



SUMMIT'S GUIDE TO SUMMER PLANNING

2026 EDITION



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Summer as a **Growth Opportunity**

Summer is more than just a break from academics—it's an opportunity for students to explore new interests, build essential skills, and take control of their personal growth. Whether through internships, jobs, courses, creative projects, or volunteering, summer experiences can shape both academic and personal development.

Of course, rest and reflection are equally important. Stepping away from the school routine allows for mental and physical recovery so students can return recharged. As they dive into summer planning, we encourage students to reflect on what they hope to achieve so they can make meaningful summer choices that will have a lasting impact even once school is back in session.

MAXIMIZING SUMMER'S POTENTIAL

The summer months provide space for self-directed growth. With fewer academic pressures, summer offers the freedom to explore areas that may be overlooked during the school year. Students can dig into hobbies, pick up new skills, and engage in activities that challenge them and help them build new competencies.

EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

Summer encourages students to pursue new interests without the constraints of a busy school schedule. Trying out photography, getting their feet wet with robotics, or launching an independent project—any new activity will foster curiosity. This is a time to explore interests freely and experiment without fear of failure.



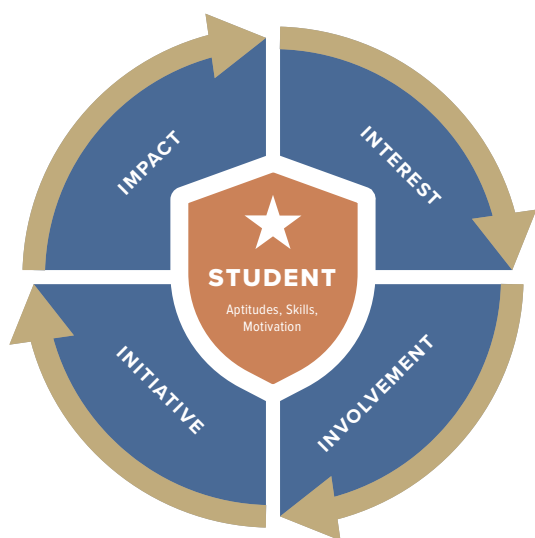
BUILDING ESSENTIAL SKILLS

The practical skills that students develop over the summer will be useful well beyond high school. Jobs, internships, and volunteer roles will help them develop life skills—like communication, leadership, and teamwork—that are just as critical as their academic achievements.

PERSONAL GROWTH AND SELF-DISCOVERY

Free from the pressures of the school year, students can use the summer to reflect on their strengths, values, and areas for growth. Summer experiences can help students gain clarity on what they care about most and how they can contribute to their communities. This process often leads to greater maturity, confidence, and preparedness for the transition to college.

OUR i4 FRAMEWORK



THE i4 FRAMEWORK is designed to help students engage with and showcase their unique interests while enjoying the journey along the way. We've used it to guide hundreds of high school students over the past two decades. The four components—**INTEREST, INVOLVEMENT, INITIATIVE, AND IMPACT**—offer a simple structure for developing and deepening extracurricular activities.

INTEREST

Students start by identifying what excites them. Whatever the area of interest, the key is finding something that sparks genuine curiosity.

Questions to ask: What activities excite you? How do you spend your free time?
What new areas would you like to explore?

INVOLVEMENT

The next step is getting involved in activities related to those interests. This usually means joining clubs, sports teams, or community groups.

Questions to ask: What activities are you already engaged in? Which do you enjoy most? Are there new things you've wanted to try? What's available to you, in your area or online?



INITIATIVE

Eventually, students should take the lead in projects or activities, showing ownership and creativity. This can take many forms—for example, founding a club or spearheading a project within an existing organization.

Questions to ask: How have you shown leadership in or outside the classroom? Have you created something new or organized an event? What's missing from the groups you're involved in that could benefit from your initiative?

IMPACT

Finally, students assess the difference they've made in their community or school through their involvement and initiative. How did their service, leadership, or creativity change things for the better?

Questions to ask: How has your involvement affected others? What legacy do you want to leave? How have these activities affected you? What kind of growth have you seen in your community and yourself?

USING THE i4 FRAMEWORK

According to Gallup research, engaged students are significantly more likely to excel academically and feel hopeful about their future. The i4 framework helps increase engagement by encouraging students to deepen their involvement in meaningful areas, take initiative, and measure their impact.

For younger students unsure of their interests, the goal is to experiment with different activities. With a growth mindset, they can try new things without fear of failure and refine their interests over time. As students discover what excites them, they can use mentors and resources to take their involvement to the next level.

For instance, a student passionate about beekeeping might reach out to a local biologist to learn more and perhaps secure a research internship. This process of asking for help and self-advocating is a crucial life skill that fosters deeper engagement and personal growth.

HOW INVOLVEMENT EVOLVES THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

The i4 framework is circular, not linear. A student's involvement might lead to discovery of new interests, or initiative might evolve into impactful work. Having said that, here's a general guide to how this can unfold over the high school years:

- **FRESHMAN YEAR:** Students focus on exploring a variety of interests; encourage participation in new activities, and document what excites them.
- **SOPHOMORE YEAR:** Students increase their commitment to activities that resonate; this is also the time they'll start stepping into leadership roles or initiating projects.
- **JUNIOR YEAR:** Students deepen their involvement with a focus on aligning activities with potential college majors; leadership and community impact become more significant.

6 WAYS TO HELP YOUR TEEN EXPERIMENT WITH DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES

1. **Notice interests:** Pay attention to activities they naturally gravitate toward, and encourage further exploration.
2. **Leverage networks:** Connect them with relatives, neighbors, or mentors who can offer opportunities.
3. **Show enthusiasm:** Support their passions, even if they're different from your own.
4. **Coach communications:** Help with writing professional emails or making calls for opportunities.
5. **Allow evolution:** Interests may change—embrace this as part of the process.
6. **Set realistic expectations:** Expect some trial and error as they explore.



SUMMER ACTIVITIES IN HOLISTIC COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

As the college admissions process becomes more competitive, many colleges use a holistic approach when evaluating applicants. This means that, in addition to academics, admissions officers look closely at a student's extracurricular involvement, leadership, and personal development. Summer activities are essential in this evaluation because they demonstrate initiative, depth of interest, and impact.

When considering summer opportunities, it's crucial to prioritize personal growth and genuine interest. As MIT Admissions Vice President Stuart Schmill advises:

“Choose your activities because they delight, intrigue, and challenge you, not because you think they’ll look impressive on your application.”

This advice underscores the importance of pursuing activities that are meaningful and fulfilling, rather than selecting them purely for the sake of college admissions. Colleges can easily recognize when students are genuinely engaged, and authentic enthusiasm always stands out.

INITIATIVE AND LEADERSHIP

One of the key factors colleges look for is initiative. Whether students are launching a project, leading a team, or starting a community program, demonstrating initiative signals to admissions officers that they have the drive to pursue their goals independently. Students should look for ways to step into leadership roles, even if they're not traditional or formal positions.

Highly selective colleges expect more than participation—they want to see students take ownership of their activities and push themselves to make an impact. For example, a student might expand a small volunteer project into a community-wide initiative, showcasing leadership and organizational skills.

DEPTH AND IMPACT OF ACTIVITIES

Colleges value depth over breadth. Martha Allman, Dean of Admissions at Wake Forest University, agrees:

“In general, colleges seek depth of involvement rather than breadth; therefore, we advise students to focus time and attention on a few activities in which they excel.”

Rather than participating in numerous activities without focus, students should aim for sustained involvement in a few key areas. The impact of these activities—whether on the community, a cause, or the student's personal growth—should be a priority. Admissions officers want to see how a student's involvement in summer activities has made a meaningful difference, either for the student or for others.



Ashley M. Pallie, the Executive Director of Undergraduate Admissions at Caltech, reinforces this:

“An exceptional depth of experience in one or two activities may demonstrate your passion more than minimal participation in five or six clubs.”

Impactful activities can take on many forms. Some examples include developing a summer coding camp for younger students, organizing a local environmental cleanup, or conducting independent research. The key is to demonstrate growth and contribution, showing that the student isn't just a participant—they're a person who takes initiative and makes a difference.

REFLECTION AND GROWTH

Reflection is an essential component of holistic admissions. Colleges want students who can think critically about their experiences and articulate how those experiences have shaped their personal and academic goals. Michael Davis from UNC-Chapel Hill explains:

“The essay is a unique opportunity to share your story and what is meaningful or important to you. Write about a topic that helps the university understand you as a unique individual.”

Students should consider keeping a journal or notes about their summer activities, focusing on what they learned and how they grew. This not only helps with college essays but also demonstrates self-awareness and maturity—qualities that are highly valued in the admissions process.

Students should also connect their summer activities to their future academic or career goals. For instance, a student interested in pursuing a STEM major might describe how their participation in a tech bootcamp solidified their passion for computer science. Drawing these connections helps admissions officers see a clear narrative in the student's application.

MOVING FROM PARTICIPATION TO LEADERSHIP

Summer provides space for students to shift from being participants to becoming leaders. Admissions officers consistently emphasize that they want to see growth, initiative, and the ability to create impact—not just a list of clubs and memberships. The i4 Framework (Interest, Involvement, Initiative, Impact) offers a clear pathway for turning summer activities into meaningful stories of development.

- **INTEREST:** Early summers are for trying things out. A student might attend a one-week coding camp, volunteer at a local animal shelter, or join a youth orchestra. The key is curiosity.
- **INVOLVEMENT:** With more time in the summer, students can deepen their commitment. That might mean returning to a program for a second year, volunteering regularly at the same site, or signing up for an advanced workshop that builds on a past experience.
- **INITIATIVE:** Once a foundation is in place, students can take ownership. Examples include starting a community soccer camp, organizing a neighborhood cleanup, or creating a website for a nonprofit. These projects show creativity and leadership, even if they're small in scale.
- **IMPACT:** The strongest summer experiences leave a mark that lasts beyond August. A student could design a mentoring program for younger students, raise funds for a local cause, or run a research project that produces a tangible outcome.

SPECIFIC PLANNING IDEAS:

- Rising sophomores might commit to **TWO TO THREE REGULAR VOLUNTEER SHIFTS** each week to show deeper involvement.
- Rising juniors can use summer to **LAUNCH A SMALL PROJECT**, such as designing a workshop, tutoring peers, or hosting a community event.
- Rising seniors should focus on **DOCUMENTING AND REFLECTING** on impact so their résumé and essays highlight results, not just hours.

REFLECTION PROMPT FOR FAMILIES:

Ask, “What is one activity you want to deepen this summer? What steps will you take to move from involvement to initiative, and how will you measure your impact by August?”



INFORMAL LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE THAT COUNTS

Not all leadership comes with a title. Many students show initiative through everyday roles. Summer is a prime season to highlight these contributions.

EXAMPLES OF INFORMAL LEADERSHIP:

- **FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES:** Caring for siblings, managing household duties, or supporting a family business.
- **COMMUNITY SERVICE:** Organizing a neighborhood drive, tutoring younger kids at a library, or maintaining a community garden.
- **PERSONAL PROJECTS:** Starting a podcast, running a small resale shop online, or teaching a skill to peers.

The key is to show growth and initiative. Instead of just listing *“helped in family business,”* students can describe *“managed scheduling for five employees during summer peak, developing organizational skills.”*

SUMMER PLANNING IDEAS:

- Rising sophomores might **COMMIT TO A STEADY INFORMAL ROLE**, like babysitting or helping with tech in a local nonprofit.
- Rising juniors can **EXPAND** by teaching or mentoring others.
- Rising seniors should **REFLECT** on how these roles have shaped character and goals.

These informal commitments often reveal responsibility, resilience, and initiative—qualities colleges prize as much as formal titles.



BALANCING PRODUCTIVITY AND RELAXATION

While productivity is important, balance is key. Students often feel the pressure to fill every moment of their summer with activities that look good on a college application, but relaxation and downtime are essential for mental and physical well-being.

FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE

Encourage students to engage in meaningful activities that align with their interests and goals, but also be sure they carve out time for rest. Taking a break from structured activities allows students to recharge, which ultimately improves their ability to focus and engage when they return to more demanding tasks.

THE ROLE OF DOWNTIME IN PERSONAL GROWTH

Resting doesn't mean being idle. Downtime can be an opportunity for reflection, creativity, and personal exploration. Whether through journaling, reading, or simply spending time outdoors, unstructured time helps students process their experiences and recharge mentally. This balance of relaxation and productivity can reduce stress and lead to more meaningful engagement in activities.

AVOIDING BURNOUT

Overloading on too many commitments can lead to burnout. Parents should help students avoid overcommitting by ensuring their summer includes breaks for relaxation, hobbies, and low-pressure activities. This way, students can return to school refreshed and ready for the challenges ahead, rather than feeling exhausted and overwhelmed.



BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH SUMMER CHALLENGES

Admissions officers don't just evaluate achievements—they look for resilience. Summer provides the perfect stage for students to face challenges, make mistakes, and show how they respond.

EXAMPLES OF RESILIENCE-BUILDING ACTIVITIES:

- **TRYING OUT FOR A SELECTIVE CAMP** and learning from the outcome, whether accepted or not.
- **TAKING ON A TOUGH SUMMER JOB** that demands reliability and endurance.
- **PURSUING A SKILL OUTSIDE THEIR COMFORT ZONE**, like public speaking, coding, or swimming.

REFLECTION PROMPTS:

- *What challenge did I face this summer?*
- *How did I respond, and what did I learn about myself?*
- *How will I apply those lessons moving forward?*

When documented, these reflections provide strong material for essays, showing growth and maturity. A student doesn't need to win every contest; they need to show that setbacks didn't stop them from moving forward.



THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

While summer is a time for students to cultivate independence, parents remain essential guides, helping students make intentional and thoughtful decisions. Striking the right balance between giving teens freedom and offering support helps them navigate summer activities effectively and with purpose.

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE

As students mature, they naturally seek more control over how they spend their time, making summer the perfect opportunity to take charge of their plans. Parents can assist by providing resources and guidance as students explore summer programs, jobs, or internships. Still, it's crucial to step back and allow them the freedom to choose activities that resonate with their passions and interests, fostering a sense of ownership over their decisions.

PROVIDING GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Parents play a pivotal role in helping students evaluate their options and set realistic goals. When students are unsure which opportunities to pursue, parents can offer insights by discussing the pros and cons of various activities, encouraging students to prioritize what aligns with their long-term goals. It's also important to manage logistics—from budget considerations to scheduling—to prevent students from overcommitting themselves. Encouraging a balanced approach between structured activities and downtime helps students avoid burnout and stay motivated.

ENCOURAGING REFLECTION

Reflection is a key part of making the most of summer. Parents can engage students in meaningful discussions about the past school year: What did they enjoy? What challenges did they face? What are their goals for the future? These reflective conversations help students gain clarity on what they hope to achieve over the summer so their time is both enriching and purposeful.

THE GROWTH MINDSET: EMBRACING CHALLENGES

Encouraging a growth mindset is one of the most valuable ways parents can support their students during the summer. A growth mindset, as developed by psychologist Carol Dweck, is the belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through effort, perseverance, and learning from mistakes. Cultivating this mindset helps students approach challenges with optimism and resilience, viewing setbacks as opportunities to grow rather than as failures.

Parents can nurture a growth mindset by framing summer activities as chances to explore new challenges, learn from experiences, and grow in ways that stretch beyond the classroom. Whether students are taking on a leadership role, learning a new skill, or engaging in a volunteer project, remind them that success isn't just about immediate results. Growth often comes from tackling difficult tasks, making mistakes, and continuing to push forward.

