

Student Scenarios Activity

How to highlight language skills through activities and programs on college applications

Below are three student scenarios. Consider what language(s) might interest each student and how they can pursue that language in a meaningful way. Consider related fields that might interest them, and activities that would integrate their language studies with their other academic interests. For each student, discuss how you would advise them and 2-5 ways they can pursue their interests in different programs.

Example #1

Mason is a junior in high school. His parents feel that he hasn't applied himself and want him to have help preparing his college applications. They are hoping a college counselor will help him get on track. Mason does what he must in classes but doesn't really have a subject he "likes". He spends his free time with everything anime and manga. He watches and reads anime comics most nights and weekends. He's even started drawing some. He said, "I'm doing this college application thing because my parents want me to."

Example #2

Zacharie is a freshman in high school in New Orleans, Louisiana. He's been passionate about ecology and water pollution most of his life. He's seen the effects of global warming firsthand in the increased number of hurricanes along the Gulf of Mexico. He's also seen the effects of pollution while studying the Deepwater Horizon oil spill at school and in summer camps. He's also participated in camps learning about wetland restoration in the Mississippi Delta in order to reduce the Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico, which affects his father's fishing business. Zacharie reads constantly about everything and anything and lately has been reading about deforestation in the Amazon as well as how Australian Aboriginal knowledge has helped combat massive fires in Australia. He said, "Maybe it would be interesting to study ecology in the Amazon Rainforest or in the South Pacific."

Example #3

Akua is a senior in high school. Her family immigrated to the US from Ghana when she was in 9th grade. She had taken some English in Ghana, and has focused on increasing her English skill at school. She has improved to the point that she is the "official" translator for her grandmother and helps her dad with some of the things he can't do in English. Though her English isn't native-like yet, she can converse freely in English and Twi, and she is excelling at school and will graduate with honors. She would love to study medicine and work with immigrant communities of all backgrounds in the US. She said, "I translate for my grandmother and the doctor when she goes to the clinic, but when I'm a doctor, I want to be able to talk directly with my patients."

