

Twelve Reasons Why a Resume is Valuable

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1. **Historical record.** A resume helps you keep track of accomplishments, and highlights the most important features of your application. It's easier to remember you won Most Valuable Player for the junior varsity lacrosse team in the 10th grade if you've been documenting activities since you started high school and before.
2. **Gaps.** A properly constructed resume that follows along the lines of what college applications request will suggest where gaps exist in your portfolio. If you've never volunteered, don't belong to any clubs or are accomplished, those gaps will quickly become evident as you put together your resume. And the sooner you act on the gaps the better your chances for admission.
3. **Special skills.** A resume may be structured to highlight special skills in the arts, sports, academics or in your interactions with others. If you are a dancer, your resume can provide an outline that tracks where you've studied, under whom, where you've danced and awards.
4. **Degree of Involvement.** By providing a general timeline and noting dates of participation, a resume suggests how deep the involvement and how extended your commitment. And by including information relative to hours or days per week and weeks per year, a resume drills even deeper into the role the activity plays in your life. The resume could also describe the impact the activity has on other people, as it helps bring out your leadership qualities, a factor colleges highly prize.
5. **Applications.** It's easier to tackle the task of completing a college or scholarship application if you already have a single document summarizing all of your high school achievements and activities. Having a printout of your resume sitting beside your computer as you fill in blanks not only saves time but also helps you prioritize which of your many activities are most important to you.
6. **Color.** Electronic applications tend to be fairly cut and dry. They ask only for facts. A resume gives you the opportunity to color in between the lines and provides additional information that makes you come alive or stand out as a candidate. If you have specific computer skills, language fluency or certifications, a resume is a great vehicle for presenting them. If you've conducted research, given presentations or participated in enrichment activities, you can add titles, summaries or the names of your mentors.
7. **Upload.** Most electronic applications severely limit the amount of information you can provide in the way of extracurricular activities. The Common Application, for example, allows applicants to present 10 activities, including social clubs, community service and employment. Each entry is allowed 50 characters for a label and 150 characters for a description. Because of these limitations, many colleges specifically ask for resumes, so it's good to have a current one on hand. But remember that a resume should "inform" your application, not "duplicate" it. If the resume doesn't add anything, don't attach it unless specifically requested.
8. **Links.** Resumes are becoming increasingly internet-friendly. Most of the time, documents converted to PDF format will support live links to online media including blogs, videos, websites, Facebook pages or articles appearing in newspapers, journals or magazines. Don't hesitate to include these links in the form of complete URL's on your resume to encourage readers to visit websites where you create, contribute to, or manage content.
9. **Recommendations.** An up-to-date resume should be provided to anyone you ask to write a recommendation on your behalf. It helps them to know you better and to remember the important details of your high school career.
10. **Interviews.** A resume is a great conversation starter for an interview. It puts you and the interviewer on the same page – literally. It also helps an interviewer remember specifics about you after the conversation ends. *NOTE: You should always have a resume available for an interview, but ask before handing it over. Some college interviewers have rules concerning the use of background materials.*
11. **Employment.** Having a resume to attach to an application for a job, internship or mentorship makes you look that much more professional and job ready. It can answer questions employers haven't thought to ask about your background or experience, and will make your credentials stand out from the crowd.
12. **Self-Confidence.** At the end of the day, it's sometimes easy to lose sight of all you've accomplished. Maintaining a resume and looking at it once in a while will help you remember the highlights of your high school career.