HOW PARENTS CAN PROMOTE A GROWTH MINDSET

- 1 PRAISE EFFORT OVER RESULTS:** Focus on the hard work and perseverance students put into their activities, rather than solely on outcomes. This helps students value the learning process and stay motivated, even when things get tough.
- 2 ENCOURAGE RESILIENCE:** When students face setbacks, remind them that challenges are part of growth. Encourage them to reflect on what they learned and how they can approach similar situations differently in the future.
- 3 MODEL A GROWTH MINDSET:** Parents can model a growth mindset by sharing their own experiences with learning from mistakes or overcoming challenges. Demonstrating that growth is a lifelong process reinforces its importance for students.
- 4 SET STRETCH GOALS:** Help students set goals that challenge them but are achievable with effort. This will push them out of their comfort zone while maintaining a sense of accomplishment when they make progress.

By fostering a growth mindset, parents empower students to take on challenges with confidence, knowing that their efforts will lead to long-term growth, regardless of immediate success. This mindset not only benefits them during summer activities but also prepares them for future academic and personal challenges.

EXPLORING MAJORS THROUGH SUMMER EXPERIENCES

As flagship universities like UT Austin and Michigan increasingly evaluate “fit to major,” summer offers students a valuable chance to test potential academic paths. Even short-term experiences—an online design course, a week of clinical shadowing, or a local internship—can help students explore majors and build a stronger story for applications.

Encourage students to think of summer as a low-stakes laboratory for exploration. They don’t need to commit to a single career path, but they do need experiences that show curiosity and growth.

PRACTICAL IDEAS BY FIELD:

- **BUSINESS:** Intern with a small company, help a parent or neighbor with bookkeeping, or design a personal project like a resale venture on Etsy or Depop.
- **ENGINEERING:** Join a robotics team, build a DIY solar charger, or attend a program like Rose-Hulman’s Operation Catapult.
- **PRE-MED AND NURSING:** Volunteer at a hospital, shadow a local nurse, or complete an online anatomy course. Pair clinical exposure with reflection in a journal.
- **COMPUTER SCIENCE:** Take a coding bootcamp, contribute to an open-source project, or create a simple app solving a community need.
- **ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:** Launch a podcast, curate a photography project, or design a website for a local nonprofit.

STORYTELLING TIP: Encourage students to keep notes on what they enjoyed, what challenged them, and what they discovered wasn’t a fit. These details can later shape expanded résumés and college essays. For example, a student who realizes through shadowing that hospital work isn’t the right fit could pivot to public health—and that discovery itself demonstrates maturity and self-awareness.

PLANNING ADVICE BY GRADE LEVEL:

- Rising freshmen and sophomores should focus on **SAMPLING** different academic areas through camps, short courses, or exploratory internships.
- Rising juniors should aim for **DEEPER EXPERIENCES** that align with possible majors—extended internships, multi-week academic programs, or independent projects.
- Rising seniors should use summer to **CONSOLIDATE AND REFLECT**—writing about what they learned and preparing materials that show preparedness for a chosen major.



PLANNING FOR HIGHLY SELECTIVE MAJORS

Competitive majors such as engineering, business, nursing, and pre-med expect more than interest—they require clear preparation. Summer is one of the best times for students to demonstrate readiness.

FIELD-SPECIFIC EXAMPLES:

- **ENGINEERING:** Participate in a robotics competition, build a DIY project, or attend a summer program.
- **BUSINESS:** Join DECA activities, design a small e-commerce venture, or intern with a local company.
- **NURSING AND PRE-MED:** Shadow healthcare professionals, take an anatomy course, or volunteer in a hospital.
- **COMPUTER SCIENCE:** Create a coding portfolio, design an app for a community need, or complete a summer bootcamp.

PLANNING BY GRADE LEVEL:

- Rising sophomores should **SAMPLE BROADLY**—a camp or online course tied to a possible field.
- Rising juniors should **BUILD DEPTH**—a research project, competition, or sustained internship.
- Rising seniors should **CONSOLIDATE**—use summer to finalize and reflect, creating a résumé and essay-ready story of preparedness.

Colleges look for “fit to major” in activities, coursework, and essays. Summer experiences can demonstrate consistency and credibility in that story.

SEIZING THE SUMMER: FINDING THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITIES

Summer is a time for students to pursue passions, discover new interests, and build skills that will serve them in the future. But with so many options available, it can be overwhelming to decide how to spend those precious months. Choosing the right summer opportunities involves intentional planning, guided by a set of key considerations that align with both personal growth and future college goals.

By focusing on initiative, challenge, impact, and financial fit, students and their families can identify opportunities that offer meaningful experiences. And documenting these activities effectively can turn a summer of learning and growth into a strong addition to college applications.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR PLANNING

As students and their families begin planning for the summer, a few key questions can help guide the decision-making process. While there's no one-size-fits-all approach, consider the following factors to be sure that the summer is productive, enjoyable, and aligned with a student's long-term goals.

Initiative

Initiative is highly valued by both colleges and future employers. When evaluating summer opportunities, consider how much self-direction and leadership a particular activity requires. Independent projects, entrepreneurial ventures, or research activities often demand a high degree of initiative and can provide students with a sense of ownership over their summer experience. For example, starting a small business, designing a personal website, or developing a community project all show a willingness to take the lead.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR NEURODIVERSE STUDENTS

When planning summer activities for neurodiverse students, consider their unique strengths, challenges, and preferences. Here are a few key questions to guide the decision-making process:

1. What environment suits the student best?

Neurodiverse students may thrive in environments that provide structure, routine, or sensory-friendly spaces. Consider whether the student is more comfortable in smaller, low-stimulation settings or larger, more dynamic environments. Selecting a program that aligns with their sensory and emotional needs can help foster a more positive experience.

2. How much support or flexibility is needed?

Neurodiverse students may benefit from programs that offer individualized support, such as mentorship or accommodations. Research programs that provide flexibility and resources to accommodate diverse learning styles, communication needs, and social preferences—and make sure the program staff are trained and open to supporting neurodiverse students.

3. What activities align with the student's interests and strengths?

Focus on activities that cater to the student's interests. Engaging in activities they enjoy will help them build confidence and develop their skills. While you want to encourage growth, it's equally important to select programs that won't overwhelm the student with too much challenge at once.

4. How can we foster social connection?

Social interactions may present unique challenges for neurodiverse students. Consider programs that offer peer mentorship or small group activities where students can practice social skills in a supportive setting. Look for environments that prioritize inclusion and offer opportunities for neurodiverse students to build connections at their own pace.

By addressing these considerations, students and families can choose summer activities that promote personal growth, skill-building, and emotional well-being.



On the other hand, structured summer programs and internships offer valuable learning experiences but may require less initiative on the part of the student. It's important to strike a balance between activities that allow students to lead and those that offer mentorship and professional guidance. Finding ways to demonstrate initiative even within more structured environments can be a big win.

Challenge

Summer is also an opportunity for students to stretch themselves. Taking on activities that push their boundaries—whether academically, socially, or personally—helps foster resilience and growth. Challenge doesn't have to mean stress; it can simply involve stepping into unfamiliar territory. For example, enrolling in a college-level course or participating in a competitive internship can challenge students to develop new skills and think more critically.

The key is for students to identify areas where they feel they could grow and actively seek out opportunities that encourage that development. This might mean trying something completely new, like public speaking or learning a new language, or it could involve diving deeper into an existing passion in a more rigorous setting.

Impact

While personal growth is essential, students should also consider how their summer activities impact others. Volunteering for community service, working on environmental projects, or contributing to other meaningful causes can leave a lasting impression on the world around them. Colleges are increasingly looking for students who demonstrate a commitment to service and a desire to contribute positively to their communities.

EVALUATING FEE-BASED SUMMER PROGRAMS

When considering a fee-based summer program, be sure that the investment aligns with the student's goals, interests, and long-term growth. Here are key factors to consider when evaluating these programs:

1. Program Reputation and Quality

Before committing to a fee-based program, research its reputation and track record. Look for reviews from past participants, testimonials, or program outcomes that demonstrate the value of the experience. Does the program offer experienced instructors, hands-on opportunities, or networking connections? A high-quality program should offer tangible benefits, like skill development, certifications, or college credit, that justify the cost.

2. Financial Aid and Scholarships

Many fee-based summer programs offer financial aid, scholarships, or payment plans to make participation more accessible. When evaluating a program, ask about available funding options to help offset the cost. Applying for financial aid or merit-based scholarships can significantly reduce the financial burden on families, making the experience more affordable without sacrificing quality.

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When assessing summer opportunities, it's helpful to ask: will this activity have a positive impact on others? Whether it's helping to tutor younger students, organizing a neighborhood clean-up, or participating in a global service project, activities that benefit the community show a level of maturity and a willingness to engage with the world beyond personal achievement.

Financial Fit

Many excellent programs come with a high price tag, but there are plenty of affordable or free options available. Online courses, local internships, and volunteer opportunities can provide just as much value as expensive summer camps or travel-based programs. Families should explore financial aid options, scholarships, or low-cost alternatives that fit within their budget. It's not about how much an activity costs but how meaningful the experience is for the student's growth and the community around them.

EVALUATING FEE-BASED SUMMER PROGRAMS

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3. Program Length and Value

Consider how the length of the program aligns with the cost. A one-week program may have a high price tag, but if it offers unique, high-impact opportunities—such as working with industry experts, earning college credit, or participating in exclusive projects—it may be worth the investment. Compare multiple programs to determine which offers the best value for the price.

4. Networking and Career Benefits

Fee-based programs often provide students with opportunities to network with professionals, connect with mentors, or participate in exclusive events. If a program offers valuable industry exposure or connections that can lead to internships, future job opportunities, or college admissions advantages, the cost may be justifiable in terms of long-term benefits.

By carefully evaluating these factors, families can make informed decisions about whether a fee-based program is worth the investment, ensuring that it supports the student's personal and academic growth without overextending their budget.



DOCUMENTING SUMMER FOR THE EXPANDED RÉSUMÉ

Summer activities only matter in admissions if students can communicate them clearly. That means families should treat summer as both an opportunity to explore and a time to keep records.

Encourage students to capture three key details for every summer experience:

- **WHAT THEY DID:** Track roles, tasks, and responsibilities.
- **WHAT CHANGED:** Note outcomes, such as new skills gained, a project completed, or people served.
- **WHAT IT MEANS:** Write short reflections on lessons learned, surprises, or how it shaped future plans.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES:

- A student who tutors siblings could record the number of hours, create a simple log of progress, and jot down what strategies worked.
- A student who interns at a small company might track projects completed, skills learned, and contributions to the team.
- A volunteer who organizes donations could record totals collected and reflect on how leadership skills grew in the process.

By August, these notes can be converted into strong résumé bullet points and essay material. Documentation turns everyday work into compelling evidence of readiness.

STEM-FOCUSED SUMMER ACTIVITIES

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields are growing rapidly, and summer offers high school students a unique chance to gain hands-on experience and explore their STEM interests. Whether through camps, internships, research opportunities, or summer jobs, students can use this time to deepen their understanding of STEM and build valuable skills.

SCIENCE CAMPS

Science camps provide an immersive experience for students interested in exploring fields like biology, chemistry, physics, and environmental science.

- **HANDS-ON LEARNING:** Camps emphasize active participation, where students engage in lab work, experiments, and projects. Whether it's building rockets or analyzing ecosystems, students can apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- **SPECIALIZED FOCUS:** These camps allow students to dive deeper into specific STEM interests, such as climate change, genetics, or astrophysics. Working alongside professionals and like-minded peers, students can gain a clearer sense of their career path and future academic goals.
- **ACCESS TO EXPERTS:** Science camps often feature university professors and industry professionals who mentor students and offer insights into STEM careers. Students also get access to advanced tools and technologies that are rarely available in a high school setting, making these camps a valuable step toward deeper learning.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

For students who are eager to contribute to scientific discovery, research programs offer a transformative experience by allowing them to work alongside professionals on real-world projects.

- **FINDING RESEARCH PROGRAMS:** Prestigious programs like the Research Science Institute (RSI) at MIT provide hands-on research experience. Students can also explore local opportunities by reaching out to universities, research institutes, or even local businesses in fields like biotechnology.
- **SKILL DEVELOPMENT:** Research programs teach students essential skills, like designing experiments, analyzing data, and presenting findings. These experiences encourage independent thinking, creativity, and resilience—key traits that both colleges and employers value.
- **MAKING A CONTRIBUTION:** Participating in research allows students to contribute to cutting-edge projects with real-world impact. Many students have the opportunity to co-author papers or present findings at scientific conferences, showcasing their dedication and initiative.



INTERNSHIPS

STEM internships are a fantastic way for students to gain experience in a real-world setting. Internships can provide insight into various fields and help students explore potential career paths.

- **PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE:** Internships offer students the opportunity to work in fields like engineering, software development, or environmental science. They can apply what they've learned in school to real-world problems while developing professional skills like communication, teamwork, and project management.
- **NETWORKING:** Internships often connect students with professionals in their field of interest, providing valuable mentorship and career guidance. These connections can lead to future opportunities and give students a better understanding of potential career trajectories.
- **BUILDING A RESUME:** Completing an internship not only strengthens a student's resume but also signals to colleges that the student has actively pursued hands-on experience in their chosen field, demonstrating initiative and commitment.

JOBS

Summer jobs in STEM-related fields can offer a less formal but equally valuable experience. Maybe it's a tech support role at a local science museum or a lab assistant role at a research institution—no matter the position, summer jobs provide students with practical skills that will benefit them in both academic and professional settings.

- **SKILL BUILDING:** STEM-related summer jobs teach students essential workplace skills, such as time management, communication, and problem-solving. These experiences help students become more independent and responsible.
- **FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE:** Earning money over the summer can be empowering for students and helps them learn how to manage their finances. It also shows colleges that the student has been proactive and responsible in their time management.
- **WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE:** Even part-time jobs offer valuable exposure to professional environments, where students learn how to collaborate with others, meet deadlines, and navigate workplace challenges—all crucial skills for future STEM careers.

TAKING IT UP A NOTCH: INITIATIVE AND IMPACT

- **DEMONSTRATING INITIATIVE:** Whether it's founding a summer STEM club, organizing a community project, or independently reaching out to professionals for mentorship, students should aim to take ownership of their activities. Self-driven projects that align with personal passions can show initiative and commitment.
- **MAKING AN IMPACT:** Students should showcase not only what they've done but also how their efforts made a difference. Whether through expanding a volunteer project, creating a community STEM event, or contributing to meaningful research, the impact of these activities should be clear and measurable. Colleges want to see how students have applied their knowledge to real-world challenges and the effect they've had.



SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMS

CAROLINA MASTER SCHOLARS ADVENTURE SERIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

The Carolina Master Scholars Adventure Series invites academically talented middle and high school students from across the country to engage in week-long, immersive academic programs on the University of South Carolina's Columbia campus. Combining rigorous classes with social and recreational activities, this award-winning program offers a balanced, interactive learning environment that emphasizes academic growth, community service, and healthy living.

Participants gain experience in critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, and academic research, while also enhancing communication, leadership, and project presentation skills.

NASA OSTEM INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The NASA OSTEM Internship Program offers high school and college students the chance to work alongside NASA professionals in science, engineering, information technology, finance, and business. Through these paid internships, students contribute directly to NASA's mission to advance space exploration and scientific discovery. Internships are available at NASA centers across the country, with options for both in-person and remote participation.

Participants gain hands-on experience in project management, critical analysis, technical research, and data interpretation, while also strengthening their skills in teamwork, communication, and career readiness. This program provides an invaluable opportunity for students to build a strong foundation in STEM fields and to explore diverse professional pathways at NASA.

