

Collegewise Summer Planning Guide 2015

*Brought to you by Collegewise counselors
and lovers of all things summer:*

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Introduction

Which of the following summer activities would be most impressive to colleges?

- A. Attending Harvard summer school
- B. Working part-time bagging groceries at the local grocery store
- C. Taking a cooking class and learning how to make pasta from scratch
- D. Attending a summer program in Costa Rica
- E. Going to soccer camp

It's a trick question. They can all be equally impressive.

As the stress and anxiety surrounding college admissions continues to increase, many families are also feeling pressure to create a summer strategy that will best improve their student's chances of admission. From taking courses to get ahead of the masses, to tutoring in order to shore up perceived academic or testing weaknesses, to expensive summer programs promising to improve your admissions chances, summer has become less about what kids want to do and more about getting ahead in the college admissions arms race.

It doesn't have to be this way.

Why did we write this guide?

Many of our students at [Collegewise](https://www.collegewise.com) ask us for advice about how they should spend their summers. There's not one right answer to this question, and there is a seemingly limitless number of options. So we help our students think about what they enjoy, what they might like to learn about, and most importantly, what they actually *want* to do with their summer months. We help them explore options and choose summer programs or activities that aren't just productive, but also enjoyable. We wrote this guide to present students, parents, and counselors with a variety of different opportunities and perspectives, and to help students come to their own decisions about which summer activities are worthy of their time.

Three Myths of Summer Planning

There is no right or wrong way to spend your summer. And while some of the programs in this guide might sound really exciting and interesting, there is also no substitute for taking the reins and creating your own summer experience. It's a great learning opportunity, and there isn't a college admissions officer in the world who will look at your list of accomplishments and say, "Hmmm— it looks like Johnny took *too much* initiative in high school. We're *not* looking for that at Stanford." Whether it's planning a two-week backpacking trip with your friends, calling a local business to see if you can do some job shadowing, or spending every evening getting caught up on the books you've always wanted to read, what's important is that you enjoy what you're doing.

So let's dispel some of the myths surrounding summer planning and college admissions.

Myth #1: Your summer must be "impressive"

Unless your summer activities result in the discovery of extraterrestrial life or the authorship of the next Great American Novel, there's pretty much nothing you can do in two months that will cause an admissions officer to stop reading your application and circle the "admit" option. Summer is an important part of your high school years, but colleges know that it's certainly not the only part.

The other problem with trying too hard to impress colleges is you often end up doing things that lots (and lots) of other students do. That's no way to stand out.

As our fearless leader, Kevin McMullin, wrote in his college admissions guide, [*If the U Fits*](#):

"Lots of kids go to expensive summer programs at colleges. But we've only ever met one who spent his summers taking history classes at his local community college for \$20 per unit. He got to know one of his professors who shared the reading assignments for her upper division course on George Washington. That student didn't care whether any college would look favorably on it – that's not what it was about for him. He was just obsessed with history and wanted to know more. He went to Yale, where he majored in history, and then to Georgetown Law School."

So don't worry about what "looks good." Worry about what you will enjoy and what will help you to grow, whether it's intellectually, athletically, or artistically. Remember, admissions officers are just people, and what's impressive to one person isn't always impressive to another. Most importantly, you don't have any control over what your application reader finds impressive. But no matter who is reading your application, everyone will be impressed by the student who takes the time to figure out what she wants out of her summer and then does everything she can to make it happen.

“Yeah, but what if I want to go to a really competitive college?”

Really, there isn't a summer program out there that will “guarantee” you admission to those universities with single-digit admit rates. While some programs like Telluride, Research Summer Institute (RSI), and Canada/USA Mathcamp have developed reputations for being the proverbial “Golden Ticket” into an Ivy or others like them, it's important to remember that correlation isn't causation. These are programs with extremely selective application processes that tend to draw some of the most creative, ambitious, intelligent, and hardworking high school students out there – the same kind of students who are already successful in applying to places like Swarthmore and Stanford.

So if you're considering a highly selective school, don't look for shortcuts. There's no summer program or activity that will magically ensure your admission. Instead, the admissions officers will look for evidence that you're hungry to learn anything and everything and impact the community around you. And while some programs absolutely provide for that kind of experience, so do a lot of other things that don't involve flying halfway across the world to practice your Spanish or scuba diving in the Bahamas in the name of science.

In fact, one thing that we've learned over the years is that when we look back on our students who end up at places like Duke or Amherst, they're not kids who packed their summers with formal “programs.” Sure, many of them had a couple—especially in the summers before their sophomore and junior years. But many more of them simply built themselves a great summer by bagging groceries at the local market, wedging in an online course or two in the evening, and then spending their weekends diving even deeper into a volunteer program they'd already been a part of throughout high school. In other words, doing more of what they already loved—even if it didn't come with a fancy certificate of participation.

They were students who cleverly used each summer to not only explore new interests and opportunities, but also build and expand upon the things they had been involved with the previous summer. A studio art class leads to an internship at a local art gallery. Dabbling in graphic design leads to a summer job making business cards for fellow students. Playing around with mom's DSLR leads to teaching kids at the local Boys and Girls club how to document their own lives on smartphones.

So, if you're a student who is keen on applying to some of the more selective colleges out there, we encourage you to take a close look at all of the suggestions in this guide—and not just the formal or expensive ones. Carefully consider how you can build a summer that isn't about what you think admissions officers want to see, but instead is one that reflects your interests and goals in a deep and personal way. You'll not only end up with a stronger application, but you'll also end up a stronger person.

Myth #2: You need to spend a lot of money to have a productive summer

If your family has the means to send you to shear sheep in Tibet this summer, knock yourself out. But please don't do it because you think you need a splashy or expensive summer experience to get into college. There's no need to break the bank in order to have a productive summer, and you won't impress Harvard just by paying thousands of dollars to attend their summer school. There are plenty of productive things you can do with your summer that don't cost a thing—or that pay you, like a summer job—that are just as valuable in the admission review process.

As you look through this guide, you'll find that some of the programs are free and some of them cost money. Some of them cost A LOT of money. What's important is that you choose what you want to do and do it well. So, if a language immersion program isn't in the cards for you, that's completely fine. Get a job at the supermarket. Take a cooking class. Volunteer or intern at the community newspaper, or coach a Little League team. You'll shine just as brightly in your college applications as the kid who went to robotics camp at Caltech.

