

How to Choose Activities for Your Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (here abbreviated to D of E) is an award for 14 - 24 year olds, done all over the world, but mainly based in countries of the Commonwealth. There are three levels: Bronze (14+), Silver (15+) and Gold (16+)....

Part 1 of 4:

Physical

1.



If you already practice a sport outside of school, you're safe! You will just need to get your coach/teacher to confirm that you do it.

2.



Think about sports you have done before. If you liked them, why not see if there are any classes or teams in your area? If there aren't, you can always set one up yourself.

3.



Start something new. Do something that you might not normally get the chance to, like Capoeira or Belly Dancing. It's fine as long as you get some marginal amount of exercise, and you might as well have fun while you're at it. The D of E Authority allows all sorts of weird and wonderful "sports", for example: Underwater Rugby!

4.



Join a class. Most fitness centres will have a wide range of classes that you can attend. If that doesn't appeal, there are also teams, for more competitive people and more informal groups especially for beginners. There are also things like "boot camps", which are a great source of exercise and are often run in places like public parks.

5.



Get a personal trainer. It may cost more, but they will know a lot about what kind of exercise is best. With a personal trainer, it is also more likely that you will be worked harder and hence will improve your general fitness level.

6.



Invest in a membership to your local gym/fitness centre. This may cost a small amount, but will give you unlimited access to a range of fitness activities, so you don't have to stick to the same activity each week.

7.



Go running or cycling by yourself, if all else fails. This will be free, but make sure to get someone to witness that you've done it.

Part 2 of 4:

Volunteering

1.



Find a person or organization in need of help. This shouldn't be about badgering people to take you on, but more about providing help where it is needed.

2.



Apply to a local charity shop. The ubiquitous D of E Volunteering choice, these are a good option. They could usually use some help, and you can arrange your work timings and days with them more or less when you'd like them. However, these are pretty popular, and so you should probably move fast! Many Local Council's also have a team responsible for coordinating volunteers as well as Youth Workers that should be able to work with you to find an opportunity. Don't be put off by the myriad of departments on a Council website, ring the main switchboard number and the operator should be able to connect you to the right person.

3.



Talk to Scout or Guide groups. They are often in need of help, especially with their younger members. However, some groups require you to be a member of the Scouting/Guiding movement, and their meetings may last quite a bit longer than an hour. Remember that there are many different branches of these organizations, which could be a better choice if you have a particular skill, e.g. Sea Scouts or Air Scouts.

4.



Look for people in need of help. Search around in your area for people who are currently looking for some assistance. Some good places to offer your aid would be at a school for the disabled, or an old people's home, for example.

Part 3 of 4:

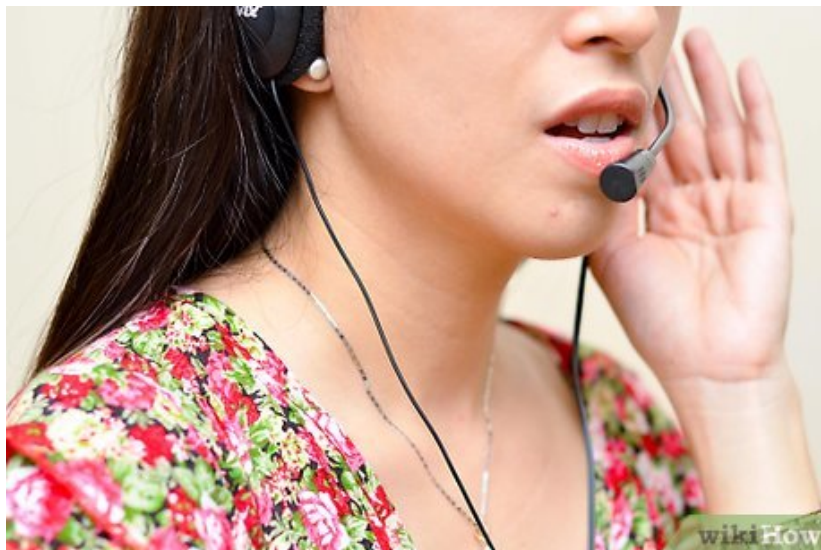
Skills

1.



Learn a musical instrument. This is always a good skill to have, and opens the doorways to things like orchestras and ensembles. You don't have to have formal music lessons, things like playing in a band can also count towards this.

2.



Learn a new language. This is becoming increasingly desirable in the modern world, will open doors to fantastic travel opportunities and be a lot of fun.