THE ANSON L. CLARK SCHOLARS PROGRAM AT TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Anson L. Clark Scholars Program is an intensive, seven-week summer research program for a select group of high school juniors and seniors. Hosted on the Texas Tech University campus, this program provides hands-on research experiences in a variety of academic fields under the mentorship of expert faculty. Scholars benefit from an all-inclusive experience, with meals, housing, and activities covered by the program.

Through the program, students gain advanced skills in scientific research, critical analysis, and project development. They also build proficiency in academic writing, collaborative problem-solving, and public speaking, culminating in a final research presentation that enhances their communication and leadership abilities.

COMPUTER SCIENCE-FOCUSED SUMMER ACTIVITIES

For students interested in coding, data science, AI, or web development, summer presents an excellent opportunity to gain practical skills, build personal projects, and apply their knowledge in real-world contexts. Through targeted computer science-focused activities, students can sharpen their technical skills and prepare for future academic and career success.

CODING BOOTCAMPS

For students eager to **dive into coding**, coding bootcamps provide an intensive, hands-on learning experience. These programs teach programming languages such as Python, Java, or JavaScript and often focus on project-based learning, enabling students to create real-world applications such as websites or mobile apps.

- **SKILL DEVELOPMENT:** Bootcamps cover everything from introductory coding to more advanced topics like machine learning or app development. The focus on problem-solving and collaboration mirrors the real-world tech environment, preparing students for future academic and professional pursuits.
- **PROJECT-BASED LEARNING:** Most bootcamps emphasize creating a portfolio of completed projects, which can include building websites, developing mobile apps, or designing algorithms. This hands-on experience allows students to apply their coding skills in meaningful ways and build a body of work they can showcase on college applications or GitHub.

INTERNSHIPS IN TECHNOLOGY

For students seeking **real-world experience**, tech internships are a valuable way to apply coding skills in a professional setting. Whether at a software company, startup, or within a tech department, internships offer students the opportunity to work on actual development projects, contribute to team efforts, and learn how coding skills are used in industry settings.

- **HANDS-ON LEARNING:** Interns might assist with software development, debug programs, or contribute to the design of user interfaces. This experience provides insight into the day-to-day operations of a tech company and helps students understand how their skills apply in the real world.
- **NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES:** Internships also allow students to connect with professionals in the field, gaining mentorship and advice that can help shape future career decisions. These connections can lead to future internships or job opportunities.

ONLINE COURSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

For students who prefer a **self-paced approach**, online platforms like Coursera, Udemy, and edX offer all sorts of computer science courses. These platforms allow students to explore topics such as data science, machine learning, and cybersecurity while earning certifications that enhance their resumes and college applications.

- **FLEXIBILITY:** These courses offer students the freedom to learn at their own pace, making them a great option for those balancing other commitments or seeking to dive deeper into specific computer science fields.
- **CREDENTIAL-BUILDING:** Earning certifications through these platforms provides tangible proof of mastery in a particular area, boosting college applications and demonstrating a commitment to learning.

BUILDING A PORTFOLIO ON GITHUB

Creating and maintaining a GitHub portfolio is an essential step for students who want to **showcase their coding projects and technical skills**. By uploading their work, students demonstrate not only their programming ability but also their familiarity with collaboration tools like version control, a skill highly valued in tech.

- **SHOWCASING SKILLS:** Hosting projects, from small exercises to complex web applications, on GitHub helps students create a public portfolio that showcases their development progress.
- **CONTRIBUTING TO OPEN SOURCE PROJECTS:** Students can contribute to open source projects, gaining experience by working alongside other developers. These contributions reflect initiative and teamwork, important qualities that stand out in college applications.

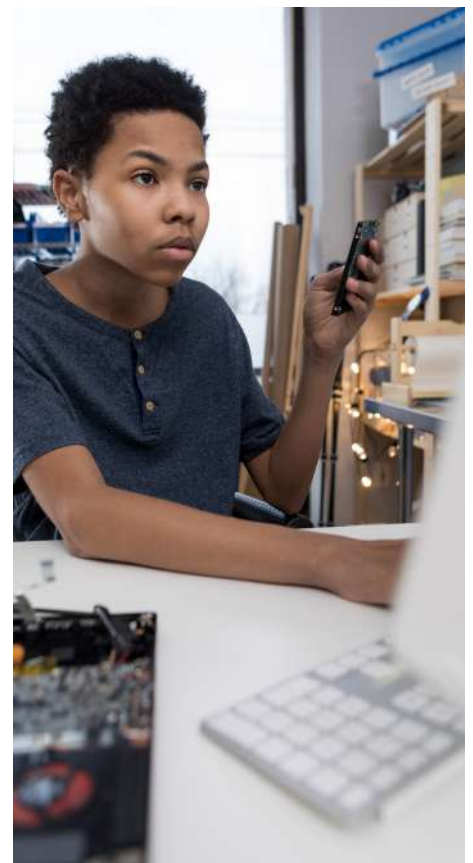
TAKING IT UP A NOTCH: INITIATIVE AND IMPACT

- **DEMONSTRATING INITIATIVE:** Students should take ownership of personal coding projects or lead initiatives within a group. From developing an app to solve a local problem to organizing a community coding event, these activities show leadership, creativity, and problem-solving abilities.
- **CREATING IMPACT:** Colleges want to see how students apply their skills to make a tangible difference. Students might create a website that improves access to community resources or develop an educational app to teach younger students coding. The key is to demonstrate how their efforts had a measurable impact.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE CHOOSING AN INTERNSHIP

Before committing to a summer internship, students should ask themselves a few key questions:

- Will this internship provide meaningful learning opportunities?
- Does the company or organization align with my long-term goals?
- How flexible is the internship in terms of schedule and location?
- Are there mentors or supervisors who can provide valuable guidance?



SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMS

MITES STEM PROGRAMS AT MIT

MITES offers rigorous STEM programs for underrepresented and diverse high school students across the United States. Through MITES Summer, MITES Semester, and MITES Saturdays, students delve into STEM fields beyond the traditional school curriculum, build confidence, and form a lifelong support network. Each program is free and provides an invaluable opportunity for students to deepen their knowledge and prepare for college and future careers.

MITES participants grow their critical thinking, problem-solving, and hands-on technical skills in areas such as engineering, computer science, and robotics. They also build resilience, teamwork, and leadership through collaborative projects and gain exposure to potential career paths—all within a supportive, diverse community.

GIRLS WHO CODE SUMMER PROGRAMS

Girls Who Code (GWC) offers high school students free, virtual summer programs designed to build computer science skills and introduce them to tech careers. With two unique program options—a two-week Summer Immersion Program and a six-week Self-Paced Program—participants can explore areas like game design, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence. Alongside hands-on learning, students connect with industry professionals, receive financial support, and build a lasting community within GWC's supportive sisterhood.

GWC Summer Programs empower students to develop coding skills in languages like Python, HTML, and JavaScript, strengthen problem-solving abilities, and gain insights into the tech industry. Through interactive projects and professional networking, students enhance teamwork, creativity, and career readiness, preparing for further studies and a future in technology.





PREMED-FOCUSED SUMMER ACTIVITIES

For aspiring doctors, summer is a valuable time to gain experience, build skills, and explore healthcare. Clinical programs, research, and volunteering all provide insights into the medical world while fostering critical thinking, empathy, and problem-solving—essential qualities for future healthcare providers. These kinds of summer experiences can help students engage with healthcare professionals, gain exposure to the field, and strengthen college applications.

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS

Hands-on clinical experience is critical for students exploring careers in healthcare. Clinical programs provide a firsthand look at patient care, medical procedures, and the daily workings of hospitals or clinics.

- **SHADOWING PROFESSIONALS:** Shadowing doctors, nurses, or healthcare staff offers a unique window into the responsibilities and challenges of healthcare. Observing in departments like surgery, pediatrics, or emergency medicine helps students discover areas of interest while learning about the doctor-patient relationship, teamwork, and decision-making.
- **HANDS-ON INVOLVEMENT:** Some programs allow students to assist with patient care, like taking vitals or helping with patient intake. Although they may not perform complex tasks, students gain an immersive experience in real medical settings, providing invaluable exposure.
- **MEDICAL CAMPS:** Specialized summer programs and camps introduce students to the healthcare world through lectures, workshops, and group projects. These programs are often designed to foster collaboration and deepen understanding of potential medical career paths.



MEDICAL RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

For students interested in the scientific side of healthcare, medical research provides an opportunity to explore biology, chemistry, and the research process. Research experience is highly valued by colleges and medical schools, demonstrating a student's ability to engage with complex concepts.

- **RESEARCH LABS:** Many universities offer summer programs where students work alongside researchers in labs focused on genetics, cancer, or pharmacology. By designing experiments, analyzing data, and contributing to scientific inquiries, students develop critical research skills.
- **SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAMS:** Prestigious programs like MIT's Research Science Institute (RSI) or Stony Brook's Garcia Summer Program offer opportunities to conduct research under faculty mentorship. These programs typically culminate in presentations or research papers, showcasing students' contributions and refining their communication skills.
- **SKILL DEVELOPMENT:** Participating in research sharpens analytical thinking, scientific writing, and problem-solving. These skills are crucial for success in college-level science and medicine. Working on real-world projects helps students understand the importance of scientific inquiry in solving medical challenges.

HEALTHCARE VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a great way for students to gain exposure to healthcare while giving back to the community. In hospitals, clinics, and health centers, volunteers assist medical staff, interact with patients, and contribute to healthcare operations.

- **HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERING:** Hospitals often have programs for high school students, where they help with tasks like delivering meals, assisting at information desks, or supporting administrative functions. While volunteers aren't involved in direct care, they play a vital role in supporting hospital operations and enhancing the patient experience.
- **COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES:** Volunteering with organizations focused on underserved populations—such as free clinics or non-profits promoting mental health, nutrition, or disease prevention—allows students to make a tangible impact. These experiences also expose students to public health challenges and encourage empathy.
- **DEVELOPING COMPASSION:** Volunteering fosters empathy and understanding of the human side of healthcare. By interacting with patients, students learn how to listen, offer support, and understand the emotional aspects of medical care—skills that are essential for future healthcare providers.

TAKING IT UP A NOTCH: INITIATIVE AND IMPACT

- **DEMONSTRATING INITIATIVE:** Students can take ownership by creating health-related projects, such as organizing a local blood drive or developing a community health program. Leading these initiatives demonstrates drive and commitment.
- **MAKING AN IMPACT:** Colleges want to see the real-world effect of students' efforts, so the focus should be on measurable outcomes. Highlighting the impact of these efforts—maybe through improving patient experiences or addressing public health issues—demonstrates the student's ability to apply their knowledge in meaningful ways.

Premed-focused summer activities give students a chance to explore healthcare in depth, develop essential premed skills, and make a meaningful impact on the healthcare community.

SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMS

CDC MUSEUM DISEASE DETECTIVE CAMP

The CDC Museum Disease Detective Camp (DDC) is an immersive, week-long summer program hosted at the CDC headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. Designed for high school students entering their junior or senior year, the camp introduces participants to the expansive field of public health through hands-on experiences and interactive lessons. Students explore topics such as infectious disease, global health, epidemiology, and emergency preparedness, working together to solve simulated public health challenges.

Participants develop critical thinking, data analysis, and scientific communication skills, with a focus on problem-solving in real-world public health scenarios. They gain exposure to epidemiological techniques, team collaboration, and effective public health strategies, preparing them to approach complex health issues with confidence and curiosity.

MEMORIAL SLOAN KETTERING SUMMER STUDENT PROGRAM

The Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) Summer Student Program offers high school juniors a unique opportunity to explore careers in biomedical sciences through an eight-week, immersive lab-based internship. Located at MSK's New York research facilities, students work under the mentorship of experienced scientists to conduct independent research that supports ongoing projects in fields such as cancer biology, computational biology, immunology, and drug development. Through lab meetings, workshops, and networking events, students gain a holistic view of translational medicine.

Participants in this program gain valuable skills in laboratory techniques, data analysis, and project management, while also strengthening their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Exposure to the broader MSK research community helps students develop communication, teamwork, and professional skills essential for a future in biomedical research.



NURSING-FOCUSED SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Nursing is a demanding yet rewarding profession that combines empathy, practical problem-solving, and scientific knowledge. By engaging in nursing-focused summer activities, students can gain insights into the day-to-day responsibilities of nurses and develop foundational skills for success in healthcare environments. These experiences help students understand the field, build practical skills, and strengthen their readiness for nursing education.

PRE-NURSING CAMPS

Pre-nursing camps provide high school students with an introduction to the nursing profession. These camps, typically hosted by hospitals or universities, offer workshops on essential nursing skills, like taking vital signs, administering basic care, and understanding patient interactions.

- **EXPOSURE TO NURSING SKILLS:** Students practice taking blood pressure, checking pulse rates, and learning CPR through hands-on activities. These skills provide a strong foundation for those considering nursing.
- **INTRODUCTION TO HEALTHCARE SETTINGS:** Camps often include visits to hospitals and healthcare facilities, allowing students to observe nurses in different environments—from emergency rooms to pediatric units. This exposure helps students determine whether nursing is the right path for them.

CLINICAL SHADOWING

Clinical shadowing allows students to observe nurses as they care for patients and collaborate with healthcare teams. This firsthand exposure provides valuable insights into the realities of nursing.

- **DAY-TO-DAY NURSING:** Students observe nurses performing daily tasks like patient assessments, medication administration, and charting. This experience helps them understand the technical and interpersonal skills required in nursing.
- **PATIENT INTERACTION:** Shadowing offers a glimpse into the compassionate care nurses provide, as students see how they build trust with patients and offer emotional support during challenging times.

VOLUNTEERING IN HEALTHCARE

Volunteering in hospitals or clinics offers students the chance to engage with patients and assist healthcare staff. While volunteers may not perform medical tasks, these experiences build empathy, communication, and teamwork—critical skills for future nurses.

- **HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERING:** Volunteers assist with non-medical tasks like helping patients move, delivering meals, or providing companionship. These roles offer insight into healthcare environments and help students develop interpersonal skills.
- **COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES:** Volunteering at nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, or community clinics provides exposure to diverse patient populations, helping students understand the various facets of healthcare.

HEALTHCARE INTERNSHIPS

Healthcare internships allow students to work alongside medical professionals and gain deeper insights into the healthcare system. While high school students may not perform direct medical tasks, internships provide valuable administrative and observational experience.

- **BUILDING PRACTICAL SKILLS:** Interns assist with tasks such as patient intake, scheduling, and documentation. These responsibilities help students understand the inner workings of healthcare facilities and prepare them for future roles in nursing.
- **NETWORKING AND MENTORSHIP:** Internships offer opportunities to connect with healthcare professionals who can provide guidance and mentorship, helping students navigate their future nursing education and career paths.

TAKING IT UP A NOTCH: INITIATIVE AND IMPACT

- **DEMONSTRATING INITIATIVE:** Students can take leadership in organizing health-related projects, such as a local health fair or a community wellness program. These activities showcase leadership and a proactive approach to healthcare.
- **MAKING AN IMPACT:** Students should highlight how these efforts made a tangible difference—maybe through improving patient care or increasing health awareness. Measurable outcomes, such as organizing a blood drive or creating an educational health campaign, demonstrate the student's commitment to nursing and community service.

SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMS

ADELPHI UNIVERSITY'S INTRODUCTION TO NURSING SUMMER PROGRAM

Adelphi University's Introduction to Nursing program offers high school students a unique, hands-on exploration of nursing as a career. This three-week, credit-bearing program takes place on Adelphi's Garden City campus, providing students the opportunity to delve into various aspects of nursing, including medical-surgical, pediatrics, obstetrics, and public health. Students will engage in simulation experiences, do clinical site visits, and earn certifications in CPR and "Stop the Bleed."