Myth #3: You can't have downtime during the summer

We don't really know who came up with the idea that students shouldn't relax and have any fun at all during the summer (and if we did, we might let the air out of their tires). You officially have permission from us—and from colleges—to take a step back and enjoy yourself without feeling just as busy and rushed as you do during the school year. Colleges know that being a student is more than a full-time job. You put in long hours, including nights and weekends, and you deserve to have some time to recharge your batteries and get ready for the upcoming school year. If you enjoy some downtime over the summer, you'll be better prepared to make an impact and hit the ground running at the start of the school year. Sure, if you spend three months doing nothing but sleeping in and watching TV, colleges will start to wonder what kind of a contribution you'll make to their campuses. But work ethic, curiosity, and passion aren't seasonal traits. Kids who love to learn want to do it all the time. Kids who enjoy being productive don't just suppress that trait for three months. And a student who loves playing soccer, programming computers, or playing guitar will probably find some (enjoyable) way to maintain a connection with that interest over the summer. Learn, be productive, have fun, and relax. You really can have it all.

To help you start thinking about what you might like to do this summer, let's start with a classic list from our Collegewise vault: 50 Ways to Spend your Summer.

A Primer: 50 Ways to Spend your Summer

This guide will present you with plenty of formal summer programs, some of which are quite expensive to attend. But first, we'd like to share this list to emphasize that successful college applicants spend their summers lots of different ways, many of which cost very little money.

Here are 50 ways to spend your summer, all of which are free or almost free, and none of which require that you forgo hanging out with your friends, sleeping in occasionally, or goofing off with regularity. Pick one that looks interesting, or use it as motivation to think of your own way to carve out a great summer for yourself.

You're only a teenager once, and there's no need to turn your summer into the college admissions version of Marine Corps boot camp. Explore, learn, grow, relax, and have fun.

1. Take an interesting class at your local community college.
2. Get a part-time job at the mall.
3. See how many books you can read this summer.
4. Work for your family's business. Consider doing so for free.
5. Think of ten people—teachers, coaches, family members, relatives—who deserve your thanks. Write them a hand-written letter of at least one page expressing your appreciation and detailing how they've impacted you. Tell them what you're going to do to make them proud and spend the summer doing it.
6. Take saxophone lessons.
7. Coach Little League. Or basketball. Or soccer.
8. Work at a summer camp.
9. Volunteer at the local mobile health clinic, or the animal shelter, or the public library.
10. Tutor kids.
11. Start a business with your friends.
12. Set a goal that you are 99% certain you won't be able to achieve this summer. Then go all out and try to achieve it as though your life depended on it. You'll either get there or get much, much closer than you were at the beginning of the summer.
13. Learn how to write computer programs.
14. Read to the blind.
15. Teach something.
16. Learn to paint.
17. Pick something that really interests you and see how far you can go with it.
18. Take classes to become an emergency medical technician.

19. Learn sign language.
20. Pick a cause in your community that you care about. Find groups who care about it, too. Organize people.
21. Offer to intern for free someplace where the work seems interesting, like the city councilman's office, or an advertising agency, or the local newspaper.
22. Play guitar at coffee shops and see how much money you can make this summer.
23. Learn CPR.
24. Cook dinner for your family once a week. Each time, learn a new dish that you prepare. Write your recipes down and make your own family cookbook.
25. Volunteer to lead tours of local state parks.
26. Buy a college guidebook and learn as much as you can about 20 colleges you know nothing about today.
27. Raise money for someone or something that needs it.
28. Learn something that is pure fun, like bongos or hip hop dance, or how to make your own purses (check out your local community colleges' "community education" programs).
29. Pick something you love and figure out how to use it to make contributions to others, like playing piano in a jazz band, teaching residents at a retirement home how to use a computer, or helping run the lights for a play at the community theater.
30. Work full-time and give all the money to a charity of your choice at the end of the summer.
31. Pick a subject that fascinates you and challenge yourself to learn as much as possible about it.
32. Learn karate.
33. Teach karate.
34. Join a book club.
35. Organize a book club.
36. Go to your school principal and ask what you could do, for free, to improve the school. You could paint a classroom, clean lockers, or refurbish the lunch benches. Better yet, enlist five friends to do it with you. Don't just tell colleges you want to make an impact. Make one.
37. Set a goal to learn as many new things as possible this summer—facts, skills, concepts, etc. Write a blog detailing what you've learned so you can share it in cyberspace.
38. Build an iPhone app.
39. Master one subject or skill you currently don't know anything about.
40. Hold informal soccer conditioning workouts, or barbecues for the new student council members so you can get to know each other better, or meetings at Starbucks with your co-editors to brainstorm story ideas for the paper this fall. Show colleges you can organize people and lead them.
41. Have a neighborhood bake sale for the French Club in which all sales are conducted in French.
42. Get a group of kids from the drama club together and enroll in an improv class.

43. Pick a classic author and read all of his or her works. Find out what all the fuss is about Twain or Hemingway or Plath or Dickinson.
44. Take the hardest college class you can find and enroll in it "not-for-credit" so you can challenge yourself with impunity.
45. Visit as many colleges as you can in a 30-mile radius of your house. Take your friends with you. Write your own reviews of each school and share them with people.
46. Learn to cut and style hair. You'll be a savior during prom season.
47. Vow not to watch any TV this summer. Not one single second. Pick something cool and fun and productive to do instead.
48. Find a class offered at a local college that looks fascinating. Email the professor and ask if you can sit in on a session or two just to experience what the class is like.
49. Train to run a 10k, or a half-marathon, or a marathon, or to do a triathlon. And get your friends to join and train with you. Consider raising money with your efforts and donating to a worthy cause.
50. Pick the five most enticing things on this list and do them. Recruit your friends to do them with you. And write a blog to document your best summer yet.

How to Use This Guide

The summer programs we mention here are by no means the only programs worth doing. And we're not endorsing these particular programs either. They're just summer opportunities that our students have had experience with, or that we've heard good things about, or that just plain sounded cool (to us). But your mileage may vary. We tried to find examples with varying costs, program lengths, and geographic locations so that you could get a better sense of the summer program landscape. So check out the programs we mention, but also do your own research.

We've also chosen to highlight programs in the categories that tend to be most popular with our students at Collegewise (Academic, Business, Leadership, Scholarship Programs, STEM, Language Immersion, Travel, and Visual and Performing Arts). If your interests lie outside of those areas, that's fantastic, and hopefully we'll still provide you with some good ideas.

For each program we've listed, we've shared the program length, location, cost (as of January 2015), and if scholarships are available. Of course, you should double-check all of this information yourself, since programs change from year to year, and the best source of up-to-date information is each summer program's website and staff.

