the timing. Colleges understand there is an ebb and flow to how much time you might spend on an activity.
5. PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD
   1. Make sure you use present tense for on-going activities and past tense for past activities.