Through this program, students develop essential skills in patient care, critical thinking, and clinical communication. The experience fosters professional values and ethical understanding, with a strong emphasis on teamwork and practical application of principles. These foundational skills and real-world experiences prepare students to make informed decisions about pursuing a career in nursing.

ENGINEERING-RELATED SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Whether focusing on electrical, mechanical, biomedical, aerospace, or environmental engineering, summer offers an excellent opportunity to explore future majors and careers in engineering. From designing medical devices to tackling environmental challenges, students can engage in hands-on activities that develop technical skills and problem-solving abilities.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Electrical engineering involves designing electrical systems and circuits. Summer is a great time to dive deeper into projects that explore how these systems function.

- **HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS:** Programs like FIRST Robotics offer opportunities to build circuits or work on electronics projects, giving students practical experience while they collaborate with peers in a team-based setting.
- **ONLINE LEARNING:** Platforms like Coursera and edX provide courses on circuits and power systems, helping students deepen their understanding of electrical concepts at their own pace.

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Mechanical engineering focuses on the design and manufacturing of machines. Robotics competitions and DIY projects allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings.

- **ROBOTICS COMPETITIONS:** Programs like FIRST Robotics and VEX Robotics foster teamwork and problem-solving as students build robots and learn about motion, mechanics, and control systems.
- **DIY PROJECTS:** Independent projects, such as designing machines or using CAD software, allow students to explore mechanical design while developing their creativity and technical skills.

CIVIL ENGINEERING

Civil engineering deals with the design and construction of infrastructure like bridges and buildings. Summer activities can include model-building challenges and sustainability projects.

- **BRIDGE-BUILDING COMPETITIONS:** Events like the ASCE Bridge Building Competition teach students about load distribution and structural integrity, offering hands-on experience in civil engineering fundamentals.
- **SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS:** Students can engage in community development or water conservation efforts, exploring how civil engineers incorporate sustainable practices into modern infrastructure.

CHEMICAL ENGINEERING

Chemical engineering focuses on transforming raw materials into useful products. Over the summer, camps and DIY experiments can help students better understand chemical processes and gain hands-on experience.

- **CHEMISTRY CAMPS:** University-based camps allow students to conduct lab experiments related to chemical engineering, such as renewable energy and material development.
- **DIY CHEMISTRY PROJECTS:** At home, students can experiment with things like water filtration systems or biodegradable materials, gaining insights into chemical reactions and product development. (Make sure to keep it safe!)

COMPUTER ENGINEERING

Computer engineering blends hardware and software design. Students interested in coding and system development have lots of options, including bootcamps and hardware projects.

- **CODING BOOTCAMPS AND HACKATHONS:** Programs like Girls Who Code offer immersive experiences in software development and AI, helping students hone their programming skills.
- **HARDWARE PROJECTS:** Students can work with Arduino or Raspberry Pi to build and program devices, gaining hands-on experience with microcontrollers.

BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

Biomedical engineering merges engineering and medical science to develop healthcare technologies, and summer programs in the field can provide opportunities to work on medical devices or bioinformatics projects.

- **MEDICAL DEVICE DESIGN:** Camps allow students to design prosthetics or diagnostic devices, applying engineering principles to solve healthcare challenges.
- **RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES:** Students may participate in lab research on biomaterials, offering exposure to cutting-edge biomedical advancements.

AEROSPACE ENGINEERING

Aerospace engineering focuses on aircraft and spacecraft design. Summer camps and independent projects provide students with hands-on experience in this otherwise hard-to-access field.

- **AEROSPACE CAMPS:** Programs like Space Camp introduce students to space exploration, rocket design, and aerodynamics, fostering interest in aerospace engineering.
- **MODEL ROCKETRY:** Building and launching model rockets gives students a practical understanding of flight dynamics and propulsion systems.

ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

Environmental engineering addresses ecological challenges like pollution control and sustainable design, and summer projects and community initiatives are a great way to get started.

- **GREEN ENGINEERING PROGRAMS:** Summer programs focused on eco-friendly design or water purification systems teach students how engineers contribute to environmental sustainability.
- **COMMUNITY PROJECTS:** Volunteering on renewable energy or environmental restoration projects allows students to apply engineering principles to real-world challenges.

TAKING IT UP A NOTCH: INITIATIVE AND IMPACT

- **DEMONSTRATING INITIATIVE:** Students can lead independent projects, such as designing a solar-powered device or creating a water purification system for their community. Leading a team or organizing a local engineering competition demonstrates leadership.
- **MAKING AN IMPACT:** Highlighting the real-world difference made by these projects—maybe improving energy efficiency or addressing a community need—shows how engineering skills can create positive change. Admissions officers value students who not only participate but also take charge and make an impact.

Whether through hands-on workshops, personal projects, or leading community initiatives, students can use the summer to deepen their understanding of engineering and stand out in college applications.

SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMS

ROSE-HULMAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY'S OPERATION CATAPULT

Operation Catapult is an immersive two-week summer program for high school juniors and seniors, hosted at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Indiana. Designed to give students a taste of college life and hands-on engineering exploration, this program allows participants to dive into exciting projects, from robotics to biodiesel production and machine building. With opportunities to live on campus, collaborate with peers, and work closely with dedicated professors, Operation Catapult offers a comprehensive and engaging engineering experience.

Through Operation Catapult, students enhance their problem-solving, teamwork, and project management skills. They also gain practical experience in scientific experimentation, engineering principles, and creative design. Completing the program earns participants two college elective credits, providing a head start on their college journey and invaluable insight into the fields of science and engineering.

CAMP CAR AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Camp CAR is a free, weeklong day camp held at The Ohio State University's Center for Automotive Research. Open to students ages 14-18, this immersive camp offers a hands-on exploration of the automotive industry, covering topics in automotive research, engineering, simulation, testing, and manufacturing. Participants engage in interactive projects, gain insights into the latest advancements in mobility, and tour OSU's state-of-the-art research facilities, all while getting a glimpse of campus life.

Through Camp CAR, students build foundational skills in engineering principles, problem-solving, and data analysis. With a focus on real-world applications in the automotive industry, participants enhance their teamwork and critical thinking abilities, preparing them for further studies in STEM fields. This unique experience empowers students to fuel their curiosity and connect with cutting-edge automotive research.

TRYENGINEERING SUMMER INSTITUTE

The TryEngineering Summer Institute is a 10-day residential engineering camp for high school students, held at premier universities like Rice University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of San Diego. This immersive program introduces students to the exciting world of engineering through hands-on projects, interactive workshops, and exclusive field trips. Designed for aspiring problem-solvers and innovators, the camp explores various engineering fields, including mechanical, electrical, aerospace, and civil engineering, with activities like building circuits, designing robots, and testing gliders.

Participants develop practical skills in critical thinking, teamwork, and technical engineering, as well as creativity in design and problem-solving. With access to industry professionals, field trips to places like NASA's Johnson Space Center, and exposure to real-world engineering challenges, students gain valuable insights into STEM careers and build a solid foundation for future academic success and career exploration.



EDUCATION-FOCUSED SUMMER ACTIVITIES

For students passionate about teaching, the summer is a great time to gain practical experience, often at no cost. Through volunteering, online courses, and working at camps, students can build key teaching skills while making a positive impact. These activities not only enhance resumes but also provide real-world experience in educational settings, offering a strong foundation for future careers in education.

VOLUNTEERING AS A TUTOR

Tutoring is an effective way for aspiring educators to gain hands-on teaching experience. Many local schools, community centers, and non-profits offer free tutoring services during the summer, providing students with the opportunity to help peers or younger students improve in subjects like math, reading, and science.

- **BENEFITS:** Tutoring builds communication skills, instructional adaptability, and patience. It also enhances empathy and creativity—essential qualities for educators.
- **WHERE TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES:** Community centers, after-school programs, and organizations like Boys & Girls Clubs or YMCA often offer tutoring programs.

ONLINE EDUCATION COURSES

For students who prefer self-directed learning, free online education courses on platforms like Coursera, edX, and Udemy provide flexible, accessible opportunities to explore classroom management, curriculum development, and teaching strategies.

- **BENEFITS:** These courses offer foundational knowledge on educational theory and teaching methods, helping students build a theoretical framework that complements hands-on experiences. And the self-paced format is ideal for summer.

COMMUNITY READING PROGRAMS

Local libraries and non-profits often run community reading programs in the summer, seeking volunteers to assist with reading sessions and literacy activities. These programs allow students to work with young children, promoting early literacy and creating a positive educational environment.

- **BENEFITS:** Volunteering in these programs develops leadership, public speaking, and lesson-planning skills. Students gain experience in engaging younger learners and fostering a love of reading, making a meaningful impact on early education.

TEACHING AT A SUMMER CAMP OR ACTING AS AN AIDE IN A SUMMER PROGRAM

For students who enjoy working with younger children, acting as an aide at a summer camp or educational program provides a dynamic, hands-on experience. These roles often involve planning activities, leading small groups, and providing supervision, helping students build strong communication and leadership skills.

- **BENEFITS:** Serving as an aide or junior counselor teaches group management, activity planning, and effective communication skills. This experience is particularly valuable for students interested in early childhood or elementary education.
- **WHERE TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES:** Community centers, religious centers, and non-profit organizations frequently offer summer camps that need volunteer counselors or aides. These programs provide interactive learning environments where students can practice teaching skills in various settings.

TAKING IT UP A NOTCH: INITIATIVE AND IMPACT

- **DEMONSTRATING INITIATIVE:** Students can design and lead their own tutoring or literacy programs, organize educational workshops for younger children, or create lesson plans that address specific community needs. These projects highlight a proactive approach to education.
- **MAKING AN IMPACT:** Highlighting the outcomes of these efforts—such as improved literacy rates or increased engagement in a summer program—demonstrates how students applied their skills to make a tangible difference.

SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMS

VOLUNTEER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR FUTURE EDUCATION MAJORS

The Volunteer Internship Program by Network Volunteers is an ideal opportunity for high school and college students interested in pursuing careers in education. This eight-week, remote internship allows students to gain hands-on experience by supporting community-based organizations focused on education and youth development. Interns contribute to impactful projects, such as creating educational content, conducting workshops, and supporting organizations dedicated to providing safe, enriching learning environments for underserved youth.

Participants gain valuable experience in teaching support, communication, and curriculum development, while also deepening their understanding of the challenges faced by educational nonprofits. Through interactive workshops and weekly reflections, interns develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, engage with meaningful social issues, and build connections with mentors and peers. This program provides an excellent foundation for aspiring education majors, offering insights into the field and real-world experience in community-based education initiatives.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

This Udemy course is perfect for students considering a career in education, especially those interested in early childhood teaching. Focused on classroom management for preschoolers learning English as a Second Language (ESL), the course offers future educators an introduction to essential skills for managing young learners. Students will explore techniques for creating organized, engaging classroom environments and learn strategies for building positive relationships with very young students.

Participants will gain foundational skills in classroom organization, behavior management, and lesson planning for young children. The course covers practical approaches to establish routines, use praise effectively, and support young learners' developmental needs. Ideal for aspiring education majors, this course provides valuable insights into early childhood education principles and offers hands-on techniques for managing preschool classrooms in an encouraging and effective way.

BUSINESS-FOCUSED SUMMER ACTIVITIES

With growing interest in business careers, students are increasingly looking for ways to explore finance, marketing, management, and entrepreneurship before college. Summer provides a valuable opportunity to gain real-world business experience, build leadership skills, and explore entrepreneurial ideas. Whether through business camps, internships, summer jobs, or independent projects, students can use these months to develop practical skills and make meaningful connections.

BUSINESS CAMPS

Business camps provide an immersive introduction to entrepreneurship, leadership, and business fundamentals. These camps go beyond theoretical learning, emphasizing real-world applications through project-based work.

- **FOSTERING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET:** Students learn to identify business opportunities, develop strategies, and take calculated risks. Participants often work on business ideas, crafting business plans and presenting them to mentors or judges. By turning ideas into actionable plans, students experience what it takes to create a business.
- **LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK:** Camps emphasize leadership through group projects that require effective communication, delegation, and decision-making under pressure. Students leave with a better understanding of how to lead teams and collaborate with others in business settings.
- **PROFESSIONAL EXPOSURE:** Many camps feature guest speakers and networking opportunities with business professionals, offering insights into potential career paths and forming connections that could lead to internships or mentorship.

INTERNSHIPS IN BUSINESS

Internships give students hands-on experience in real-world business environments, where they can apply their knowledge to areas like finance, marketing, and management.

- **REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE:** Interns gain exposure to business operations, such as financial analysis, marketing campaigns, and client management. This helps them explore different business roles and identify areas of interest.
- **BUILDING PROFESSIONAL SKILLS:** Internships develop critical workplace skills such as communication, time management, and problem-solving. Students learn to adapt to professional environments, meet deadlines, and contribute to projects, all while enhancing their understanding of business.
- **NETWORKING AND MENTORSHIP:** Interns often work closely with supervisors or mentors who provide guidance and industry insights. Building these professional relationships can lead to future internships, job opportunities, or college recommendations.

SUMMER JOBS IN BUSINESS

Summer jobs offer students a practical, accessible way to gain experience in a business environment, even without formal internships. Working in a retail store, office, or customer service role can provide valuable insights into business operations and client relations.

- **HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE:** Students working in sales, retail, or customer service learn about customer management, sales strategies, and day-to-day business operations. Even in entry-level roles, these experiences offer practical exposure to how businesses run.
- **BUILDING KEY SKILLS:** Summer jobs help students develop soft skills like communication, responsibility, and problem-solving, which are transferable across many business fields (and valuable in any career path!).
- **DEMONSTRATING WORK ETHIC:** Summer jobs showcase initiative, independence, and work ethic on college applications. No matter the role, students demonstrate that they are proactive and serious about gaining business experience.

INDEPENDENT PROJECTS

For students with entrepreneurial aspirations, summer is the perfect time to take on an independent project. Whether launching a small business, creating an online platform, or developing a personal finance blog, independent projects allow students to showcase creativity, leadership, and business acumen.

- **STARTING A SMALL BUSINESS:** Students can explore entrepreneurship by starting a small business, such as an online shop or service-based enterprise. This teaches them about business planning, marketing, financial management, and customer relations.
- **CREATING DIGITAL CONTENT:** Students interested in marketing or social media might create a blog, YouTube channel, or Instagram page focused on business-related content. This helps them develop digital marketing skills and build an audience, while also learning about content creation and brand management.
- **SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING:** Independent projects allow students to explore areas of interest on their own terms, whether by developing an app or launching a community initiative.

STARTUP COMPETITIONS

Startup competitions provide an exciting platform to pitch and develop business ideas. These competitions challenge students to think creatively, solve problems, and present their ideas in front of judges or potential investors.

- **DEVELOPING BUSINESS PLANS:** Students work on creating detailed business plans, conducting market research, and projecting financial outcomes. This process sharpens analytical thinking and prepares them for the challenges of launching a business.



- **PITCHING TO JUDGES:** Presenting business ideas to a panel of judges teaches students how to communicate their vision clearly and persuasively. Feedback from judges helps them refine their ideas and build confidence in pitching to professionals.
- **COMPETING FOR PRIZES:** Many competitions offer cash prizes, scholarships, or seed funding for winning teams. Even beyond prizes, participants gain recognition and access to resources that can help turn their business ideas into reality.

TAKING IT UP A NOTCH: INITIATIVE AND IMPACT

- **DEMONSTRATING INITIATIVE:** Leading a project or business venture—such as organizing a community workshop or starting a small online business—shows leadership and creativity. Taking ownership of a project signals a proactive approach to learning and development.
- **MAKING AN IMPACT:** Highlighting the tangible results of these efforts—whether it's increasing sales for a small business, gaining followers for a digital platform, or leading a successful fundraising campaign—demonstrates the real-world impact of a student's work. Colleges and employers value students who can show measurable success and meaningful contributions.

SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMS

MICHIGAN ROSS SUMMER BUSINESS ACADEMY

The Michigan Ross Summer Business Academy (SBA) offers rising high school seniors a unique two-week immersion into the world of business at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business. Designed for highly motivated students from diverse backgrounds, this program provides an in-depth exploration of business operations, leadership, and problem-solving through interactive classes, workshops, and group projects. Participants will experience life as a Michigan Ross student, connecting with faculty, industry professionals, and peers, while building foundational skills for future success.

Through action-based learning, students gain practical knowledge in areas such as business strategy, teamwork, and effective communication. By engaging with real-world case studies, working on collaborative projects, and attending expert-led sessions, participants develop critical thinking and leadership skills essential for impactful business careers. Ideal for students interested in exploring business fields, the Summer Business Academy combines academic rigor with hands-on learning to inspire and prepare the next generation of leaders. Scholarships are available to cover program costs, ensuring accessibility for all accepted students.

VOLTAGE SCHOLARS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The Voltage Scholars program is a free, three-day intensive experience at the University of Chicago, designed for high school sophomores interested in economics. This selective program introduces students to UChicago's innovative approach to macroeconomics and microeconomics, guided by insights from The Voltage Effect text. Alongside lectures and interactive sessions, students will explore real-world economic issues, network with college students from the Becker Friedman Institute's diversity program, and gain an inside look at college life.

Voltage Scholars build foundational knowledge in economic concepts and public policy. Through workshops and discussions, students develop analytical skills, engage in critical thinking, and explore how economics can address global issues like poverty and climate change. Ideal for students passionate about economics and diversity in the field, this program provides a unique academic experience and insights into a career in economics—all at no cost, with additional funding available for travel as needed.

TCU HIGH SCHOOL INVESTOR CHALLENGE

The TCU High School Investor Challenge is an immersive program designed for high school students with an interest in finance and investing. Hosted at Texas Christian University's Neeley School of Business, this unique program offers a week of college-level classes in securities analysis and portfolio management, allowing students to experience life as a TCU Horned Frog. Participants manage a virtual \$100,000 portfolio over the course of the academic year, receiving feedback from TCU finance students and presenting their results at a spring banquet.

Through hands-on experience in stock analysis and portfolio management, students develop skills in financial research, critical thinking, and decision-making. By analyzing market trends, creating stock reports, and learning from finance professionals, participants gain a strong foundation in investment principles. The TCU High School Investor Challenge not only deepens knowledge in finance but also offers valuable insights into college life and prepares students for potential careers in business and finance.

KELLEY WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The Kelley Women's Leadership Institute (KWLI) at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business offers high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors a unique introduction to the college experience and the world of business. Through this selective, free program, young women spend a day on the Bloomington campus, participating in workshops led by top faculty, exploring real-world business cases, and building leadership and communication skills. KWLI provides a supportive environment for students to connect with like-minded peers and Kelley alumni, empowering them to envision and pursue business careers.

Participants gain valuable insights into business principles, teamwork, and public speaking. By tackling business cases and engaging in discussions, students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills. Ideal for young women looking toward a career in business, KWLI fosters a sense of community and confidence—and a clearer understanding of college life and professional pathways in business—all at no cost, with meals included during in-person sessions.



ARTS AND CREATIVE SUMMER PROGRAMS

For students passionate about the arts, summer provides an ideal opportunity to explore creative pursuits in a focused, immersive environment. Whether in visual arts, performing arts, or writing and filmmaking, summer programs allow students to hone their skills, experiment with new techniques, and collaborate with peers. These experiences go beyond classroom learning, fostering artistic expression, confidence, and technical expertise while helping students build a portfolio for future academic and professional opportunities.

VISUAL ARTS PROGRAMS

Visual arts programs give students the chance to enhance their skills in mediums like painting, sculpture, photography, and digital design. These programs foster creativity, provide individualized instruction, and support students in creating a portfolio of high-quality work.

- **HANDS-ON DEVELOPMENT:** Visual arts programs emphasize active studio time, where students experiment with various materials and techniques, from charcoal sketches to digital designs. Personalized feedback from professional artists helps students refine their artistic skills and push creative boundaries.
- **PORTFOLIO-BUILDING:** Many visual arts programs focus on creating a portfolio, a crucial element for students applying to art schools. By the end of the program, students have a diverse body of work that reflects their growth, creativity, and technical proficiency, setting them apart in competitive admissions.
- **EXPOSURE TO ART COMMUNITIES:** Students often visit galleries, museums, or artist studios, gaining insights into professional pathways. This exposure inspires students while offering networking opportunities with established artists.

PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMS

For students interested in acting, dance, or musical theater, performing arts programs offer an immersive environment to refine their craft. These camps and workshops develop technical performance skills while fostering teamwork and collaboration.

- **DEVELOPING PERFORMANCE SKILLS:** Students engage in hands-on learning through acting workshops, dance rehearsals, or musical productions. These programs focus on character development, choreography, and vocal techniques, helping students grow as performers.
- **BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND COLLABORATION:** Performing arts programs build confidence by encouraging students to take risks on stage and work collaboratively in groups. Through rehearsals and feedback, students develop communication and leadership skills essential for ensemble work.
- **SHOWCASE PERFORMANCES:** Many programs culminate in a final performance, where students demonstrate their growth. These showcases not only serve as a capstone to the summer's work but also provide material for college audition portfolios.

WRITING AND FILM PROGRAMS

Writing and film programs immerse students in the craft of storytelling, whether through creative writing, screenwriting, or filmmaking. These programs provide structured workshops and hands-on experiences that develop narrative skills and technical proficiency.

- **EXPLORING STORYTELLING FORMS:** Students experiment with fiction, poetry, screenwriting, or filmmaking. Creative writing programs focus on style and voice, while film programs teach camera operation, editing, and sound design. By the end, students produce written works or short films that highlight their storytelling abilities.
- **PERSONALIZED FEEDBACK AND MENTORSHIP:** Instructors provide detailed feedback on students' creative work, helping them refine their storytelling. Mentors guide students on future goals, such as applying to film school or submitting writing for publication.
- **BUILDING A PORTFOLIO:** Students leave these programs with completed works, such as a screenplay, short film, or polished story. A strong portfolio is essential for students applying to college programs in writing or film, and these experiences provide the foundation for future creative success.

SUMMER JOBS AND INTERNSHIPS IN THE ARTS

Summer jobs or internships in the arts provide practical, real-world experience that helps students understand the business side of creative fields. Working in a gallery, theater, or arts organization offers invaluable exposure to professional environments.

- **HANDS-ON LEARNING:** Students can gain experience in set design, gallery management, or assisting with artistic projects. These roles provide insight into the operational aspects of the arts and develop skills like time management, communication, and organization.
- **BUILDING PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS:** Arts-related jobs or internships often allow students to connect with artists, curators, and industry professionals. These relationships can lead to mentorship and open doors for future opportunities in the creative world.

INDEPENDENT CREATIVE PROJECTS

Independent projects offer students the freedom to explore their artistic vision outside of structured programs. Whether writing a novel, creating a series of paintings, or producing a short film, these self-directed projects showcase initiative and passion for the field.

- **EXPLORING PERSONAL VISION:** Independent projects allow students to experiment with new ideas or mediums without the constraints of a formal program. This autonomy encourages deeper exploration of personal interests and creative expression.
- **PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT:** Self-directed work can be included in college portfolios, showing a student's ability to take initiative and follow through on their artistic ambitions. Independent projects demonstrate dedication and innovation, qualities highly valued in competitive applications.

TAKING IT UP A NOTCH: INITIATIVE AND IMPACT

- **DEMONSTRATING INITIATIVE:** Students can lead their own creative projects or start arts-related initiatives in their communities. For example, organizing a gallery show, directing a local theater production, or publishing a collection of stories all show leadership and entrepreneurial spirit.
- **MAKING AN IMPACT:** Highlighting the impact of their creative work—be it through public exhibitions, community involvement, or social media engagement—helps students demonstrate how their art resonates with others. Admissions officers look for students who not only create but also influence and inspire through their work.

Arts-focused summer programs provide students with the opportunity to deepen their skills, build a portfolio, and explore potential creative careers. Whether through structured programs, internships, or independent projects, students can use the summer to take ownership of their artistic journey and make a meaningful impact.

SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMS

INTERLOCHEN ARTS CAMP

Interlochen Arts Camp offers an extraordinary summer experience for young artists from around the world, set in a stunning lakeside campus in Michigan. From visual arts and music to theater, dance, film, and creative writing, the camp provides intensive, immersive programs across seven arts disciplines. Students enjoy the best of both worlds—honing their craft in a collaborative, inspiring environment, while also experiencing classic summer camp adventures like hiking, swimming, and outdoor games.

Through expert-led workshops and performances, students refine technical skills, develop artistic expression, and gain confidence in their craft. The program fosters creativity, resilience, and collaboration among peers. Surrounded by talented artists and supportive faculty, students grow artistically and personally, making lifelong memories and connections. Financial aid and scholarships are available, so this unique summer arts experience is accessible to aspiring artists from all backgrounds.

MARYMOUNT MANHATTAN COLLEGE MUSICAL THEATRE INTENSIVE

The Marymount Manhattan College (MMC) Musical Theatre Intensive is a two-week summer program for rising high school juniors and seniors, held in the heart of New York City's theater district. This immersive program provides individualized coaching in musical theater, focusing on script analysis, song interpretation, and performance techniques. Guided by MMC's experienced faculty, students learn industry-standard skills for college auditions and professional theater, while exploring the vibrant culture of Broadway.

Throughout the program, students deepen their understanding of storytelling through song, refine their acting choices, and learn techniques for creating professional digital pre-screens. By working closely with faculty and like-minded peers, participants build confidence, collaborative skills, and a repertoire tailored for auditions. The experience culminates in a final performance for family and friends, showcasing each student's progress and passion. With options for housing and additional private voice lessons, the program offers an authentic taste of a BFA musical theater education in one of the world's top arts cities.



COMMUNICATIONS-RELATED SUMMER ACTIVITIES

The field of communications spans various industries, including public relations, journalism, digital media, and broadcasting. For students looking to explore communications, summer is the perfect time to build foundational skills in writing, public speaking, media production, and storytelling. Engaging in communications-related summer activities helps students refine their ability to share ideas, craft compelling narratives, and engage diverse audiences across platforms.

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND DEBATE WORKSHOPS

Mastering the art of clear and persuasive communication is essential for any career in communications. Public speaking and debate workshops help students improve their oral communication skills, grow their confidence, and learn to craft persuasive arguments.

- **PUBLIC SPEAKING CAMPS:** Many organizations offer workshops focused on organizing thoughts, delivering presentations, and engaging audiences through effective body language and vocal techniques. These camps provide a supportive environment for students to practice speaking skills, making them more comfortable in front of an audience—crucial for all sorts of careers.
- **DEBATE PROGRAMS:** Debate programs help students sharpen their critical thinking and argumentation skills, learning to structure arguments and anticipate counterpoints. These workshops emphasize quick thinking, research, and the ability to respond under pressure.

JOURNALISM AND MEDIA PRODUCTION PROGRAMS

For students passionate about writing, reporting, and digital storytelling, journalism and media production programs provide hands-on experience in creating content for print, broadcast, or online platforms.

- **JOURNALISM CAMPS:** These programs teach the fundamentals of reporting, interviewing, and writing under deadlines, often simulating newsroom environments. Students develop their portfolio by producing written or digital content and learning about journalistic ethics, accuracy, and objectivity.
- **MEDIA PRODUCTION WORKSHOPS:** Media production programs focus on technical skills such as video editing, audio recording, and multimedia storytelling. Students create projects—like documentaries or news segments—gaining experience in crafting visual and audio narratives for various media platforms.

JOBS IN COMMUNICATIONS

Taking a summer job can be a great way to build practical skills in communications while earning some income. Whether working in customer service, marketing, or social media management, communications-related jobs provide exposure to real-world applications of communication strategies in various industries. These roles help students develop key skills such as effective messaging, content creation, and customer engagement, all of which are valuable for future careers in communications.

- **CUSTOMER SERVICE ROLES:** Working in customer service provides students with opportunities to enhance their verbal and written communication skills by interacting with clients and customers. These roles help students learn how to convey information clearly, resolve issues, and maintain professionalism in diverse situations.
- **MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA JOBS:** Students interested in digital marketing or social media management can gain experience by working for local businesses, non-profits, or community organizations. Tasks may include creating content for social media platforms, drafting marketing copy, or assisting with branding efforts. These jobs allow students to practice crafting messages tailored to specific audiences and analyzing the effectiveness of their communication strategies.
- **RETAIL AND SALES JOBS:** While retail and sales positions may not seem directly related to communications, they involve critical skills like persuasion, customer interaction, and product promotion. Students in these roles learn how to engage with customers, explain product benefits, and close sales, which are transferable skills to careers in marketing, advertising, and public relations.

INTERSHIPS IN COMMUNICATIONS

Internships provide students with real-world exposure to the communications industry, offering practical experience in public relations, marketing, media, or broadcasting.

- **PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING INTERSHIPS:** Internships at PR firms or digital marketing agencies help students understand branding, messaging, and media relations. Students may assist with press releases, social media, or marketing campaigns, gaining insights into how communications strategies are executed.
- **MEDIA AND BROADCASTING INTERSHIPS:** Interning at news stations, radio shows, or digital media outlets offers hands-on experience in content creation, story research, and interviews. These internships give students a behind-the-scenes look at media production and storytelling.

DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION PROJECTS

For students interested in exploring communications independently, digital content creation is an ideal way to build skills while expressing creativity. Blogging, podcasting, and social media management offer opportunities to experiment with different forms of storytelling.

- **BLOGGING AND PODCASTING:** Creating a blog or podcast allows students to explore topics they're passionate about while honing writing, speaking, and production skills. These platforms help students build a portfolio that demonstrates their creativity and ability to communicate with an audience.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT:** Managing a social media account for a personal brand or local project gives students experience in digital marketing, content creation, and audience engagement. Understanding analytics and metrics helps them refine strategies in real time, making these skills valuable for future endeavors.

TAKING IT UP A NOTCH: INITIATIVE AND IMPACT

- **DEMONSTRATING INITIATIVE:** Students can lead independent communication projects, such as creating a digital marketing strategy for a local business, launching a podcast, or organizing a public speaking event for peers. Taking the lead in such projects highlights leadership, creativity, and entrepreneurial thinking.
- **CREATING MEASURABLE IMPACT:** Students should highlight the tangible outcomes of their efforts—things like increasing social media engagement, producing a successful series of podcast episodes, or contributing to a major media project.

Communications-related summer activities provide students with valuable experience that will help them better understand the industry and gain skills that can help them demonstrate fit-to-major on their applications.

SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMS

MISSOURI UNIVERSITY JOURNALISM WORKSHOP

The Missouri University Journalism Workshop invites high school students passionate about storytelling to experience an in-depth journalism training program on the University of Missouri campus. This immersive workshop gives aspiring journalists a chance to hone their skills in writing, interviewing, and multimedia reporting, all while learning from the Missouri School of Journalism's faculty and seasoned industry professionals. Through the Missouri Method of hands-on learning, students will tackle real-world assignments, developing their voice and reporting skills alongside peers who share their enthusiasm for journalism.

Participants will gain experience in crafting compelling stories, conducting impactful interviews, and using audio, video, and podcasting tools to enhance their narratives. Emphasis is placed on reporting accuracy and covering diverse communities, providing students with practical skills and a broadened perspective. The workshop culminates in original reporting projects, allowing students to apply what they've learned in a dynamic, supportive environment. This program offers a unique opportunity to experience life as a journalist while learning from some of the field's top educators and practitioners, setting the foundation for a future in journalism.