Important Questions to Ask Yourself

Before you begin your search for summer activities, you may want to consider the following questions:

1. How much time do you have this summer to devote to a summer activity? Do you have to balance a summer job, sports practice, vacation, or family responsibilities with whatever else you choose to do? A good first step is to figure out how much free time you will have and at what point in the summer you'll be available. And remember that your school and family responsibilities always come first.
2. Do you want to earn money or spend money? Or both? If you're in a position to spend some money on a summer program, how much? (This is probably a good time for a family meeting to discuss finances.) And if you'd love to do a summer program, but you're not sure if you can afford it, check out the section of this guide that highlights programs offering scholarships (and know that there are many more opportunities out there for students who demonstrate financial need).
3. What do you hope to gain from your summer experience? Do you have any goals you'd like to accomplish or projects you want to complete before the start of the school year?
4. Is there something you've always wanted to learn more about? Or something that you're already decent at, but have room for improvement? If so, exploring that interest further might be a good idea.
5. Is there anything you need to do to prepare for the upcoming school year? Would an extra math or language course really help you get a leg-up next year?
6. Do you want to spend time on a college campus? Is there a school where you're interested in applying that you'd like to learn more about? If so, check to see if they offer a residential or commuter summer program. Either option can be a great way to get a taste of college life, and also help you write a stellar supplemental college application essay on why you want to go to that particular school.
7. Do you want to stay at home and take part in a program during the day, or would you prefer to spend some time away from home? How far away would you be comfortable going? (And are your parents as comfortable as you are about that program in Antarctica?)

Summer Planning Timeline

Just as it's never too early to start gathering information and visiting colleges, there is no right or wrong time to start developing your plan for the summer. And while a select few summer programs have rigid application or scholarship deadlines, most will welcome interested students to apply well into March and sometimes into April or even later. Summer programs are unlike college admission in that way: most will find a way for you to enroll if you are a good fit, and submitting an application nine months early probably isn't necessary—or even possible!

Nevertheless, for programs that require an application (as opposed to the ones that just ask you to sign up), it's important to be aware of the program's application deadlines and selection criteria. Many of the more selective summer programs will ask that you provide an essay and one or two teacher recommendations, just like a college would, and you want to make sure that you give yourself and your recommenders enough time to do a thoughtful job. To be on the safe side, we typically recommend that students start exploring summer programs by the end of December in order to get a sense of application requirements, deadlines, enrollment dates (many programs will have multiple sessions throughout the summer), cost, etc., and narrowing down options by the end of January or February.

By taking the time to do your research, assess your goals for the summer, and put your best foot forward on your applications, you can set yourself up for a truly unique summer experience that any college admissions office will want to read about. And if you need help narrowing down program options, then see our [Summer Research Worksheet](#) in the Additional Resources section of this guide for a handy way to compare programs.

And parents (we know you're out there), this is a great opportunity to let your student take the lead. Just as summer programs give students a taste of college, this is a chance to practice taking a step back and letting your child take ownership of the process. Imagine a year from now, when your kid is sitting down for a college interview, and the interviewer says, "I see you volunteered at a doctor's office last summer. How did you get involved with that?" There's a big difference between the kid who says, "I've always been interested in medicine, and I thought this would be a good way to see what it was really like to be a doctor. So I called my family practitioner and asked about shadowing her for a couple days during the summer, and she offered me a volunteer position," and the kid who says, "My mom signed me up for it." Stepping back allows your child to take more initiative, and that's what will really impress colleges.

Summer Programs by Category

**Each description of an individual program listed here is copied and pasted from that program's website. We didn't reword or otherwise edit any of their descriptions because we thought they'd want to speak for themselves. And remember that except for Summer Discovery, we don't have a relationship with any of these programs. We hope you'll click the links and investigate those that look interesting to you to find out if you might be a good fit together.*

ACADEMIC

So you want to get a leg up on the competition for college applications? Academic programs abound all over the country, but remember that not all are created equal. There is a misconception that if you go to a summer program at Stanford it will help you gain entry, but this is simply not the case.

To give you further proof, check out Stanford's FAQ Page (<http://summer.stanford.edu/faqs>):

Question: Would attending Stanford summer programs improve one's chances for freshman admission?

Answer: We do not have a preference for students who attend Stanford specific summer programs, but overall, engaging in enrichment opportunities and advanced courses may demonstrate your enthusiasm for learning and discovery. The fact that you are taking summer or enrichment programs is not in and of itself the value-add to your application; it is what you take from that experience, how you share that experience with us through your essays and how that experience has enhanced your intellectual life that is of importance.

There are plenty of other fantastic programs held on college campuses over the summer (the enrichment program [Explo](#) comes to mind). And while it can be a wonderful experience to live on a college campus and have the first taste of independence while taking interesting courses, we want to be clear that a summer program on a college campus is no more prestigious than taking a class at your local community college or teen center. With that said, if you're pretty sure you want to spend your summer on a college campus, here are the sorts of options you will find:

Telluride Association Summer Program

Location: University of Michigan or Cornell University

Description: Each program is designed to bring together young people from around the world who share a passion for learning. Telluride students, or TASPers, attend a seminar led by college and university scholars and participate in many other educational and social activities outside of the classroom. Students attend TASP because they want a personal and intellectual challenge. Telluride Association seeks students from all kinds of educational backgrounds who demonstrate intellectual curiosity and

motivation, rather than prior knowledge of the seminar's subject matter. TASPers participate solely for the pleasure and rewards of learning with other intelligent, highly motivated students of diverse backgrounds. TASP does not offer grades or college credit.

Program Length: Six weeks for juniors and a separate six-week program for sophomores.

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: Nada! Zip! Free! This program is completely subsidized with the exception of transportation.

Website: http://www.tellurideassociation.org/programs/high_school_students.html

Note: Admission is highly competitive.

Summer Discovery

Full disclosure— we have partnership with Summer Discovery. We're big fans because they take such good care of our students who decide it's right for them. But plenty of our students choose to spend their summers doing other things. And just as you have to find the right fit in a college, you also need to find the right summer program for you.

Location: Various college campuses both in America and abroad.

Description: Discovery programs introduce students to the college experience in an environment that is intellectually stimulating, culturally and socially enriching, and fun. Students choose from over 300 courses (with really great teachers) at 13 different locations, with internships in 4 exciting cities. At Discovery programs, students are treated with the respect they deserve, increasing self-esteem, confidence, and independence. Most classes are small and feature interactive, experiential learning. Students choose from a variety of enrichment and/or college credit classes on each campus, designed to expand their horizons and sharpen their skills. Summer Discovery also offers Language and Cultural Immersion in Italy and England, as well as Jr. Discovery, a more structured program for middle school students.

