

Your interests and extracurriculars

After you've defined your stats, you'll need to go over your interests and extracurriculars. This can mean a lot of things—anything from volunteer work to videos that you've posted on YouTube for a class project. It can include community activities through your church, temple, or even atheist's organization; involvement in school plays or sports; and after-school jobs or internships.

Fill out the following chart; rate yourself on a **1** to **5** scale, **1** being the least involved person that you know, and **5** being the most, for each activity. Don't worry if you can't fill every category—few students can! We just like to leave a little extra room. Ignore the “Buzzwords” column for now; you'll fill that in later.

Category	Description	Buzzwords	Points
Leadership Experiences			
Activities: Sports, Clubs, Performing Arts			
Honors and Awards, Recognitions			

Community Involvement, Service, Volunteer Work			
All Others, including Paid Work			

Every activity for which you've given yourself a **3** or higher is one that you'll want to use in your application, and you might want to seek out the faculty or adult advisors who oversaw those projects. Can they help you with a recommendation? How do they feel about their *own* alma mater? Would you consider going to that school? If you're interested in applying to a college that an adult in your life is an alumna of, it would be fantastic to have a recommendation from that person.

If you've rated yourself a **1** or **2** for any activity, is there a way to become more involved before you send off your applications? Think about it, and try to become more involved. Whether that means spearheading a new initiative (adding vegan baked goods to bake sales) or taking a leadership role, you should try to bring those **1s** and **2s** up to **3s**, **4s**, and **5s**. If you're not interested, then forget about them—and devote yourself fully to your other activities.

Colleges prioritize extracurriculars in the same way that they prioritize anything else. The ideal merit aid candidate has