

Community Service/Volunteering - Text

Course Description

This 18 week course is geared toward 17- and 18-year olds. It helps students to identify a suitable volunteer position lasting at least ten weeks, and allows them to document and articulate their experience in a creative and challenging format.

In addition, this course provides a historical overview of volunteering in the U.S.;

profiles of famous volunteers; opportunities to profile a volunteer; examinations of non-profits internship-to-career opportunities;

of various opportunities relating to animals, environment, and sports; an analysis of organizations founded by young people; and for community service beyond high school.



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volunteer
suggestions

Numerous high school college-preparatory programs require senior students to volunteer fifty or more hours in their final year. Universities have come to expect this on college applications. This course ensures that students applying to universities can show the same level of volunteer commitment as their counterparts from other schools.

Syllabus Sample

Lesson 3: Your Perfect Volunteer Position

In the last lesson, you identified three potential volunteer positions that seem right for you. Now, it's time to make contact with the people who can help you secure one of these opportunities.

Main Assignment: First, you need to locate the appropriate contact person for your chosen organization. Often, a website will list the name, e-mail address, and phone number for a volunteer coordinator. If you can't locate contact information in this manner, just call the organization. Mention that you're interested in volunteering, and ask for the name and phone number or e-mail address for the person whom you should contact. Please list this information for your teacher in a chart like the one below:

Organization	Contact Person	Phone Number	E-mail Address
1.			
2.			
3.			

Once you have located the appropriate person to speak with about your potential volunteer position, there are three methods of making contact.

The first is by phone. Simply call the volunteer coordinator and explain what you'd like to do, and why. Below, read the transcript of a conversation between coordinator and potential volunteer:



Volunteer: Hello. My name is Joseph Lee. May I please speak with Rosa Sanchez?

Coordinator: Speaking. What can I do for you?

Volunteer: I'm interested in volunteering for your organization. I'm a high school student working on a semester-long community service course, and I'd like to commit at least ten weeks to the Humane Society. I own three dogs and four cats, and I love working with animals.

Coordinator: That's wonderful! What days and times were you thinking of?

Volunteer: I can volunteer on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 2 and 5 PM.

Coordinator: That sounds perfect. I'd like you to come in and fill out some paperwork. After that, we'll train you and you can get started.

Volunteer: Thanks very much. I look forward to working with you.

You might choose to make contact with your coordinator by e-mail or regular mail. This is useful when an organization is particularly busy. Read the introductory letter below and feel free to use it as a template for your own letter.

January 19, 2008

Mr. Don O'Bannon
Children's Sports Club

Dear Mr. O'Bannon,

My name is Frances Dawson. I'm writing to you because I'm enrolled in an 18-week community service course through Laurel Springs School, and I'd like to volunteer with the Children's Sports Club for ten weeks.

As a seventeen-year old avid baseball and basketball player, I think I'd be particularly useful in helping to coach youth teams. I have a solid understanding of both games, and I successfully coached my younger sister last year on pitching, catching, and batting so that she excelled on her softball team.

I am available after school for two hours, three days a week. On a separate page, please find contact information for three personal references.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Frances Dawson
805/649-4953
fdawson@hotmail.com

Note that in the above letter, the writer mentions personal references. A volunteer coordinator will likely need these to get a better sense of who you are as person.

Identify three people who can act as your personal references. These need to be adults who know you well. Examples include teachers, coaches, officials from your church, club advisors, past employers if you've had a job, and other adults who know you well. In some cases, coordinators will accept your parents as personal references.

Give your teacher the names of three personal references along with their relationship to you, following the example given:

Name	Relationship to You
Kelly McGinnis	Horseback Riding Instructor

The final way in which you may contact a volunteer coordinator is in person. You may choose to make what is called a "cold call." Dress neatly and print out a copy of your resume, if you have one. Also print out a copy of the contact information for your three personal references. Go to the office of your chosen volunteer organization and ask to speak with the volunteer coordinator.

If he/she has time to see you, explain--as described in the telephone conversation and letter above--why you're interested in volunteering, and note when you're available. Be courteous and thank the coordinator for his/her time.

Alternatively, you may want to set up an appointment by phone to meet the coordinator in person. The same rules—neat appearance, documents in hand, polite manner—apply. Here are a few tips for in person meetings:

- Give a firm handshake and look the coordinator in the eye in a friendly manner.
- Speak in a low, clear voice and avoid talking rapidly.
- Sit up straight with your shoulders back, but not stiff.
- Don't chew gum!
- Maintain eye contact. Don't be afraid to smile and nod to show that you're attending to the conversation.
- Shake hands again upon leaving, and thank the person for his/her time.



In the next lesson, you'll be asked to describe your process of finding and obtaining your volunteer position. Spend the rest of this week making contact with coordinators.

Good luck!

Outline for Community Service/Volunteering

Unit 1: Why volunteer, and how to find your dream position

- Lesson 1: Volunteering throughout U.S. history
- Lesson 2: Identify your ideal volunteer position
- Lesson 3: How to obtain a position

Unit 2: Taking your place among illustrious volunteers

- Lesson 4: Describe your new volunteer position
- Lesson 5: Famous volunteers
- Lesson 6: Profile a volunteer
- Lesson 7: What makes a successful volunteer?

Unit 3: So many volunteer opportunities, so little time

- Lesson 8: Volunteers in animal care
- Lesson 9: Volunteers in sports
- Lesson 10: Volunteers for the environment

Unit 4: Young adults changing the world

- Lesson 11: The rise of teen volunteers
- Lesson 12: Volunteer positions created by young adults

Unit 5: Non-profits and internships

- Lesson 13: Why non-profits need you
- Lesson 14: Why you need an internship position
- Lesson 15: Reflect on your volunteer experience
- Lesson 16: Critical analysis and personal reflection

Unit 6: Volunteering for life

- Lesson 17: College opportunities for volunteering
- Lesson 18: Course evaluation and self-reflection