3.



Learn more about a subject. There are myriad groups and This is especially important if you desire to study a mostly non-curricular or obscure subject.

4.



Take the opportunity to do some of the odder examples allowed by the D of E Authority. These will likely have added cost, but will be extremely interesting and amusing. Examples include:

Part 4 of 4:

Residential (Gold Only)

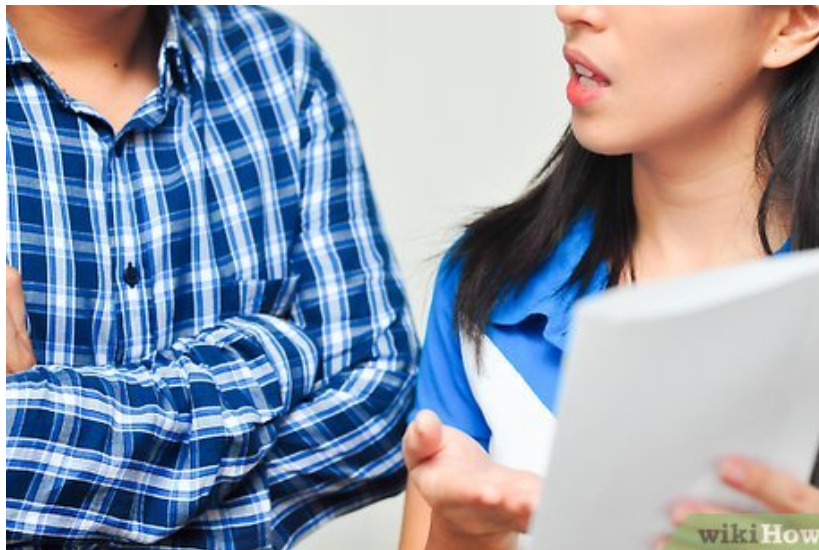
This should be undertaken over at least 5 days and 4 nights (consecutively). This should also be done away from home, and without any teachers that you know, or only your friends - so that you meet new people in an unfamiliar environment.

1.



Go on a course. There are many summer schools or courses which are at least 5 nights long, and you can learn things at the same time too. This can also be an asset to your personal statement if you do something related to your intended course of study, e.g. Medlink for Medicine, JACT summer schools for Classics, etc.

2.



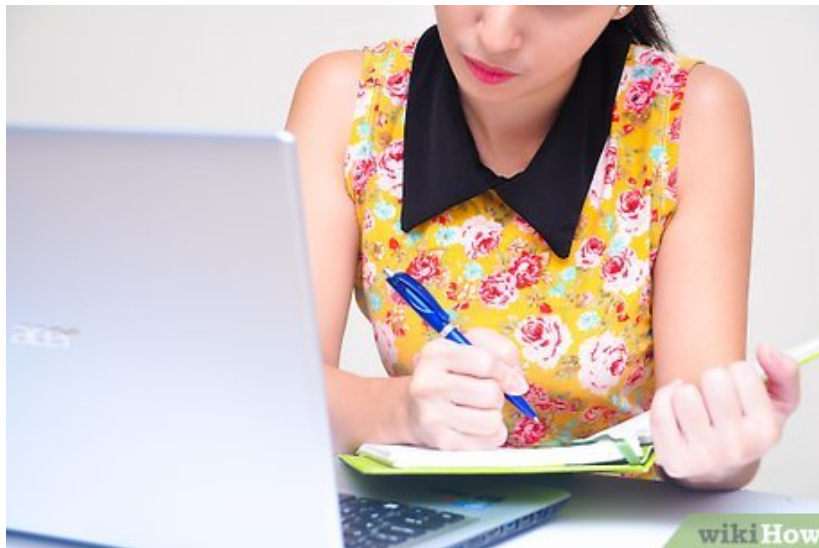
Ask your teachers for ideas. They will probably have some information on some courses that could be useful for you, and some teachers even teach also at these events!

3.



Do some volunteering. There are loads of great volunteering opportunities wherein you can fulfill your requirements for the Residential section **and** do some good at the same time. You could go abroad and help with a project, like building a school, or look for some smaller projects, again like with the elderly or the disabled. You could also see if there's a school/scout/guide group that wants to do something like a summer camp who would appreciate your assistance.

4.



Research online. If you don't find anything related to your academic interests, or you don't have any especial academic interests, search online for fun things you could do. There are many many places that offer week-long activity residentials, e.g. The National Trust, so search around until you find something that catches your eye.

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