What do employers want?

As well as your experience and qualifications, almost every employer is interested in your 'key competencies' such as commitment, leadership, initiative, being reflective and more. These vary from employer to employer but there are some competencies that every employer would like their employees to have.

In almost every job application you will be asked to comment on your abilities in these areas.

What are my key competencies?

Playing in a band, peer mentoring or playing football really can make you more employable.

You are already using, practicing and improving your key competencies in the enrichment activities you do. And, if you're not, they are all things that you can learn.

How can I demonstrate my key competencies?

Writing about your activities in your enrichment diary is a great way to demonstrate your key competencies. You might write about times when you've taken the lead or shown your initiative in your diary or illustrate your key competencies with video, audio or photographs.

Being able to reflect on what you have done, how well you did it and learn from your successes and mistakes is also important. By writing about your activities, you're practicing being a reflective learner which is, itself, a key competency.

Get Going

Here are nine key competencies (although there are more), a short description of each and a couple of questions you might answer about your activities in your Enrichment Diary.

Organisation: 1. To form as or into a whole consisting of interdependent or coordinated parts, especially for united action: *Synonyms:* coordinate, establish, set up, put together, take care of.	Organisation is when you make a plan and follow it through. You might organise something big like a fundraising day or a sports match. You might also organise something small like a timetable for when you meet everyone else in your activity.	Describe a time in your activity when you have shown your organisational skills. What did you organise and how?
		Have you made a plan to do something? Did your plan work?
		What three words would you use to describe how you organised something in your activity? Explain what you did and why these three words describe it.

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Leadership: 1. A person who guides or directs a group 2. Ability to lead 3. An act or instance of leading; guidance; direction. *Synonyms:* authoritativeness, influence, command, effectiveness; sway, clout.	Leadership is when you take charge of something or help/instruct a group of people to do something. You might have been given responsibility as the captain of your sports team or you have taken the lead in organising an event.	Describe when something went well in your activity because of your leadership.
		Have you ever been given a position of responsibility such as a supervisor at work, helping out in lessons, running an activity etc. Why do you think you were given this role? You might ask the person who gave you the role to explain why.
		What are the qualities of a leader? Use examples from your activity to illustrate these qualities.
Initiative: 1. An introductory act or step; leading action. 2. Readiness and ability in initiating action; enterprise. 3. One's personal, responsible decision.	Initiative is when you see something that needs to be done and do it. You might do this on your own or with other people but the idea is yours.	Describe how you have used your initiative to get something done for your activity. What needed to be done and how did you do it?
		Have you come up with ways to do things differently in your activity? What did you do and was it successful?
		Have you approached other people to help you with your activity? What did you ask them to do and why?

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Collaboration/ team work: 1. The act of working with another or others on a joint project. 2. Something created by working jointly with another or others.	Collaboration/ team work is when you work with other people to do something together. For example, you might all play in sports team together, sing as a choir or work on a community project. You might also work in a team whilst doing work experience.	Think of a time when you worked together in a team to achieve a common outcome. How did you all work together to overcome differences of opinion? This might be in your paid work or you might be part of a band, club, sports team etc
		Describe a time when you have shared your knowledge of your activity with other people. How did this help them?
		Write about a time when have you changed your opinion or reached a compromise because you listened to other people in the group.
Problem Solving/ Overcoming Difficulties: The process of working through details of a problem to reach a solution; this can be a gauge of an individual's critical thinking skills.	Problem solving/ overcoming difficulties is when there is a problem or something is difficult and you do something to solve it or make it work. It can be a big or small problem such as having too many tasks to do at once or learning something new. It could also be a practical problem like how to reduce the energy used by your school/ college.	Describe a time in your activity when you were under pressure to do something. How did you deal with being under pressure?
		Describe a time in your activity when there was a problem. What did you do to solve it?
		Describe a time in your activity when you had to do something you had never done before. What was it and how did you learn how to do it? Were you successful?

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Effective communication: The imparting or exchange of information, ideas or feelings.	Communication is how you interact with other people. Effective communication is about how well you help, instruct and advise other people and how well you listen to their help, instruction and advice. It is always a two way street.	Write about a time when you have changed your approach to something after getting feedback. Who gave you the feedback and what did you do about it?
		In your activity, have you had to deal with people having differences of opinion about something? What did you do to help reach an agreement?
		Write about a time in your activity when you had to explain something to someone else. What did you do to make sure they understood you?
Motivation/ engagement: Desire to do; interest or drive to occupy oneself, to become involved, to assume an obligation.	Motivation/engagement is how you feel about an activity and why you do it. You might really enjoy your activity or you might motivate yourself to do your best in an activity that you don't enjoy.	Have you pushed yourself to go above and beyond what is expected of you in an activity? Describe what you have done.
		Why are you interested in your activity? What is your motivation for doing it?
		Illustrate how you have motivated yourself to do something in your activity that you didn't want to do.

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Commitment: A promise or an obligation. Perseverance and challenge.	Commitment is showing that you make an effort to do an activity well. You might try your best to make sure that you are always on time for your activity or you might have made a special effort in your activity.	How long have you been doing your activity and how often do you do it? Explain how this shows that you are committed to it.
		Ask someone who knows you to describe what you have done to make sure that you are involved in your activity to the best of your ability.
		What is difficult about your activity? Describe the effort you put in to your activity or the sacrifices you make to fully commit to it.
Creative Thinking: The ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.; originality, progressiveness, or imagination.	Creative thinking is when you think inventively about how you might do something. You might come up with a new way of doing something or deal with a problem by finding an unusual solution.	Describe a time in your activity when you have come up with an unusual solution to a problem. What was the solution?
		Show how you take an innovative approach in your activity.
		Show that you are creative by recording your achievements in an original way.

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