Program Length: Two to six weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: Varies <http://www.summerdiscovery.com/resource-center/dates-and-tuition>

Website: <http://www.summerdiscovery.com/>

Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth

Location: Baltimore, MD

Description: Students choose CTY for a number of reasons. Most need a greater or different kind of intellectual challenge from what they get at home. They look forward to the chance to meet other very bright young people who share their

interests and abilities. Some may want to study a subject they can't find anywhere else, while others want to get an edge they can use back at school. Some simply had a great CTY experience the previous year that they're eager to repeat.

Program Length: Three-week session

Program Type: Residential or commuter

Program Cost: Varies depending on program. http://cty.jhu.edu/summer/tuition/#is_tuition_payment

Website: <http://cty.jhu.edu/summer/grades7-12>

Note: Eligibility is based on test scores. <http://cty.jhu.edu/summer/apply/eligibility.html>

BUSINESS

During the college search process, a lot of students tell us that they're interested in majoring in business. Usually, this interest stems from one of two things: either they had an especially successful lemonade stand/Girl Scout cookie sales experience as a kid, or they're picturing themselves as the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, gazing out the window of a corner office on the 57th floor. In reality, business involves a lot of different roles and responsibilities, from managing a team of people, to promoting and selling your product, to taking care of your customers. If you're thinking about majoring in business, but you're not quite sure what that means, consider signing up for a program where you can get a small taste of that world. And if you can't find a program that fits your interest, think about other ways you can get involved, from interning with a local company you admire to starting a website and selling your world-famous brownies.

Economics for Leaders

Location: Various college campuses

Description: The goal of the Economics for Leaders (EFL) program is to give promising students the skills to be more effective leaders and to teach them how to employ economic analysis when considering difficult public policy choices. The program is led by economics professors and leadership instructors. Students learn the "economic way of thinking" while building an understanding of leadership through a series of tasks and dilemmas, and the week culminates in a creative decision-making challenge.

Program Length: One week

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$850-\$1200 (scholarships available)

Website: <http://www.fte.org/student-programs/economics-for-leaders-program>

National Student Leadership Council – Business & Entrepreneurship Program

Location: Various college campuses

Description: A program where high school students experience realistic simulations that let them see and feel what it's like to start, manage, and build a company. The program also includes off-site trips specifically tailored to the business field, including the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the Chicago Board of Trade, and the Microsoft campus (trips depend on program location). Students can be nominated by a counselor, or apply independently online.

Program Length: 10 days

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$2995 (scholarships available)

Website: <http://www.nslcleaders.org/youth-leadership-programs/business-entrepreneurship/>

Wall Street 101

Location: Bentley University, Waltham, MA.

Description: A non-residential program that gives students the opportunity to learn about the financial industry and other business fields, from NASDAQ, to IPO, to Dow Jones. Through classroom participation and hands-on exercises, students explore the stock market and discover the process of investment. They also experience working in a real trading room environment, including participation in industry analysis, portfolio construction, and simulated trading sessions.

Program Length: Five days

Program Type: Non-residential

Program Cost: \$799

Website: <http://www.bentley.edu/centers/trading-room/wall-street-101>

LEADERSHIP

Leadership has become something of a buzzword in college admissions these days. Students vie for a limited number of president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary slots as a way to check off that imaginary "leadership" box on their applications. But as was noted in a recent Collegewise blog post, "Holding a formal leadership position isn't necessarily the same thing as leading. Leading means seeing a future and rallying people to join you in reaching it, often without step-by-step instructions." Maybe you're looking for a way to share your love of reading with other kids on campus, so you start a science fiction book club. Or your softball team wants to get sweatshirts but it's not in the budget, so you organize a fundraiser. That's leadership. The reason leadership matters to colleges is because students who make an impact in high school are the same people who make an impact in college. Leadership programs can be a great opportunity to dive into areas like communications, legislation, and public policy. But remember, leadership is more than just a box to check off.

Global Youth Village

Location: Blue Ridge Mountains, VA.

Description: For two hours each morning, students participate in small group leadership training. Through dialogue, team-building challenges, and simulations, youth explore topics including global warming, community health, bullying, gender issues, war & peace, human rights and more. Afternoons are spent exploring sports, hiking and stream walks, yoga, dance, public speaking, arts, and Arabic, Spanish, and Chinese language. Special events include: mountaintop day hikes, picnics, community service, debate night, cultural sharing, talent shows, cabin nights, guest musical performers, garden tours, and bonfires. There is an optional 5 day extension in Washington D.C.

Program Length: Two weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$1550 (U.S. students); \$3550 (international students; includes D.C. extension)

Website: <http://www.globalyouthvillage.org/participate/global-youth-village-summer/>

Junior Statesmen of America

Location: Various college campuses

Description: JSA offers two different programs that focus on a variety of political, communications, and economics topics. Summer programs integrate college-level academics with a mix of engaging enrichment activities designed to build students' skills, emphasizing leadership, confidence, and preparedness to take on challenges no matter what college, career, or life path they choose.

Program Length: Two weeks (Summer School) and three days (Summer Institute)

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$275-\$595 (Summer Institute) and \$4950-\$5250 (Summer School); scholarships available

Website: <http://summer.jsa.org/programs/>

Washington Internship Experience

Location: Washington, D.C.

Description: An internship with a congressional office, congressional committee, campaign office, gubernatorial office, or NGO. Interns perform critical support duties ranging from constituent correspondence to general office administration. The aim of this program is to provide firsthand, on-site observation of the day-to-day workings of Capitol Hill. Students live on campus at Marymount University and participate in extracurricular and social activities with other interns.

Program Length: Three to six weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$7950

Website: <http://www.workshops.org/site/internships.html>

World Affairs Seminar

Location: Carroll University, Waukesha, WI.

Description: With a focus on a different topic every year (2015's topic is Global Energy), this conference allows students to experience new and different ideas and viewpoints brought forward both by their colleagues and by world-renowned experts. Through public policy simulations, students discuss information and ideas and put their new knowledge to use.

Program Length: One week

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$650 (domestic) and \$550 (international); scholarships available

Website: <http://www.worldaffairsseminar.org/>

Business and Leadership programs are also available as part of the summer programs at Boston University, Miami University (Ohio), Brown University, Georgetown University, and many other schools.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

As we've stated before, attending a summer program is by no means essential to your success as a college applicant. There are plenty of other ways to demonstrate your enthusiasm for dark matter or your obsession with Henry VIII and all his wives. But, if the cost of a summer program is out of your budget, you don't necessarily have to forgo the opportunity. Many of the programs we've mentioned throughout this guide offer scholarships, but we also wanted to highlight a few programs that offer full or substantial financial assistance.

Bank of America Student Leaders

Location: Local internship and summit in Washington, D.C.

