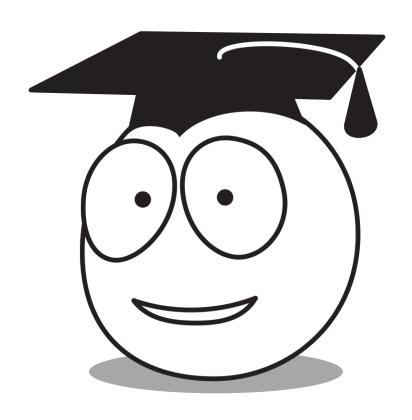# Take Stock of What You've Done

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Benefits of Taking Inventory

If you maintain an inventory of your activities and accomplishments throughout high school, you will:

- never forget any of the great stuff you did, from the biggest to the smallest item.

- make filling out the Activities section on college and scholarship applications so much easier.

- be prepared at any time to submit your resume to a potential employer.

- make your recommenders' lives much easier when they're seeking great stuff to say about you.

- feel more confident because you took time to appreciate your achievements.

- be practicing the very important habit of self-reflection.

This article is broken into two parts, the first about your *Inventory* and the second about your *Professional Resume*. If you do a good job on your *Inventory*, the *Professional Resume* will be cake.

Part 1: Inventory

Your *Inventory* is where you will keep track of everything you do in high school–and this means EVERYTHING. Even if you think something is unimportant or unimpressive, you need to track it. Don't underestimate what you've done. You never know what could distinguish you in the college process.

Ideally, you would start in eighth grade and update your *Inventory* every semester all the way through high school. If you're late to the party, you should retroactively fill in information from the years you missed. You need to update your *Inventory* at the end of every semester, never deleting information but rather only adding to or changing what you already have. By the time you start applying to colleges, you'll have one master *Inventory* that shows everything you did and achieved.

Take out your *Inventory Worksheet* from the *Tools* section on page XX , so you can follow along. The first page is for the fall semester of whatever year you're currently in, and the second page is for the yearlong summary you will do at the end of your spring semester.

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Here's how it's broken down:

1. **Date and period covered:** Enter the date you completed this particular Inventory and the period of time the Inventory covers.

2. **Personal info:** Enter your name, address, phone number, and email.

3. **Education info:** Enter the name of your school, your expected graduation year, your current unweighted GPA, your current SAT/ACT, your possible major(s), and your career interests.

4. **School activities:** For each in-school extracurricular activity you took part in during this period, list the name of the activity (for example, basketball, Key Club, etc.), briefly describe what you did and any special roles you held, and enter the number of hours per week you committed to it.

5. **Out-of-school activities:** Follow same steps at #4. This category includes community service, jobs, internships, travel sports, and any other activity not offered through your school. This also includes major family commitments, such as caring for a younger sibling or an ill relative.

6. **Awards and honors:** List both in-school and out-of-school awards and honors. For each, include the year and a description.

7. **Passions, skills and qualities:** Describe any notable passions and skills, and list the traits you feel define you (for example,. hardworking, creative, team-oriented, etc.) For each, trait, give a brief description. (See Qualities List in Tools section on page XX).

Part 2: Professional Resume

This section will be most helpful for students who are applying for jobs or internships. You do not need a *Professional Resume* to apply to college, especially if you've kept an *Inventory*.

Your *Professional Resume* will be a fancier, more concise version of your *Inventory*. It will summarize your most notable experiences, qualifications, skills and interests. If you've done a good job on your *Inventory*, you've already done the hard work.

There are two main steps: getting the info down and then putting your resume together:

STEP 1: GET THE INFO DOWN. We're going to break this step into "substeps." After that we will deal with how your resume looks. For now, just get the info down.

HOW TO DESCRIBE

Need assistance with activity descriptions? Read the *Professional Resume* section for some pointers.

"You need to apply for student loans so you can go to college and get a good job to pay off your student loans."

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Take out the *Resume First Draft Worksheet* and the *Resume First Draft Example* from the *Tools* section. The blank one is for you to fill out and the other is for you to see an example.

Sub-Step 1: Fill out the *Personal* section.