KENYON REVIEW YOUNG WRITERS WORKSHOPS

The Kenyon Review Young Writers Workshops offer high school students a transformative experience to immerse themselves in the literary arts. Held both online and on the scenic Kenyon College campus, these workshops bring together talented young writers from around the world. Participants engage in multi-genre workshops, exploring their craft through poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction while connecting with peers who share their passion for writing.

Throughout these intensive sessions, students sharpen their storytelling abilities, develop critical reading and writing techniques, and learn to give and receive constructive feedback. Guided by experienced instructors and surrounded by a supportive literary community, participants are encouraged to stretch their creative boundaries, gain confidence, and discover new dimensions of their writing voice. The program's diverse offerings include a six-week online winter workshop, a one-week summer online session, and a two-week residential program—all designed to foster growth and camaraderie in an inspiring setting.



ATHLETIC- AND SPORTS-FOCUSED SUMMER OPTIONS

For students who are passionate about sports, summer presents the perfect opportunity to sharpen athletic skills, engage in specialized training, and even explore opportunities for college recruitment. Whether students are seeking to improve their performance in their favorite sport, gain a better understanding of sports science and nutrition, or showcase their talents to college coaches, there are a variety of summer programs designed to meet these goals. These programs provide high-level instruction, offer valuable feedback from professionals, and help student-athletes build the skills and networks they need for future success.

SPORTS CAMPS

Sports camps are an excellent way for student-athletes to focus on skill development and improve their performance in a specific sport. These camps, often led by experienced coaches or former professional athletes, provide intensive training in sports such as soccer, basketball, swimming, tennis, and more.

- **SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND INTENSIVE TRAINING:** At sports camps, students receive high-level coaching in both the technical and tactical aspects of their sport. Whether it's mastering ball-handling skills in basketball, improving stroke technique in swimming, or honing footwork in soccer, athletes benefit from personalized instruction and feedback designed to improve their overall performance. Camps often include position-specific training that allows athletes to focus on areas that need improvement.

- **TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION:** Athletes often participate in team drills or scrimmages, learning how to communicate effectively with teammates, build chemistry, and understand strategic elements of the game. For many student-athletes, the camp environment fosters a sense of camaraderie as they work together to achieve shared goals.
- **EXPOSURE TO COLLEGE COACHES:** Many high-level sports camps are also attended by college coaches, giving student-athletes the opportunity to showcase their abilities and receive feedback from professionals who may be involved in college recruitment. This exposure can be crucial for athletes hoping to pursue sports at the collegiate level, as it allows them to demonstrate their skills in a competitive, structured environment.

SPECIALIZED ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT

Specialized athletic development programs focus on areas such as sports science, nutrition, strength training, and injury prevention. These programs are designed to enhance overall athletic performance, improve physical fitness, and provide students with the knowledge they need to maintain their health and stamina over time.

- **STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING:** Specialized athletic development programs often include rigorous strength and conditioning components aimed at building muscle, increasing endurance, and improving flexibility. Athletes work with certified strength and conditioning coaches who design personalized workout plans tailored to the student's specific sport or athletic goals. These programs teach students the fundamentals of safe and effective weightlifting, agility drills, and recovery techniques that help prevent injury and optimize performance.
- **SPORTS NUTRITION:** Nutrition plays a critical role in athletic performance, and many specialized programs emphasize the importance of fueling the body for optimal results. Athletes learn how to create personalized nutrition plans that support their training, focusing on aspects like hydration, protein intake, and meal timing. Proper nutrition is essential for maintaining energy levels during competition and speeding up recovery after intense training sessions.
- **SPORTS SCIENCE AND INJURY PREVENTION:** Specialized programs often introduce athletes to sports science principles such as biomechanics, kinesiology, and injury prevention strategies. Athletes learn how the body moves and functions under stress, allowing them to improve their technique and minimize the risk of common sports injuries. Injury prevention strategies, including stretching routines, warm-up protocols, and rehabilitation exercises, are integrated into training sessions to ensure athletes stay healthy and active throughout the season.

COLLEGE RECRUITMENT AND SHOWCASE EVENTS

For student-athletes hoping to compete at the collegiate level, summer showcase events and recruitment camps provide critical opportunities to display their talents in front of college scouts and coaches. These events are designed to bring together top high school athletes from across the country, allowing them to compete in high-pressure environments while gaining exposure to college recruiters.

- **SHOWCASING TALENT IN COMPETITIVE SETTINGS:**

College recruitment events typically include scrimmages, tournaments, or competitive drills that allow athletes to demonstrate their skills in real-time. These events are structured to highlight each athlete's abilities, from technical skills to game strategy and leadership on the field or court. Competing against other talented athletes also pushes students to perform at their best and showcases their potential as future college athletes.

- **NETWORKING WITH COLLEGE COACHES:** These events also give student-athletes the opportunity to interact with college coaches who are actively recruiting for their programs. They often include networking sessions, where athletes can introduce themselves, ask questions, and learn more about what coaches are looking for in recruits. This direct interaction with college representatives helps athletes gain insights into the recruitment process and better understand how to navigate their path toward playing sports at the collegiate level.

- **IMPROVING RECRUITMENT PROSPECTS:** Participating in showcase events not only provides a platform for immediate exposure but also enhances an athlete's overall recruitment prospects. College coaches often follow up with athletes they've seen perform at these events, leading to scholarship offers or invitations for campus visits. For many athletes, these events are a key step in their journey toward securing a spot on a college team.

Student-athletes should take advantage of the summer months to develop personal and team-focused skills, showcase their talents, and of course, stay healthy, so they're ready to get back into their sport when school resumes.





VIRTUAL SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES

Whether through online learning, remote internships, digital volunteering, or pre-college programs, students can make the most of their summer while maintaining flexibility. These options provide a chance to explore new fields, earn certifications, and engage with global communities—all without the need for travel or in-person attendance.

ONLINE CLASSES

Online courses are an accessible way for students to explore academic interests, develop skills, or earn certifications that enhance college applications and career prospects. Platforms like Coursera, edX, and Udemy offer courses in almost every subject imaginable.

- **EXPLORING VIRTUAL LEARNING PLATFORMS:** Students can choose from thousands of free or low-cost courses that allow them to learn at their own pace. Students should find courses that align with their interests—there's no shortage of classes for any pursuit, and it's a great way to dive deeper into a topic they love or learn something completely new.
- **EARNING CERTIFICATIONS:** Many online platforms offer certification tracks in areas like data science, marketing, or project management. These certifications demonstrate initiative, a commitment to learning, and an ability to complete rigorous coursework—qualities that stand out to colleges and future employers.

REMOTE INTERNSHIPS

Remote internships offer students the chance to gain real-world work experience without needing to be physically present in an office. With more industries adopting virtual environments, students can now intern in fields like marketing, technology, public relations, and more—all while working from home.

- **BENEFITS OF REMOTE INTERNSHIPS:** These internships provide flexibility, allowing students to balance their work with other summer activities. Remote internships also help students develop digital literacy, communication, and time management skills.
- **FINDING VIRTUAL INTERNSHIPS:** Job boards such as LinkedIn and Internship.com offer filters for remote positions. When applying, students should emphasize their experience with digital collaboration tools like Zoom, Slack, or Google Workspace, showcasing their ability to work independently in a virtual environment.

DIGITAL VOLUNTEERING

For students seeking to make a positive impact, digital volunteering offers an opportunity to engage in community service and advocacy from home. Remote volunteer opportunities allow students to contribute meaningfully while developing essential skills in project management and digital communication.

- **ONLINE ACTIVISM AND ADVOCACY:** Platforms like Change.org and Global Citizen enable students to engage in digital activism, raising awareness and mobilizing resources for social justice, environmental protection, and human rights causes.
- **REMOTE COMMUNITY SERVICE:** Students can offer tutoring through platforms like UPchieve or provide tech support for non-profits via TechSoup. These opportunities allow students to leverage their skills to support communities in need, creating global impact while gaining valuable experience.

ONLINE PRE-COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Online pre-college programs are an excellent way for students to experience university-level courses, explore potential majors, and build academic skills in preparation for college. Many top universities offer virtual summer programs in various fields, giving students access to college-level instruction without needing to be on campus.

- **EXPOSURE TO COLLEGE-LEVEL LEARNING:** Pre-college programs offer courses in fields such as science, engineering, business, and the arts, providing students with a preview of college academics. These programs are often interactive, allowing students to engage with professors and peers through discussions, group projects, and assignments.



- **STRENGTHENING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS:** Participating in an online pre-college program shows initiative and academic commitment, strengthening college applications. It also allows students to explore potential majors, helping them make informed decisions about their future academic paths.
- **DEVELOPING A COLLEGE-READY MINDSET:** These programs help students develop the study habits and time management skills needed for college success. They also offer opportunities to build connections with professors and peers, creating a support network before starting college.

TAKING IT UP A NOTCH: INITIATIVE AND IMPACT

- **DEMONSTRATING INITIATIVE:** Students can take the lead by creating and managing their own digital projects, whether it's launching a podcast, starting an advocacy campaign, or developing a blog on a topic of interest. These projects demonstrate leadership, creativity, and a proactive approach to learning.
- **MAKING AN IMPACT:** Highlighting the tangible outcomes of their efforts—whether it's improving social media engagement for a non-profit, increasing website traffic, or helping a student achieve academic success through tutoring—demonstrates the real-world impact of their work.

Virtual summer opportunities allow students to gain critical skills, build professional networks, and make a meaningful impact while maintaining flexibility of location (and sometimes even flexibility of schedule).



COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE PROGRAMS

Community service and social justice initiatives not only help students contribute to causes they care about but also build leadership, empathy, and a deeper understanding of complex social issues. Whether students are looking to make a difference locally or globally, there are all kinds of programs and opportunities available to help them take action.

LOCAL VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering locally allows students to directly impact their communities through service projects and ongoing support for local organizations. There are opportunities to get involved in almost any community, whether it's through food distribution, tutoring, environmental clean-ups, community development, or any other initiative that accepts student volunteers.

- **CONTRIBUTING TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY:** By engaging in local volunteer work, students can support their neighbors while building strong connections within their community. Programs like Meals on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity, and local food banks offer structured ways to give back. Additionally, students can volunteer at schools, libraries, or community centers, helping younger children or assisting with events. Local volunteering often helps students see firsthand how small acts of service can make a big difference, instilling a lifelong commitment to social responsibility.

- **ACTIVISM AND ADVOCACY PROJECTS:** For students passionate about social justice issues, summer is the perfect time to engage in activism and advocacy work. Many organizations offer opportunities to work on projects that address human rights, environmental justice, racial equality, and gender rights, among other causes.

- **TAKING ACTION ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES:**

Activism programs help students understand how systemic issues impact society and give them the tools to advocate for change. Students can participate in online or in-person campaigns, community organizing, or public awareness projects. Through these experiences, students learn about advocacy strategies, such as grassroots organizing, lobbying, and media campaigns, helping them develop a strong voice for the causes they care about.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING

International volunteering allows students to extend their impact beyond borders by working with communities around the globe. These programs often focus on issues such as education, health, environmental conservation, and sustainable development.

- **MAKING A GLOBAL IMPACT:** Organizations like Global Volunteers, Projects Abroad, and UNICEF offer programs where students can volunteer in regions such as Africa, Latin America, or Asia. Students might work on building schools, assisting in health clinics, or teaching English.
- **BROADENING WORLDVIEWS:** International service projects broaden students' worldviews and deepen their understanding of global challenges, such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. International volunteering not only fosters cross-cultural exchange but also helps students develop adaptability, problem-solving skills, and a sense of global citizenship. These programs offer a unique chance for personal growth while making a tangible impact in the lives of others.

Community service and social justice programs provide students with a meaningful way to engage in positive change. These experiences not only strengthen college applications but also help students cultivate compassion, leadership, and a lifelong commitment to social responsibility.

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING ABROAD

Volunteering abroad offers students a unique way to experience different cultures and develop a global perspective. These programs allow students to immerse themselves in new environments, work on meaningful projects, and learn to adapt to unfamiliar settings. Whether it's teaching in a rural school or helping with community development, international volunteering fosters empathy, leadership, and problem-solving skills. Students who volunteer abroad often return with a deeper understanding of global issues and a renewed sense of purpose, making the experience valuable both personally and academically.





TRAVEL-BASED LEARNING AND EXPLORATION

Travel-based learning is one of the most enriching experiences students can have during the summer. Whether through academic programs, family trips with an educational twist, or independently designed travel projects, students have the opportunity to explore new places, immerse themselves in different cultures, and expand their knowledge of the world. Travel not only exposes students to new perspectives but also helps them develop critical thinking, adaptability, and a greater sense of independence.

ACADEMIC AND CULTURAL TRAVEL PROGRAMS

Academic and cultural travel programs offer students the chance to experience hands-on learning while exploring new regions or countries. These programs are often designed around specific themes, such as language immersion, art history, or environmental science. For example, a program might take students to France to study French language and culture, or to Costa Rica for a conservation project focused on biodiversity.

- **ENRICHMENT THROUGH IMMERSION:** These programs are typically led by educators or subject-matter experts, ensuring that students receive both academic instruction and cultural exposure. Students might visit historical sites, engage with local communities, or participate in workshops, all while earning academic credit or certifications. This immersive learning experience fosters a deeper understanding of the subjects being studied and a more meaningful connection to the places they visit.



FAMILY TRIPS WITH AN EDUCATIONAL FOCUS

Family vacations don't have to be purely recreational—by incorporating educational elements, they can also become powerful learning experiences. Planning a trip with a focus on history, science, or culture can turn a vacation into an adventure that stimulates curiosity and encourages lifelong learning.

- **TRANSFORMING VACATIONS INTO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:** Parents can design trips that include visits to museums, national parks, historical landmarks, or cultural festivals. For instance, a trip to Washington, D.C. could include tours of the Smithsonian museums, while a vacation to Yellowstone National Park can provide insights into geology, ecosystems, and conservation. By adding educational stops or activities, teens gain a greater appreciation for the places they visit and can connect these experiences to their academic interests.

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL PROJECTS

Encouraging students to plan and document independent travel projects can be a powerful way to promote personal growth, self-reliance, and critical thinking. Whether traveling alone, with friends, or as part of an organized group, students can design trips that align with their interests and curiosities.

- **CREATING MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES:** Independent travel projects challenge students to take the lead in planning their itinerary, managing logistics, and documenting their experiences. This can include writing travel journals, creating photo essays, or conducting research on the places they visit.
- **SKILL DEVELOPMENT:** By reflecting on their travel experiences, students develop important skills in problem-solving, cultural awareness, and self-expression. These projects can also serve as valuable material for college essays or future academic pursuits.

CULTURAL IMMERSION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING PROGRAMS

For students looking to broaden their horizons and develop language skills, summer presents the perfect opportunity for cultural immersion and language learning. These experiences promote fluency and deeper understanding of global cultures.

LANGUAGE CAMPS

Language camps provide an immersive environment for students to learn or improve their skills in languages. These programs focus on intensive language instruction combined with cultural activities to help students practice speaking in real-world situations.

- **IMMERSION EXPERIENCE:** Camps often simulate living in a foreign country by encouraging full immersion, meaning that all activities and interactions are conducted in the target language. This approach accelerates learning and helps students gain confidence in their conversational abilities.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Cultural exchange programs allow students to experience new cultures firsthand by living with host families in different countries.

- **WIDENING PERSPECTIVES:** These programs provide students with the unique opportunity to immerse themselves in a new culture, participate in local traditions, and practice language skills with native speakers. Whether it's spending a few weeks in a rural village or attending school in a foreign city, these exchanges foster greater cultural awareness, empathy, and global citizenship.

STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

For students seeking a deeper academic experience, short-term summer study abroad programs offer the chance to take courses in international settings. Whether studying art history in Italy or environmental science in Costa Rica, these programs combine academic rigor with cultural exploration.

- **ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT:** Study abroad options often include guided excursions and cultural experiences that enrich students' understanding of the subjects they're studying while allowing them to practice language skills in an academic setting.

THE VALUE OF TRADITIONAL SUMMER CAMPS FOR TEENAGERS

Traditional summer camps, often associated with outdoor activities, team-building, and personal development, offer teenagers more than just a break from school—they provide a unique environment for growth, self-discovery, and social connection. These camps, whether they're sleepaway camps or day programs, allow teens to step away from technology and academic pressures, immersing themselves in nature and new experiences.

Building Independence and Confidence

For many teens, traditional summer camps are their first experience being away from home for an extended period. This independence fosters self-reliance and confidence, as teens learn to navigate new environments, form friendships, and solve problems without immediate parental guidance. Whether they're mastering outdoor skills or taking on leadership roles in group activities, campers develop a sense of accomplishment and resilience—on their own.

Strengthening Social Skills

Camps bring together teens from diverse backgrounds, helping them build teamwork, communication, and conflict resolution skills. In a setting where cooperation is key—whether it's in sports, arts and crafts, or team challenges—teenagers learn the value of collaboration and empathy.

Connecting with Nature and Unplugging

Traditional camps also encourage teens to disconnect from screens and connect with nature. Time spent hiking, swimming, or engaging in other outdoor activities helps reduce stress, improve mental well-being, and promote a healthy lifestyle.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Especially for students facing the pressures of academic performance, extracurriculars, and future planning, summer presents a unique opportunity to step back, focus on self-care, and engage in activities that promote mindfulness, emotional balance, and mental wellness. Programs that focus on mental health and well-being offer a chance to develop healthy coping strategies, manage stress, and find a better balance between work and relaxation.

MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION RETREATS

Mindfulness and meditation retreats provide students with an immersive experience in mental clarity and relaxation techniques. These retreats are designed to help students reduce stress, manage anxiety, and cultivate mindfulness—a practice of being fully present in the moment without judgment.

- **BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS:** Practicing mindfulness can improve emotional regulation, enhance focus, and decrease feelings of overwhelm. Meditation retreats typically offer guided sessions, breathing exercises, and lessons on how to incorporate mindfulness into daily life. For students, developing mindfulness skills can lead to a more centered approach to managing stress, especially during the school year. Many mindfulness and meditation retreats are hosted at wellness centers, local yoga studios, or even online. Programs range from day-long sessions to multi-week retreats, giving students the flexibility to choose a program that fits their needs.

SUMMER CAMPS FOCUSED ON EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Some summer camps are dedicated to promoting positive mental health and emotional well-being. These camps provide a supportive environment where students can explore wellness strategies through activities like yoga, journaling, group discussions, and nature walks.

- **BUILDING EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE:** Wellness camps help students develop coping mechanisms to handle stress and anxiety. Through workshops and group activities, students learn how to express their emotions, build resilience, and create positive habits that support their mental health. These camps emphasize self-reflection and emotional growth, providing tools students can carry into their academic year.
- **TYPES OF CAMPS:** From day camps to overnight programs, wellness-focused summer camps are designed for various age groups and interests, offering activities that range from art therapy to outdoor adventures—all aimed at promoting mental well-being.

EXPLORING SUMMER SCHOOL OPTIONS

Summer school can be an invaluable way for students to stay academically engaged outside the traditional school year. Whether looking to get ahead, recover credits, or explore new academic interests, summer school provides flexible pathways to meet students' unique goals. With a variety of programs available, students can strengthen essential skills, dive into favorite subjects, or free up their schedules for the upcoming year.

WHY CHOOSE SUMMER SCHOOL?

For many students, summer school offers a focused learning experience without the distractions of a regular school schedule. Some may use the summer to tackle advanced coursework, while others may need to make up credits in core subjects like English or math. Additionally, summer school allows students to explore subjects outside their usual curriculum, from psychology and environmental science to creative writing or coding. Taking a summer class can open doors to new interests, provide an early start on college-level subjects, or offer a valuable boost in challenging areas.

TYPES OF SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Summer school options vary widely, catering to different learning styles and schedules. Many high schools offer in-person classes that cover core subjects like Algebra II, Biology, U.S. History, or Spanish, often delivered in shorter, more concentrated sessions. Online programs provide another layer of flexibility, allowing students to learn at their own pace while balancing summer commitments. Some online platforms even offer specialized classes not typically available in high school, such as game design, forensic science, or global economics, giving students a unique opportunity to pursue specific interests.

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

Choosing the right summer school program depends on each student's goals and preferences. Those wanting to advance in core subjects may benefit from a structured, in-person class at their high school, while students curious about niche topics might consider the flexibility of an online course. It's also essential to confirm that any credits earned will be accepted by the student's high school, especially for online programs or classes taken through external providers.

MAKING THE MOST OF THE EXPERIENCE

Though summer school can be fast-paced, students can make the most of it by adopting an organized approach. Establishing a consistent study routine, asking for help when needed, and taking regular breaks can help prevent burnout. Balancing academic work with downtime and other summer activities is essential to maintain motivation and energy. With a growth-oriented mindset, students can not only earn credits but also gain skills and insights that enrich their high school journey and prepare them for future academic challenges.

MAKING THE MOST OF SUMMER TRAVEL AND ENRICHMENT

Summer isn't only about structured programs or academic classes. Travel, cultural immersion, and enrichment experiences can also become meaningful opportunities for growth. Whether it's a family trip, a service experience abroad, or even a local exploration of museums, parks, or communities, these moments can demonstrate curiosity, adaptability, and initiative.

TURNING EXPERIENCES INTO STORIES

What matters most is not the location, but the reflection. A student who journals daily observations on a family trip, captures photos tied to cultural history, or starts a blog about what they are learning is already building a story that can later be woven into essays or résumés. Admissions officers are not impressed by travel alone—they want to see how students think, notice, and grow from the experience.

BALANCING “DOING” AND “REFLECTING”

Summer enrichment is most powerful when paired with intentional reflection.

Encourage students to:

- Keep a travel or enrichment journal.
- Create a small project tied to the experience (a video, slideshow, or creative piece).
- Note specific challenges faced (navigating a new culture, learning a new skill) and how they responded.

Reflection transforms enrichment from a fleeting memory into evidence of curiosity and personal growth.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

- A student on a family trip to Spain reflects on how learning basic Spanish phrases changed the way they connected with locals.
- A student who visits national parks creates a photo essay tied to environmental themes, later used in a science class or essay.
- A student spending the summer close to home takes a cooking class, writes about the history of recipes, and shares reflections with family or friends.

In all of these examples, it's not the destination but the meaning drawn from the experience that matters.



SUMMER TEST PREP STRATEGY

Summer is one of the most effective times for students to focus on test preparation. With fewer daily distractions, students can build momentum in ways that are difficult to sustain during the school year. By using the summer months intentionally, students can approach the SAT or ACT with confidence and reduce the stress that often comes with testing during the busiest academic periods.

WHY SUMMER IS THE BEST TIME FOR TEST PREP

- **FEWER SCHOOL-YEAR DISTRACTIONS:** Without homework, sports, and packed schedules, students have the bandwidth to focus.
- **ROOM FOR CONSISTENCY:** The summer calendar allows for steady practice without constant interruptions.
- **CONFIDENCE BEFORE DEADLINES:** By starting in the summer, students can enter junior or senior year with a strong foundation and clear testing plan.

MANAGING ACADEMIC PRESSURE IN SUMMER

Summer is a great time to focus on SAT/ACT preparation, but it's also important for students to manage their stress and avoid burnout. To create a balanced approach, students can break down their study schedule into manageable chunks, allowing time for relaxation and fun. Setting realistic goals, practicing mindfulness, and incorporating exercise into the routine are all solid strategies for staying focused without feeling overwhelmed. Mental health is just as important as test scores when preparing for college.



STEP 1: TAKE A DIAGNOSTIC TEST

A baseline assessment is the first step toward a strong strategy. Rising sophomores and juniors should take one full-length SAT and one ACT under timed conditions. This helps determine which test feels like a better fit. Diagnostic results provide a clear roadmap, guiding families to focus on the exam that will highlight a student's strengths.

PRACTICAL TIP: Schedule diagnostics at the beginning of summer so there is time to create and follow through with a study plan.

STEP 2: BUILD A PERSONALIZED STUDY PLAN

Once the preferred test is identified, students can design a prep plan that fits their goals and style of learning. Options include one-on-one tutoring, small group classes, or self-study using official resources. A sustainable rhythm is more effective than cramming, so aim for two or three study sessions per week across the summer.

PRACTICAL TIP: Set a weekly routine, such as two weekday practice blocks plus one weekend review. Build in family time, downtime, and other activities to avoid burnout.

STEP 3: SCHEDULE PRACTICE EXAMS

Taking practice exams is the best way to build stamina and accuracy. Students should take a full-length practice test every three to four weeks. These should simulate real testing conditions, including timing and environment. After each exam, review mistakes and adjust strategies. This cycle of practice and reflection helps students steadily improve.

PRACTICAL TIP: Use the same start time as the official exam to get comfortable with early morning testing.



STEP 4: CHOOSE TEST DATES

Planning ahead reduces last-minute stress.

- **RIISING JUNIORS:** Target fall or spring of junior year for a first official sitting, allowing time for a second attempt if needed.
- **RIISING SENIORS:** Use late summer or early fall test dates if scores need a final boost before application deadlines.

PRACTICAL TIP: Register early to secure preferred test sites, and always allow space for a potential retake.

QUICK TIPS FOR FAMILIES

- **RIISING SOPHOMORES:** At this point, testing should be exploratory. The goal is exposure, not pressure.
- **RIISING JUNIORS:** Treat summer as the launchpad for serious prep. Small, steady steps now will pay off in the fall.
- **RIISING SENIORS:** Stay focused on targeted practice. This is not the time to start from scratch but to sharpen strategies for the final push.

Test prep is not the centerpiece of summer, but it is an important part of the larger picture. With a clear plan, students can make measurable progress without sacrificing balance, rest, and meaningful experiences in other areas. The summer months provide the space to gain confidence, build stamina, and enter the school year with momentum.

PSAT PREPARATION: WHO SHOULD CONSIDER IT?

The PSAT can serve as an early indicator of strengths and weaknesses and qualifies high-achieving juniors for the National Merit Scholarship. However, its importance varies:

Who Should Prepare:

- **Rising Juniors:** Those scoring in the top percentile on practice SAT or ACT tests may wish to prepare specifically for the PSAT to qualify for National Merit.
- **Rising Sophomores:** Early exposure can be beneficial, though National Merit qualification applies only to juniors.

Efficient PSAT Prep Tips: Focus on overlapping SAT content for students preparing for both tests, as PSAT skills often support SAT success. Brief sessions on PSAT-specific features, such as using the built-in calculator and managing PSAT's unique question formats, can be beneficial.

SUMMER PLANNING FOR PARENTS OF 7TH & 8TH GRADERS

As your child enters middle school, summer becomes an important time for them to explore their interests, develop new skills, and prepare for the challenges of high school. While the transition to high school may still seem far off, the summer months offer a valuable opportunity to nurture academic growth, personal development, and creativity. Here are some strategies for making the most of summer for 7th and 8th graders.

1 ENCOURAGE LEARNING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Middle school is a time of rapid intellectual growth, and it's important to engage your child in activities that both challenge and excite them. Encourage educational activities that are fun and interactive.

- **INTERACTIVE LEARNING:** Explore online educational platforms or engaging apps that foster curiosity in subjects like math, science, or language arts.
- **PREVENTING LEARNING LOSS:** Consider workbooks, reading lists, or summer academic programs to help maintain the skills developed during the school year.
- **EXPLORING NEW INTERESTS:** Allow your child to dive into independent projects, such as learning to code, writing stories, or experimenting with art or science kits, encouraging them to discover new interests.

2 PROMOTE PERSONAL GROWTH

Summer is also an ideal time for personal growth and goal-setting. Encourage your child to think about what they'd like to achieve over the break.

- **GOAL-SETTING:** Help them set realistic goals, such as improving a specific academic skill, reading a certain number of books, or completing a creative project.
- **TAKING INITIATIVE:** Support your child if they want to start something new—whether it's organizing a community service project, building a personal website, or launching a club.
- **FOSTERING CREATIVITY AND CURIOSITY:** Encourage creative outlets like journaling, painting, or building, and engage them in activities that spark their curiosity, such as visits to museums, science centers, or historical sites.

3

ENGAGE IN MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

Finding meaningful ways for your child to spend their summer can help them feel accomplished while developing important life skills:

- **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:** Explore local community service options that align with your child's interests. Volunteering can teach responsibility, empathy, and leadership.
- **INTERNSHIPS OR PART-TIME JOBS:** For older middle schoolers, consider light part-time jobs or internships that provide real-world experience.
- **SUMMER PROGRAMS:** Enroll your child in programs that focus on areas of interest, whether it's a writing camp, a math workshop, or a STEM-related summer course.

4

BALANCE STRUCTURED AND UNSTRUCTURED TIME

While structured learning is important, downtime is equally vital for middle schoolers. A well-balanced summer should allow time for rest and relaxation.

- **SCHEDULING DOWNTIME:** Schedule free time for your child to unwind with hobbies, outdoor activities, or simply hanging out with friends and family.
- **SOCIALIZING:** Encourage your child to build and maintain friendships by organizing gatherings or participating in group activities like sports or theater.
- **NEW EXPERIENCES:** Plan family adventures or local outings that expose your child to new experiences, such as hiking, road trips, or exploring new hobbies.

5

PREPARE FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR

Summer can be a time to bridge the gap between academic years by reinforcing skills and introducing new concepts:

- **REVIEWING KEY CONCEPTS:** Gently review essential skills from the previous school year to reinforce understanding in subjects like math, reading, and science.
- **INTRODUCING NEW MATERIAL:** Gradually introduce topics your child will encounter in the upcoming grade to help ease the transition when the new school year begins.



6 FOCUS ON HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Support your child's overall growth by encouraging activities that showcase their unique strengths and potential future interests:

- **SHOWCASING STRENGTHS:** Encourage your child to pursue activities that allow them to develop their unique talents, whether it's sports, art, technology, or leadership.
- **EXPLORING FUTURE INTERESTS:** Allow your child to explore possible future career interests through activities that align with any budding interests.

7 CONSIDER PRACTICAL SKILLS

Middle school is the perfect time to start introducing life skills and responsibilities:

- **LEARNING LIFE SKILLS:** Encourage your child to take on new responsibilities, such as managing their schedule, learning basic cooking skills, or helping with household tasks. These experiences will build independence and confidence.

By striking a balance between structured learning and free time, you can help your 7th or 8th grader enjoy a fulfilling and productive summer. The goal is to keep their minds engaged while allowing them the time and space to recharge and explore new interests, setting them up for success in the coming school year.

SUMMER PLANNING FOR NEURODIVERSE STUDENTS

Every neurodiverse student is unique, and finding the right summer program requires careful consideration. By involving your child in the decision-making process and understanding their specific needs, you can create a fulfilling and supportive summer experience.