Description: A paid internship at a local non-profit, including a one-week summit in Washington, D.C. Through the internship and summit, students will have the opportunity to develop and apply leadership skills through hands-on community work experience while serving their community and leading others.

Program Length: Eight weeks

Program Type: Local internship and residential summit.

Website: <http://about.bankofamerica.com/en-us/global-impact/student-leader-eligibility-criteria.html#fbid=QbBqVUO3FoR>

Girls on Ice

Location: Alaska and Washington (Cascades)

Description: Girls on Ice is a wilderness science education program for high school girls that takes place in the North Cascades in Washington State and on a glacier in Alaska. Each year, a team of nine girls and three instructors explores and learns about mountain glaciers and the alpine landscape through scientific field studies with professional glaciologists, ecologists, mountain

guides, and artists. Girls on Ice is the science version of a “language immersion” experience, where science is connected with all aspects of daily life with the goal of creating lifelong advocates for earth science, specifically, and the scientific process as a whole, regardless of whether or not participants decide to specialize in science in college.

Program Length: 12 days

Program Type: Residential

Website: <http://girlsonice.org/>

Summer Search

Location: Various locations

Description: Students can apply independently or be nominated by a counselor provided they attend a partner high school (see website for a list of schools in your area). Once accepted into the program, students will receive support throughout high school and college. As rising juniors, students participate in a 2-3 week wilderness expedition. As rising seniors, students participate in a second summer experience from a second wilderness program to academic programs on a college campus to community service. All parts of the program are supported by deep mentoring relationships. As part of Summer Search, students receive college counseling, financial aid advising, and ongoing support toward completing their bachelor’s degree.

Program Length: Varies

Program Type: Varies

Website: <https://www.summersearch.org/OurProgram>

Gettysburg College Civil War Institute

Location: Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA.

Description: The Civil War Institute Summer Conference includes lectures, battlefield tours, breakout sessions, and other special activities. This year’s conference focuses on the War in 1865.

Program Length: 4 days

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: Scholarships available to cover all costs except transportation.

Website: <http://www.gettysburg.edu/cwi/>

STEM

We’re not talking forestry or horticulture classes. STEM is an acronym that stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Now, we know what you’re thinking. Aren’t technology and engineering basically just science and math? The answer is yes, which is why STEM has become one of the most overused shorthand terms in the world of educational jargon. Google the term “STEM Summer Programs,” and you will come up with scores of hits, only a smattering of which might actually be related to something you’d like to take part in over summer break.

Rather than taking all STEM summer programs at face value, we encourage you to do what an engineer might do and break it down to its pieces. If you were looking for vegetables, you would never walk into a grocery store and stroll down the aisles, reading and analyzing each product until you found the eggplant that you were looking for. Don't do the same with summer programs. Think about what your own interests and goals might be and find a program that delivers.

If you want to learn more about what it would be like to pursue a STEM program once you get to college, or to work in a STEM-related field after college, check out [STEM's Many Branches](#) by Collegewise counselor and STEM expert, Meredith Graham.

Science

There are many different branches of the scientific tree, starting with the "big picture" subjects that you've already heard of. But even if you just search for programs within the field of, say, biology, you are still going to be overwhelmed with options. Think about where your interests and passions lie. If you're interested in studying pre-med, see if you can get help finding an internship or if there are any National Youth Leadership Conferences on Medicine happening in your area. If you are passionate about the marine sciences and conservation, narrow your search down to programs that specialize in marine biology. And if sustainable agriculture is your game, why not start a garden in your backyard and see if you can get a stand at the local farmer's market?

If it's something you are passionate about, you will enjoy the experience and will take pleasure in making the most out of it. Here are some ideas to get you started:

Stanford Institute of Medicine Summer Research Program

Location: Stanford University, Stanford, CA.

Description: High school students from diverse backgrounds are invited to perform basic research with Stanford faculty, postdoctoral fellows, students, and researchers on a medically-oriented project. The goals of the program include increasing interest in biological sciences and medicine in high school students, helping them to understand how scientific research is performed, and increasing diversity of students and researchers in the sciences.

Program Length: Eight weeks

Program Type: Commuter only

Program Cost: Free + \$500 stipend

Website: <http://simr.stanford.edu/>

University of Pennsylvania Chemistry Research Academy

Location: University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

Description: The Research Academy gives participants hands-on experiences with cutting-edge research projects in the chemical sciences. Specific topics included in the Academy will be derived from departmental research and may include: synthesis and characterization of new compounds and materials, chemistry of life processes, spectroscopy and environmental photochemistry, nanoscale materials and molecular devices, and the development of new materials to solve energy challenges.

Program Length: Three weeks

Program Type: Commuter or residential

Program Cost: \$6,399 (commuter), \$7,499 (residential)

Website: <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/summer/programs/highschool/academies/chemistry>

Technology

Obviously, the STEM fields have a lot of overlap, which is why they can share a single acronym. But while fields like “science” and “math” are relatively easy to differentiate, technology and engineering really go hand-in-hand. You don’t find too many astronauts making intricate calculations on a sundial or civil engineers designing a bridge with a slide rule, so it can be difficult to extricate the work that engineers do from the technology that allows them to do it.

For the sake of this guide, we will go with the differentiation coined by our colleague in [STEM’s Many Branches](#): “Engineers really focus more on theories, ideas, and initial prototypes, while technologists focus more on the hands-on component of making things happen and improving and maintaining something once it has been created. An engineer will design a new car, while a technologist will ‘tweak’ the design to improve it for future models.” And that great definition doesn’t even delve into the world of computer science and robotics that seems to drive everything within the field today.

So we invite you to look at technology and engineering as two sides of the same coin, and if there is an area of study that you find particularly appealing, you shouldn’t think twice about jumping in with both feet. For example:

iD Tech Teen Academies

Location: 20+ college campuses

Description: Intensive, pre-college programming camps for students ages 13-18 held on university campuses nationwide. Students are immersed in the world of computer science in order to increase their understanding of application development and computer coding. In addition to classes, many students have the opportunity to tour major app development studios.

Program Length: Two weeks

Program Type: Commuter and Residential

Program Cost: \$2,899 (commuter), \$4,099 (residential)

Website: <https://www.idtech.com/teens/programming/>

Michigan State Introduction to Robotics Engineering

Location: Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

Description: This program is designed for students with an interest in the practical side of computer programming, and allows them to learn about the intersection of robotics and engineering. Throughout the week, students work with NXT and VEX robotics software, biomimetic robotic fish, nanorobotics, and manufacturing automation. The program focuses on short lectures, hands-on experiments, group projects, and lab tours.

