Your Experience Clearly Told

For high school and college students writing applications, resumes or interview answers. Start with what you actually did. Show your contribution without making it bigger than it was.

ONE REAL MOMENT

- **What I did**
- **Who it helped**
- **What I learned**
-

VAGUE

Role
I am a great leader.

Action
I helped with everything.

Result
I changed the whole club.

SPECIFIC

Role
I ran weekly meetings.

Action
I assigned tasks.

Result
Our team used the shared task list.

Clear does not mean exaggerated

The comparison above is fictional. Your strongest wording is the wording you can explain and support. A useful detail does not have to be a number.

START WITH EVIDENCE

Build Your Experience Inventory

Choose a responsibility, project or moment you remember well. Make a private record before you try to make it sound impressive.

Collect the details you can stand behind

Context and dates: where did this happen?

Your actions: what did you do?

Evidence: what can you check?

Outcome or learning: what do you know?

STUDENT CLUB NOTES

Fictional example

1 **Context**
Club secretary, spring term.

2 **My actions**
Drafted agendas and recorded who owned each task.

3 **Evidence**
Saved agendas and meeting notes.

4 **What I know**
Members used the notes to find their next task.

Look beyond formal titles

Schoolwork, paid work, care at home and community roles can all give you a real example to discuss.

Evidence can be your notes, a draft or feedback. Ask before sharing someone else's work or personal details.

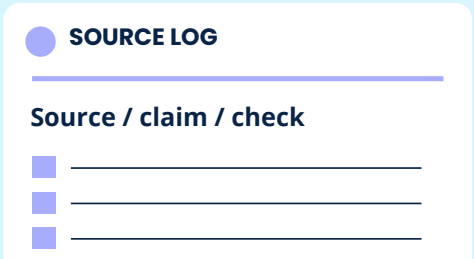
No saved artifact? Describe what you remember accurately. Mark uncertain dates or counts to check, not to invent.

Find the Work Inside the Experience

These are fictional examples, not claims about you. Notice the specific action in each one, then look for an honest parallel in your own life.

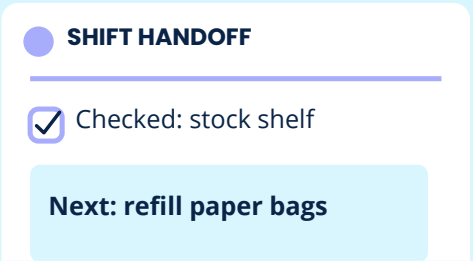
School project

Compared sources and wrote the evidence section of our group report.



Paid work

Checked restock needs and left handoff notes for the next shift.



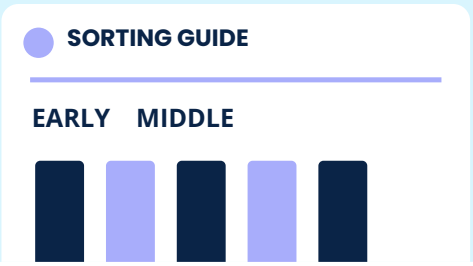
Care at home

Planned school pickups and adjusted the weekly schedule when plans changed.



Community work

Sorted donated books by reading level with other volunteers.



Say What You Contributed

STEP 1

Choose a verb that fits

Led means you directed the work. Supported, drafted, checked, scheduled or contributed may describe your role more accurately.

Before: overclaimed

"Led a research project."

After: "Compared sources for our group report."

STEP 2

Separate your part from the team

Name your action first. Then describe the shared outcome as shared. Do not take credit for decisions or results that belonged to others.

Before: unclear ownership

"Organized the whole book drive."

After: "Sorted donations for our team's book drive."

STEP 3

Use results you can support

Include a number only if you know what it counts and can explain it. If the outcome is unknown, describe the completed work or what you learned.

Before: unsupported impact

"Doubled team productivity."

After: "Made a task list that teammates used at meetings."

All before-and-after examples on this page are fictional.

One Experience Different Formats

Keep the facts the same. Change the detail and emphasis to answer the actual prompt or role. Follow any stated length limit.

RESUME — **Make your action easy to find**

Fictional example: "Drafted club agendas and recorded task owners in shared meeting notes."

APPLICATION — **Add meaning and reflection**

Explain one moment, your action and what it taught you. Connect it to the question, not a generic claim about leadership.

INTERVIEW — **Tell the story out loud**

Give brief context, your part and what happened. Practice from notes, then answer naturally and leave room for follow-up questions.

TRY A SHORT PARAGRAPH

Fictional example.
What did this student do, and what did they learn?

As club secretary, I noticed that next steps were sometimes unclear. I added task owners to our meeting notes. Members used the notes to check their responsibilities. I learned that leadership can mean making a next step clearer, not making every decision.

Write Your Own Experience Story

Choose one real experience. Use these prompts in your notes, then draft a short answer. You do not need to share private family or personal details.

1 Choose a moment

What was the situation? What were you responsible for?

2 Name your action

What did you personally do? Who else contributed?

3 State what you know

What happened, or what did you learn? What can you check?

MY STORY NOTES

Context

My action

Outcome or learning

BEFORE YOU USE IT

Does it answer the prompt?
Is my role accurate?
Can I explain each claim?
Have I protected privacy?