1 REFLECT BEFORE PLANNING

Before diving into specific programs or activities, take some time to evaluate your child's needs and goals for the summer. Here are a few questions to guide your planning:

- **WHAT ARE THEIR STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES?** Understanding your child's learning style, social needs, and areas where they excel can help you choose activities that align with their capabilities.
- **WHAT ARE THEIR INTERESTS AND PASSIONS?** Engage your child in conversations about what excites them. Identifying their interests will help you select activities that keep them motivated and engaged.
- **WHAT SUPPORT DO THEY NEED TO THRIVE?** Consider whether your child needs accommodations in social settings or academic support in more structured environments. Determine whether a mainstream program with accommodations or a specialized setting would be the most comfortable and beneficial for them.
- **WHAT GOALS SHOULD THEY AIM FOR?** Work with your child to set realistic goals for the summer, whether it's building social skills, learning a new subject, or gaining confidence through hands-on activities.

By taking the time to answer these questions, you'll be better equipped to design a summer experience that allows your child to grow and thrive, while also ensuring they feel supported and confident.

2 ENCOURAGE LEARNING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Neurodiverse students can greatly benefit from small-group academic enrichment programs, which provide more individualized attention than typical high school settings. These programs often include instruction in subjects like writing, remedial math, or even SAT/ACT prep, allowing students to maintain academic progress in a low-pressure environment. Summer also offers a unique opportunity to explore new subjects of interest and foster intellectual curiosity in areas not covered during the school year.

3 FOSTER PERSONAL GROWTH AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Social interaction can be particularly challenging for students who are shy, socially anxious, or who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Many summer programs are designed specifically to support neurodiverse teens by creating safe, structured environments for social engagement. Smaller group sizes ensure a comfortable setting where students can participate in activities like arts, sports, or weekend excursions without feeling overwhelmed. Programs tailored for specific populations can help your child connect with peers who share similar experiences, giving them the confidence to form lasting friendships and improve their social skills.

4 SEEK OUT HANDS-ON LEARNING AND EXPERIENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

For students who learn best through hands-on activities, summer offers the perfect time to explore skills and interests through experiential learning. Programs that focus on outdoor adventures—such as rock climbing, horseback riding, or whitewater rafting—allow students to challenge themselves in new ways, building confidence and teamwork skills. Vocational training programs or internships can also provide practical, real-world experience, equipping students with technical skills that enhance their college applications and future job prospects.

5 CONSIDER SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS FOR TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS

For students who are both intellectually gifted and neurodiverse (twice-exceptional), specialized programs offer academic enrichment in a supportive environment. These programs allow students to explore their intellectual passions while receiving the accommodations they need to succeed. Connecting with similarly gifted peers in an intense academic environment can be a powerful experience, helping students gain insight into their learning style and prepare for the demands of college.

6 TAILOR THE SUMMER EXPERIENCE TO INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Neurodiverse students are most successful when their summer programs align with their unique strengths, interests, and needs. It's important to involve your child in the planning process, allowing them to express their preferences and excitement for different activities. Whether your child thrives in a structured academic program, a creative arts camp, or an outdoor adventure experience, the key to a fulfilling summer is creating a supportive environment where they can grow and develop new skills. Programs that emphasize social skills, confidence building, and hands-on learning are often the most impactful for neurodiverse teens.

DOCUMENTING SUMMER ACHIEVEMENTS FOR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

Holistic admissions recognize the whole student, allowing students to showcase personal strengths and unique experiences. It provides multiple pathways to admission, emphasizing well-roundedness and reducing the focus on standardized test scores. Colleges want to see students' authentic selves, highlighting the qualities that make them unique—and summer activities can be a huge part of that. That means students need to effectively document what they've done so they can showcase it when the time comes.

THE FACTORS CONSIDERED IN HOLISTIC COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

As students progress through the summer, they should consider how they're showcasing each of these factors.

- **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

- » Rigor of coursework taken
- » Grade trends over time
- » Performance relative to high school opportunities
- » Standardized test scores (if submitted)

- **PERSONAL QUALITIES AND EXPERIENCES**

- » Leadership potential
- » Intellectual curiosity
- » Creativity
- » Resilience in overcoming challenges
- » Unique talents or skills

- **EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT**

- » Sustained involvement in areas of interest
- » Impact made in school or the community
- » Work experience or family responsibilities

- **ESSAYS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- » Communication skills and self-reflection
- » Personal growth, character, and values

HOW TO DOCUMENT SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR HOLISTIC COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Accurately recording summer activities gives students a strong foundation for building their resumes, completing applications, and crafting compelling personal statements. Here are some suggestions for how to effectively document these experiences.

1 KEEP A JOURNAL OF SUMMER ACTIVITIES

One of the best ways for students to document their summer achievements is by keeping a consistent journal throughout their experiences. Regardless of the experiences they had over the summer—including self-guided activities—they should record the specifics of what they did, how they contributed, and what they learned. This practice will make it easier to reflect on their activities when it's time to apply to colleges. Here are the kinds of things to include in a journal:

- **DAILY OR WEEKLY TASKS:** Recording the work they completed—whether managing a project, collaborating with a team, or leading an initiative.
- **SKILLS DEVELOPED:** Identifying any new skills they gained, such as proficiency in a particular software, leadership abilities, or public speaking.
- **CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:** Documenting any obstacles and how the student worked through them—colleges appreciate students who demonstrate resilience and problem-solving.
- **KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** Highlighting the outcomes of their efforts—whether they helped achieve a team goal, improved a process, or made a tangible impact.

Maintaining a journal not only helps students reflect on their growth but also gives them concrete examples for future essays and interviews.

2 CAPTURE QUANTIFIABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Students should make sure to capture quantifiable achievements when presenting their summer activities to colleges. Admissions officers value measurable outcomes because they provide a clearer picture of a student's contributions and impact. Here are some examples of quantifiable achievements:

- “Completed 150 hours of volunteer work at a nonprofit, organizing a food drive that served 500 families.”
- “Increased social media engagement for a local business by 30% through a targeted campaign.”
- “Led a team of 10 peers in a summer research project, resulting in a published report.”

3

REFLECT ON CHALLENGES AND GROWTH FOR FUTURE APPLICATION ESSAYS

Colleges are interested not just in what a student did, but in how they grew through their experiences. Admissions officers want to see that a student can handle adversity and learn from real-world experiences. Here are some questions to guide this reflection:

- What were the biggest obstacles you encountered in your summer activities?
- How did you handle setbacks or unexpected challenges?
- What did you learn from these experiences, and how will you apply these lessons in the future?

Reflecting on challenges and personal growth demonstrates resilience, adaptability, and a willingness to learn—qualities that are highly valued by colleges.

4

ORGANIZE YOUR EXPERIENCES IN A RESUME FORMAT

After documenting their summer achievements, students can begin to organize them into a resume format—something that will be essential for college applications, internships, and future scholarship opportunities. A well-structured resume provides admissions officers with a clear, concise overview of a student's experiences and achievements.

A resume can take on many forms, but these are the sections students will want to be sure to include:

- **EXPERIENCE:** Include internships, jobs, volunteer work, or personal projects, emphasizing responsibilities and outcomes.
- **SKILLS:** Highlight any specific skills gained, such as leadership, communication, or technical abilities.
- **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** List clubs, sports, or other activities that demonstrate interests and sustained commitment.
- **AWARDS AND HONORS:** Mention any recognitions received, whether during summer activities or throughout high school.



EMBRACING THE SUMMER FOR GROWTH AND DISCOVERY

For teenagers, summer is more than just a break from the demands of school—it's a powerful opportunity for personal and academic growth. During these months, they have the freedom to explore new interests, build valuable skills, and engage in activities that ignite their passions. Whether they choose academic programs, internships, creative projects, or community service, each experience offers the chance to shape their future in meaningful ways.

What makes summer particularly special is that it allows teenagers to take ownership of their time. It's a season where they can focus on what truly excites them, whether that's preparing for the next step in their academic journey or exploring potential career paths. By choosing activities that align with their interests and goals, they can turn these months into a period of discovery and growth.

Parents and guardians play a supportive role, guiding their teens through decision-making while encouraging independence. By helping their teens reflect on their goals and interests, parents can provide valuable advice without dictating the experience. This balance of independence and support gives teenagers the confidence to make choices that are right for them. It's important to remember that summer isn't about achieving perfection—it's about growth and exploration. Trying new things, even those that seem outside of their comfort zone, can lead to some of the most rewarding experiences.

Each opportunity, no matter how small, helps build their confidence and prepares them for the challenges ahead.



PLANNING TOOLS

SUMMER GOAL-SETTING WORKSHEET

1. Reflection on the Past School Year

Take a moment to think about your previous school year. What were your biggest achievements and challenges?
What subjects or activities did you enjoy the most?

WHAT DID I EXCEL AT ACADEMICALLY?

WHAT EXTRACURRICULARS OR ACTIVITIES BROUGHT ME THE MOST JOY?

WHAT CHALLENGES DID I FACE, AND HOW DID I GROW FROM THEM?

2. Academic Goals for the Summer

List your top academic goals for the summer. These could include subjects you want to explore more, courses you want to take, or skills you want to develop.

GOAL 1: _____

GOAL 2: _____

GOAL 3: _____

3. Skill-Building and Career Exploration

Identify the specific skills or career fields you'd like to focus on this summer. Are there workshops, internships, or certifications that can help you in this area?

SKILL 1: _____

SKILL 2: _____

HOW DO THESE SKILLS CONNECT TO YOUR FUTURE CAREER OR ACADEMIC GOALS?

4. Personal Growth Goals

Reflect on areas where you want to grow personally. This could include leadership, communication, or time management skills, as well as activities like volunteering or community involvement.

PERSONAL GOAL 1: _____

PERSONAL GOAL 2: _____

HOW WILL ACHIEVING THESE GOALS IMPACT YOUR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT?

5. Relaxation and Mental Well-Being

Summer is also a time for rest and reflection. List some activities that will help you relax and recharge during the break.

ACTIVITY 1: _____

ACTIVITY 2: _____

HOW DO THESE ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING?

6. Action Plan

List any specific programs, courses, or opportunities you plan to pursue to achieve your summer goals.

Program/Opportunity	Goal(s) addressed	Application deadline/Requirements

7. Reflect and Review

At the end of the summer, revisit your goals and reflect on your progress. What did you accomplish? What new insights did you gain? How have you grown academically and personally?

SUMMER ACTIVITY PRIORITIZATION CHART

Step 1: List Your Potential Summer Activities

Consider activities like internships, part-time jobs, volunteer work, travel, personal projects, summer courses, etc.

Activity	Description
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

Step 2: Evaluate Each Activity

Rank each activity on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Low, 5 = High) for each of the following criteria. This will help you assess which activities align with your goals.

Activity	Initiative	Challenge	Impact	Enjoyment	Time commitment	Cost
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						

Step 3: Prioritize Your Activities

Based on your scores, decide which activities should be your top priorities. You can list the top three to five activities below:

Rank	Activity	Reason for priority
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Step 4: Balance Productivity and Relaxation

Make sure you're not overcommitting. List one or two ways you plan to incorporate relaxation or downtime into your summer.

RELAXATION ACTIVITY 1: _____

RELAXATION ACTIVITY 2: _____

Step 5: Final Action Plan

Now that you've ranked your activities, develop a rough plan for how you'll manage your time. Add any deadlines, application requirements, or commitments you need to keep in mind.

Activity	Dates/Time commitment	Application deadline/Requirements
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

SUMMER SCHEDULE PLANNER

Weekly Overview

Week of: _____

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8:00 – 9:00 AM							
9:00 – 10:00 AM							
10:00 – 11:00 AM							
11:00 – 12:00 PM							
12:00 – 1:00 PM							
1:00 – 2:00 PM							
2:00 – 3:00 PM							
3:00 – 4:00 PM							
4:00 – 5:00 PM							
5:00 – 6:00 PM							
6:00 – 7:00 PM							
7:00 – 8:00 PM							
8:00 – 9:00 PM							

Daily Activity Breakdown

Date: _____

Time	Activity	Category
8:00 – 9:00 AM		Academic/Work/Personal
9:00 – 10:00 AM		Academic/Work/Personal
10:00 – 11:00 AM		Academic/Work/Personal
11:00 – 12:00 PM		Academic/Work/Personal
12:00 – 1:00 PM		Break/Free Time
1:00 – 2:00 PM		Academic/Work/Personal
2:00 – 3:00 PM		Academic/Work/Personal
3:00 – 4:00 PM		Self-Care/Relaxation
4:00 – 5:00 PM		Academic/Work/Personal
5:00 – 6:00 PM		Academic/Work/Personal
6:00 – 7:00 PM		Free Time/Family Time
7:00 – 8:00 PM		Free Time
8:00 – 9:00 PM		Relaxation/Self-Care

Weekly Summary: Goals and Reflection

Weekly goals

1.

2.

3.

Accomplishments

1.

2.

3.

What went well this week?

1.

2.

What can be improved next week?

1.

2.

Free Time and Self-Care Tracker

To ensure you maintain balance, use this section to track how much time you spend on activities that help you relax and recharge.

Day	Activity	Time spent
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE TRACKER

1. Summer Activity Overview

List the main activities you participated in over the summer, such as internships, volunteer work, part-time jobs, research projects, or personal projects.

Activity	Description
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

2. Skills Gained

For each activity, list the key skills you developed. These could be technical, interpersonal, leadership, or problem-solving skills.

Activity	Skill 1	Skill 2	Skill 3
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

3. Challenges Overcome

Reflect on the challenges you faced during these activities. How did you handle them, and what did you learn from overcoming these obstacles?

Activity	Challenge faced	How I overcame it
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

4. Impact of the Activity

Describe the impact of your activities. How did your work contribute to the organization, community, or your own personal growth?

Activity	Impact/Contribution
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

5. Connection to Future College or Career Plans

Think about how these experiences connect to your future academic or career goals. How will these skills and experiences help you in college or in your desired career field?

Activity	Connection to future goals
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

6. Achievements and Key Takeaways

Summarize your key takeaways and achievements from the summer. What are you most proud of? How will you showcase these experiences on your resume or college applications?

Activity	Key achievements
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

7. Reflections for Resume/Applications

In this section, you can start drafting resume or application language to highlight these experiences.

ACTIVITY 1 (DRAFT):

ACTIVITY 2 (DRAFT):

ACTIVITY 3 (DRAFT):

SUMMER PLANNING WORKSHEET

Top Academic and Personal Interests

Consider your **interests** and **involvement** in activities. What are you most passionate about—or think you might be?

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Summer Goals and Desired Takeaways

What do you hope to accomplish, and how do you hope to grow as a person? In other words, what **initiative** do you want to take, and what **impact** do you hope to have?

Examples: course credit, certifications, increased knowledge about a certain career or subject, foreign language proficiency, research experience, etc.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Summer Research:

Program or Opportunity	Goals/Takeaways Addressed	Application Requirement/Deadline or Resources Needed

MAKE THE MOST OF SUMMER WITH SUMMIT

Summer is the perfect time to reset, recharge, and make meaningful progress toward next year's goals. Whether your student needs support, structure, or a strategic plan, Summit helps them use summer with purpose—balancing rest with growth.

HOW WE HELP

From skill-building to long-term planning, our summer programs give students the tools they need to start the school year confident and prepared.

- **TEST PREP:** Personalized SAT & ACT plans built around each student's goals and learning style.
- **ACADEMIC TUTORING:** One-on-one support to strengthen understanding and get ahead for fall.
- **EXECUTIVE FUNCTION COACHING:** Coaching that builds organization, planning, and study skills that last long after summer ends.
- **SUMMER PLANNING GUIDANCE:** Free webinars, checklists, and strategy sessions to help families choose meaningful summer opportunities.

FREE RESOURCES

Explore Summit's planning tools, score-boosting tips, and webinars at mytutor.com/resources#guides.



READY TO GET STARTED?

Scan the QR code or call 1-800-MY-TUTOR to connect with a Program Director about building your student's personalized summer plan.