Program Length: One week

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$800

Website: <http://www.egr.msu.edu/future-engineer/programs/introduction-robotics-engineering-msu-residential>

Engineering

Although the fields of engineering and technology tend to blend together, we don't want students to get the impression that they are mutually exclusive. So, we will use this section of the guide to provide a brief breakdown of programs for the traditional engineering fields, from the large-scale, sky's-not-even-the-limit field of aerospace engineering to the intricate and concrete fields of mechanical engineering and the geological sciences.

As you begin to research traditional engineering summer programs, you will probably find that most of them fall into one of three main categories: exploratory programs; research and apprenticeship programs; or academic and college prep programs. So it's important to think about what you really want to get out of your summer experience and how the program you choose will help you achieve those goals.

Remember, just because a program is housed on a college campus does not mean that it will be filled with a bunch of dull classes, so keep your goals in mind as you explore these programs. And try to look at them more for what they offer than for where they happen to take place.

Notre Dame Introduction to Engineering

Location: Notre Dame University, South Bend, IN.

Description: The College of Engineering introduces students to the world of opportunities available across engineering disciplines. These introductory courses provide a chance to interact with professionals in the field and discover the many paths students can take with an engineering degree. The program is guided by the interests and questions of student participants and incorporates everything from informal classroom lectures to lab tours and conversations with experts in the field.

Program Length: Two weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$1,850

Website: <http://www3.nd.edu/~iep/>

Department of the Navy Engineering Apprenticeship Program

Location: Multiple locations

Description: The Apprenticeship Program places academically talented high school students with interest and ability in science and mathematics as apprentices in naval laboratories. Students work with scientists and engineers who act as mentors, offering students a unique and positive experience in their fields of interest. This program is offered to over 250 high school students at 25 participating naval labs nationwide.

Program Length: Eight weeks

Program Type: Commuter

Program Cost: Free +\$3,300 stipend

Website: <http://seap.asee.org/>

University of Michigan Summer Engineering Academy

Location: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.

Description: Thirty students are invited to each of the three sessions and attend four classes (Technical Communications, Engineering Concepts, Engineering Math, and Professional Development) designed to develop their understanding of engineering, its disciplines, and the process to follow when applying to an engineering school. Students work on their college portfolios within those classes and are encouraged to enhance their experience with guided tours of the engineering departments and presentations given by related university specialties.

Program Length: Two weeks

Program Type: Commuter

Program Cost: \$100

Website: <http://cedo.engin.umich.edu/summer-engineering-academy/>

Math

If choosing a summer program in science, engineering, or technology confuses students due to the breadth and variety in these fields, mathematics programs tend to draw just as many questions due to their specificity. After all, what could you possibly do at a math camp besides, well, math?

Just about any local college will offer math classes in order to give students an opportunity to review, get ahead, or just stay fresh with their mathematics concepts during the summer break. Math-specific summer programs, on the other hand, tend to go beyond the numbers to look at the discipline from a more philosophical perspective. If you are the type of student who thinks about math as an art rather than a science and enjoys dissecting a calculus proof with the same level of enthusiasm that an English teacher dissects a poem, a mathematics summer program just might be for you.

Program in Mathematics for Young Scientists

Location: Boston University, Boston, MA.

Description: PROMYS is housed at Boston University and designed to encourage high school students to explore the creative world of mathematics in a supportive and enthusiastic community. All first-year students attend a daily lecture, but they spend the bulk of their time working independently or collaboratively on carefully crafted and very challenging number theory problem sets. Results are presented to the PROMYS community at the end of the summer, and students develop a foundation in the field that they can use in future mathematical endeavors.

Program Length: Six weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$3,600

Website: <http://www.promys.org/program>

Ross Mathematics Program

Location: The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.

Description: In partnership with the Clay Mathematics Institute, the central goal of the Ross Program is to instruct bright young students in the art of mathematical thinking and inspire them to discover for themselves the value and importance of abstract ideas. For most students, this is the first time they are asked to consider entirely new questions in the field of mathematics, to develop methods that they have not seen before, and to justify every answer in grounded mathematical theory and practice.

Program Length: Six weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$3,000

Website: <http://u.osu.edu/rossmath/>

University of Washington Mathematics Academy

Location: University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

Description: Math Academy is an intensive, four-week session held on the UW Campus each summer. Students engage in coursework created by UW math faculty and designed to develop the skills necessary to meet the high standards of college-level math and engineering. Students also have enrichment opportunities to explore the range of career opportunities available to engineers through lab tours, research projects, site visits, and networking events.

Program Length: Four weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: Free

Website: <http://www.engr.washington.edu/alumcomm/mathacademy.html>

LANGUAGE IMMERSION

International language immersion programs give students a wonderful opportunity to see the world and dive deeply into another culture. But you don't necessarily need to have a passport in order to learn a new language or advance in one that you've been practicing for years. There are plenty of great language immersion programs offered both within the USA and abroad, so it's important to ask yourself some important questions before deciding which language program is right for you.

Do you want to live in a dorm with other students, or would you prefer a homestay with a local family? Do you want to spend your time in the classroom, out interacting with peers, or some combination of the two? Do you feel comfortable traveling halfway around the world, or would you be better suited to one of the many immersive programs closer to home?

There is no right or wrong answer to any of these questions, and only you can decide exactly what you're comfortable with when it comes to finding the right language program. Options abound in this category, from day camps at local colleges to living with a family in Barcelona or Buenos Aires, so be sure to think about what you hope to get out of the program (beyond language study) in order to find the best fit.

Middlebury Monterey Language Academy

Location: Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT.

Description: The Academy provides a community where students live with a diverse group of peers – all of whom are simultaneously eating, sleeping, hearing, and absorbing a new culture. The language communities are open to everyone from beginners to fluent speakers and emphasize a pedagogy of learning and repeating language rather than forced memorization. Classes and communities are available in Spanish, French, German, Chinese, and Arabic.

Program Length: Four weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$5,995

Website: <http://mmla.middlebury.edu/>

Edu-Culture Immersion

Location: France and Spain

Description: The Edu-Culture Immersion program offers students a traditional dormitory and classroom experience accompanied by a homestay with a local family. Students take part in small classes and engage with French and Spanish teens through the Language Partner Program, followed by a nine-day homestay with a local family in which students speak only the language of study. Programs are offered in France and both Northern and Southern Spain and provide both language and cultural immersion opportunities.

Program Length: Four weeks

Program Type: Residential (on-campus and homestay)

Program Cost: \$7,995

Website: <http://educulture.com/>

Concordia Language Villages

Location: Minnesota

Description: The Language Villages give high school students exposure to foreign languages not typically taught in secondary schools in an immersive and supportive environment. Through these programs, students can earn up to a full year of academic credit through a thematic curriculum, experiential immersion techniques, and performance-based assessments. Language villages are available for 15 different languages, including Danish, Finnish, French, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Swedish.

