

Here are some options to consider (particularly your summer between Junior and Senior year) if you don't have summer activities lined up already.

Carry a Current Extracurricular Into the Summer

Your current extracurricular activities don't have to take a break for the summer. Find a way to continue to participate in your current clubs or activities during the break. For example, if you're involved with the entrepreneurship club at school, come up with a way to host a fundraiser over the summer that can benefit the club when school resumes in the fall.

If you're in the debate club, organize a few "off-season" debates to help you and your teammates stay sharp and prepared for the fall.

If you host an after-school program for music at the local community center, see if you can continue that for students who may be attending a day-camp during the summer. Find creative ways to stay active in your current activities even though school is out of session.

Volunteer

Reach out to local organizations to see if they need volunteers for the summer. Have a passion for nature and the outdoors? See if the local parks organization needs volunteers to help run parks programs or staff a visitor's center.

Students interested in art could volunteer at a local museum or gallery, helping with ticket sales, events, or other administrative duties. Also contact local children's organizations, like the Boys and Girls Club, to see if they need volunteers to teach art or coach a sport. There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer in your community – and colleges like to see students making an impact and helping others with their passions and interests.

Gain Hands-On Experience

A summer job in a field of interest is another way to have a productive summer while also gaining real-world experience – and a paycheck. A student with a passion for swimming, water, and water engineering can take a summer job at the local pool teaching swimming lessons and helping the staff find clean and efficient ways to take care of the pool itself.

Maybe you're interested in healthcare and your doctor's office is looking for a summer intern to help process paperwork and organize patient records. This can

give you insight into the day-to-day activities of a doctor's office and what it takes to keep a practice organized and running efficiently.

Other opportunities for hands-on experience can include assisting with a research project at a local university, or even honing your computer programming skills by taking on some freelance coding work from a local business or organization. There are a number of ways to spend your summer gaining experience while also earning a little money for college in the process.

Take College-Level Courses

You don't have to have a job or internship during the summer to learn more about an area of interest or be productive. One way to delve deeper into your interests is to actually learn something new about them through online or summer courses. Check with local universities or community colleges to see if they have any summer classes in a topic of interest, like business, communications, art, or some other field.

Look for online courses or MOOCs that you can take at your own pace in between other activities, too. Sample courses on [edX](#) and [Coursera](#) include [Software Development Fundamentals](#), [Philosophy and Critical Thinking](#), and [Medical Neuroscience](#), just to name a few.

Catch Up on Outside Reading

Reading books, magazines, blogs, and other publications related to an area of interest is one of the best ways to learn more about the things you're passionate about and whether they're a good fit for you. Take time to read and expand your understanding of topics that pique your interest or that you want to study in the future. Not only will this make you an expert in certain specialties, but it will also come in handy when writing your college essays, as many colleges will ask what you are reading outside of the classroom.

Prepare for the ACT or SAT

The summer is a great time to prepare for the ACT or SAT and it is a productive activity, however, it's not the only activity you should spend your time on this summer. Continue to take practice tests, evaluate performance, and work on test-taking skills during the summer in between other activities like working, volunteering, or another activity of interest. This is especially important for students who plan to take the exams during the summer months.

Work on Your College Applications

Just like with test prep, rising high school seniors shouldn't devote the entirety of their summer to college applications – they should also pursue other activities that relate to their interests. However, you will be writing your 650-word personal statement for the Common Application and finalizing your college list. You may have college visits to complete. This is the best time to get a jump on your essay writing and application completion. The Common App opens August 1st.