Sub-Step 2: Fill out the *Education* section.

Sub-Steps 3 & 4: Fill out the *School Activities* and *Out-of-School Activities* sections. The baby steps below are the same for both.

Baby Step 1: List out the top 2-4 school extracurricular activities you have participated in or currently participate in. Next to each, write your role. List them in chronological order, starting with the most recent and working your way back.

Baby Step 2: For each activity, write the duration (length) of your participation. If you're still doing it, the end date will be "present" (see example). The way you write the dates should be consistent throughout.

Baby Step 3: For each activity, create 2-3 bullet points describing what you did in your role. Also, be sure to list any special accomplishments or contributions. It's also good to include the weekly time commitment for each.

Baby Step 4: How you describe your participation in each activity is key. Let's talk about how to make the most of your descriptions.

Use Action Words: Each bullet point will start with an action word (see the Action Words List in the Tools Section) Use strong action words that are specific and descriptive, NOT vague.

Vague: **Did** fundraiser that raised over $10,000.

Specific, descriptive: **Planned** fundraiser that raised over $10,000.

Descriptions should be active, not passive.

Passive: **Responsible for training** volunteers on phone-a-thon fundraising.

Active: **Trained** volunteers on phone-a-thon fundraising.

<u>Grammar:</u> Full sentences are not needed. Fragments are fine. Use past tense for action verbs if the action is no longer happening. Use present tense for the action verbs if the action is still happening. See below:

Action no longer happening: **<u>Managed</u>** a team of five people.

Action still happening: **<u>Managing</u>** a team of five people.

<u>Punctuation (periods, commas, etc.):</u> Whatever you choose to do, do the same thing for all the descriptions. Stay consistent!

<u>Baby Step 5:</u> Have a good writer (besides you) check over your descriptions and give you feedback!

Sub-Step 5: Think back about the most impressive awards and honors you have received. List the top 3-4. Include the date and a brief description for each. Make sure you write the date out the same way you have been writing it! Stay consistent!
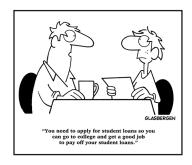
Sub-Step 6: List your top passions, most impressive skills, and the positive qualities that define you (see the *Qualities List* in the *Tools* section).

STEP 2: PUT IT ALL TOGETHER! Now you just have to put all that content into proper resume format and make your resume look awesome! As you're doing this, get the following items from the Tools section. You will find these very helpful :

- **Resume Example:** This resume was created using the info from Resume First Draft Example It is a good example because it follows the steps below.

- **Resume Non-Example:** This resume shows exactly what not to do and challenges you to find the 15 mistakes. The page after shows the correct answers with comments.

Now onto the steps...

Sub-Step 1: Choose a resume layout. Microsoft Word and similar word processing programs provide numerous templates / layouts for resumes. You can also download them for free from the Internet. Choose one that you really like and make it your own, but make sure it looks clean and professional! And no matter what, keep it on one page!

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Sub-Step 2: Decide on font style. Font size should be between 10pt-12pt. Font color should be basic: black, dark blue. Stick with clean and professional-looking fonts. Check out these examples and non-examples.

Examples (good)	Non-Examples (bad)
Boom!	Too much.
(Franklin Gothic Book)	(Curlz MT)
Work it!	Stop it.
(Times New Roman)	(Brush Script MT)
Lovely font!	You will NOT get this job.
(Arial Narrow)	(Comic Sans MS)
Word! (Get it?)	NO!
(Baskerville Old Face)	(Broadway)
Fontastic!	
(Bell MT)	

Sub-Step 3: Last but not least, follow this advice as you are finalizing your resume.

- **Keep it Clean!** – No matter how awesome you are, if you walk into a job interview dressed sloppily, you probably won't get the job. It's the same with your resume. If it looks sloppy, it doesn't matter what it says. It sends a message that you are lazy and careless. Take time to make sure everything is perfectly neat and lined up!

- **Stay Consistent** – Formatting must stay consistent throughout the entire resume! Take some time to look at the *Resume Example* worksheet and the *Resume Non-Example* worksheet so you can see what to do and what not to do!