Program Length: Four weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$4,275

Website: <http://www.concordialanguagevillages.org/>

SYA Summer Programs

Location: China, France, Italy, Spain

Description: Each high school program focuses on intensive language instruction and immersion in the culture, enabling students to make significant progress in their language of study while experiencing the sights and sounds of the city and country they are

visiting. All students live with host families and explore their host cities during afternoon and weekend trips before enjoying a week of travel around their host countries at the end of the program.

Program Length: Five weeks

Program Type: Residential - Homestay

Program Cost: \$6,700

Website: <http://www.sya.org/s/833/global.aspx?sid=833&gid=1&pgid=361>

TRAVEL

Although many people associate study abroad programs with a traveler's junior year of college, high school students will find that summer can be a great time to visit a foreign country. And trust us—you'll do much more than post photos as you and your friends squeeze into a London telephone booth or pretend to hold up the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Immersing yourself in another country's language and traditions (and let's be real here—eating the food!) can have an extraordinary impact on your perspective and world-view. And the challenges that come with visiting a foreign country are similar to those all college freshmen face when they're on their own for the first time, so a summer abroad program can be a great practice run before heading off to college. Plus, there's nothing quite like studying Shakespeare in London, or wildlife preservation in the Galapagos Islands, or international relations in Beijing. If you're looking for a way to dip your toe into the study abroad experience, the following programs are a good place to start.

Oxbridge Academic Programs

Location: England, France, Spain, and Scotland

Description: Led by outstanding teachers, the Oxbridge Academic Programs immerse students in subjects they are passionate about while helping them discover the spectacular cities in which they are living. Local resources are used as teaching aids, and classes are held in some of the world's greatest museums and galleries. To make the experience even more meaningful (and to consolidate the learning process), each course culminates in a final project.

Program Length: One to four weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$2250 (1 week) and \$7795 (4 weeks)

Website: <http://oxbridgeprograms.com/>

Global Leadership Adventures

Location: Central America & the Caribbean, South America, Africa, Asia & The Pacific

Description: Through hands-on learning experiences, GLA students learn about themselves and their roles in the world, discovering new passions and honing their leadership skills. GLA students emerge with a deeper understanding of increasingly global challenges—a new perspective on healthcare, economic and political issues, children’s rights, animal protection, the environment, indigenous and women’s rights, and poverty, among many others. These issues become real when students come face-to-face with them in a new culture.

Program Length: 10 days, two weeks, and three weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$2299 (10 days), \$3399 (two weeks), and \$4999 (three weeks)

Website: <https://www.experiencegla.com/>

Outward Bound Costa Rica

Location: Costa Rica and Panama

Description: Outward Bound summer courses in Costa Rica and Panama provide learning experiences that allow participants to build life skills, intercultural competence, command of the Spanish language, and self-awareness. Through varied adventure challenges and service learning expeditions, students expand self-awareness, step up into leadership roles, and discover that they are capable of more than they ever thought possible.

Program Length: Two, three, four, and five week options

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$2800 (two weeks), \$3800 (three weeks), \$4600 (four weeks), \$5100 (five weeks)

Website: <http://outwardboundcostarica.org/programs/summer-expeditions/>

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

So you’re an aspiring Meryl Streep or Michelangelo who’s wondering what your options are now that you’ve decided to follow your dreams? Well, before you head off to college, it will be important to figure out if you’re interested in a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), which would give you a well-rounded academic education within your chosen arts major, or a Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.), which would require a much more intensive, hands-on approach to your chosen discipline. For instance, an actor getting a B.A. will still take all the general education courses that every student takes. For a B.F.A. student, though, the degree is considered a professional degree and course requirements will revolve around the arts. So that student will also take classes on set design, lighting, and playwriting. Exploring a summer program can help you decide which path you might like to follow, and it can also be a lot of fun, even if you’re not considering a visual or performing arts major in college. And since most major art museums offer summer programs, you have the option of staying local or traveling farther afield.

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Location: Chicago, IL.

Description: School of the Art Institute strives to help students master a variety of mediums so that they will have the freedom to move and explore throughout different disciplines, take risks, experiment, and find the right solution for each individual problem. The school boasts an interdisciplinary philosophy, enthusiastic faculty, and the third largest collection of art in the world to serve as inspiration for students.

Program Length: Three two-week sessions and one four-week session

Program Type: Residential, but not required

Program Cost: \$3462 (two weeks), \$6924 (four weeks). Scholarships are available.

Website: http://www.saic.edu/cs/high_school/summerinstituteresidencyprogram/

School of the Museum of Fine Arts

Location: Boston, MA.

Description: SMFA offers a rigorous summer program for high school students interested in the visual arts. The core of the curriculum is centered on an interdisciplinary approach, combining studio work with critique and discussion. Students build a solid foundation of artistry, conceptualization, and technical skills. Attendees from a variety of backgrounds and countries spend four weeks on SMFA's campus, utilizing the studios, working with expert faculty and graduate mentors, building their portfolios, and exploring the Museum of Fine Arts and Boston's cultural and historic landmarks. Graduates of the program can earn up to four college credits towards undergraduate study at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts.

Program Length: Four weeks

Program Type: Residential or commuter

Program Cost: \$3300 (commuter), \$5500 (residential). Scholarships are available.

Website: <http://www.smfa.edu/pre-college-summer-studio>

Savannah College of Art and Design

Location: Savannah, GA and Atlanta, GA.

Description: Students attend two workshops and have access to the university's extensive facilities, resources, and libraries. Workshops are taught by SCAD professors, alumni, or selected graduate students and may include demonstrations, lectures, studio work, and local field trips. To provide maximum individual attention and collaborative interaction between students and instructors, class sizes are small, with generally 15 or fewer students in each workshop. Organized social and cultural activities are offered each day to create an authentic experience of life as a SCAD student in the city. A closing exhibition of student work is held at the end of each session.

Program Length: Five one-week sessions in Savannah and two one-week sessions in Atlanta.

Program Type: Residential or commuter

Program Cost: \$1000 (commuter), \$1200 (residential), additional \$40 registration fee plus an extra \$40 for each additional session. Scholarships are available.

Website: <http://www.scad.edu/academics/pre-college-summer-programs>

French Woods Festival of the Performing Arts (Summer Camp)

Location: Western NY.

Description: Each camper designs his or her own unique summer experience. Campers are able to focus on one particular area of interest, or they may choose to select a variety of activities. Camp specialties include dance, theater, music, circus, magic, visual arts, and film and video. Campers are also offered traditional camp activities that can be chosen *a la carte*.

Program Length: One week to 12 weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$850 (one week), \$12,100 (12 weeks)

Website: <http://www.frenchwoods.com/>

New York University/Tisch School of the Arts

Location: New York University, New York, NY.

Description: During the summer, the Tisch School of the Arts offers high school students the chance to participate in intensive training in New York City. Through these programs, students gain an enriching and enlightening experience, as well as a better understanding of the nature of a professional training program. In each four-week residential program, students are enrolled in rigorous and highly structured college-level courses taught by full-time faculty. Upon successful completion of the summer program, students earn six college credits, all fully accredited New York University courses.

Important Note: Application deadline is in January!

Program Length: Four weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$8,638 + meal plan, registration, and supply fees

Website: <http://specialprograms.tisch.nyu.edu/page/hsStudents.html>

Sci/Art Nano Lab Summer Institute at UCLA

Location: UCLA, Los Angeles, CA.

Description: At the Sci/Art Nano Lab Summer Institute, students will make connections between cutting-edge scientific research, popular culture, and contemporary arts. Through historical retrospectives, surveys of current art-science collaborations, and science fiction movie screenings, students will be exposed to the interface of science, art, and culture with a focus on multi-disciplinary collaborations that explore the possibilities and implications of technological innovation. Lab visits, workshops, hands-on

experiments, and meetings with world-renowned scientists will be balanced with visits to museums, daily movie screenings, and meetings with famous contemporary artists who collaborate with scientists.

Important Note: Highly competitive

Program Length: Two weeks

Program Type: Residential

Program Cost: \$3196 plus some expenses. Scholarships available to California residents.

Website: <http://www.summer.ucla.edu/institutes/SciArtNanoLab>

How to Create Your Own Summer Program

If you've read through the last 20+ pages and are feeling a little like Goldilocks (none of these programs are just right), you might want to create your own summer activity. We can't say enough about the importance of taking initiative, and a great way to do that is to find your own way to be more involved with something you enjoy. That might mean taking your résumé to the local office of an organization you admire and asking about volunteer opportunities. Or contacting a business leader in your community to find out about a possible internship. Or organizing a weekly nature sketching group at different spots around your town. We know it can be intimidating to make the first move, so take a look at the following Collegewise blog posts for a few tips on how to write a good email or make a better phone call. Remember, communicating with an individual makes a much stronger statement than just submitting a form online.

How to make better phone calls

<http://wiselikeus.com/collegewise/2013/12/how-to-make-better-phone-calls.html>

How to write a good email message

<http://wiselikeus.com/collegewise/2010/07/how-to-write-a-good-email-message.html>

Additional Resources

We've done our best to get you started with your summer program research. These sites can help you pick up where we've left off:

http://cty.jhu.edu/imagine/resources/summer_programs/history.html

<https://www.teenlife.com/>

<http://www.teenink.com/summer>

<http://summerprogramfinder.com> (thanks to Paul C. Kaser of Bergen County Academies for creating this database)

Five Tips for Thriving at Your Part-Time Job

(Reprinted from the *Collegewise* [blog](#))

Planning to work this summer instead of or in addition to attending a summer program? Good for you- we love that work ethic! For those students who secure part-time employment in high school, here are five ways to get the most out of your experience and actually do a great job.

1. Don't treat it like a part-time job.

Sure, this job isn't your life (it is a *part-time* job, after all), and you may have plans for a future that doesn't involve folding clothes or making sandwiches. But it matters a lot to someone there. If the clothing store doesn't perform well, your manager could lose his job. If the deli doesn't sell enough sandwiches, the owner might not be able to pay her mortgage. And the other employees at your gig who won't be leaving it at the end of the summer care a lot about keeping their jobs. You'll do better work and be a better employee if you treat this part-time job like your future depends on it. For someone there, it does.

2. Anticipate your boss's requests.

A good employee will cheerfully take out the garbage when her boss asks. A great employee picks up on the fact that the garbage needs to be taken out when it's full and just takes care of it without being asked. Every day that you go to work, listen to what your boss asks you to do and think about how you could anticipate that request the next time. Every time you do something your boss would normally have to ask someone to do, you're showing her that you're a smart employee who can be trusted.

3. Treat your mistakes seriously.

You're going to make a few mistakes at your job. It happens to the best of us. When it does, take it seriously. Let your boss know that you realize it matters that the ketchup gets changed out at the end of the day (see tip #1). Apologize and resolve not to make the mistake again. When you take a mistake seriously, you can actually prove yourself to be a better employee. Mistakes happen. But they can actually help you become a better employee when you treat them seriously.

4. Don't worry about credit.

The most respected and valued employees don't spend a lot of time worrying about whether or not they're getting credit for what they do. If you clean the windows after closing (without being asked), your boss may not ever know it was you. Do it anyway. You're not going to get credit for every good thing that you do in this job or in this life. That's the way it goes. The most successful people care more about doing good work than they do about getting credit for every good thing they do. The credit—and its associated rewards—will eventually show up. But in the meantime, don't expect, demand, or wait for it.

5. Be a happy worker.

Positivity is contagious. When you're cheerful and pleasant to be around, people gravitate towards you. No, you may not leap out of bed every morning excited to get to work, but once you get there, act like there's no place you'd rather be. Be nice to customers, your co-workers, and your boss. Smile a lot. You won't just make yourself happier; you'll make everyone around you happier, too. That's the kind of impact I write about here, the kind that makes people miss you when you move on to something else. Work hard, do a good job, and make a point to be a happy worker. You'll thrive at this part-time job and improve your chances of getting the next job that you want.

Collegewise Summer Research Worksheet

Name of Activity, Summer Program, and/or Affiliated Institution (if applicable)			
Location			
Length of Program and Program Dates			
Program Cost (if applicable)			
What do you hope to gain from this experience? What are your learning goals for this activity/program?			
What do you like about this program? Your opinions!			
What do you dislike about this program? Your opinions!			
Application Requirements?			
Rate Your Interest 1 to 10 (10 being the highest)			

About the Authors

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[Colleen Boucher](#) is a graduate of Loyola University Chicago and Boston University, and a college counselor at Collegewise – East Bay Area, California. A recovering theater geek, Colleen spent her summers in *Grease* (the musical, not the country), mastering the triple time step in *42nd Street*, and rocking some gold lamé in *A Chorus Line*.

[Sara Kratzok](#) is a graduate of Wellesley College and Harvard University, and the director of Collegewise – Newton, Massachusetts. In high school, Sara spent her summers as a cashier at Office Max and assisting the graphic designer at a screen printing company (she may still be recovering from the fumes).

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