

Summer Tips for College Success

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Summer Tips for College Success from ICAN

As the temperatures hover between 70 degrees and snow, are you imagining the carefree days that await you this summer? Are your daydreams filled with poolside conversations and weekend trips with your friends? Summer vacation is a break from the daily grind of homework, papers and pop quizzes, however don't let those three months off set you back in your quest for future success.

Enjoy your summer break but also use your abundance of free time to get in some additional college prep work. Now, before you stop reading altogether, we're talking fun college prep work here. Summer activities can be a lot of fun and also help prepare you for future collegiate success.

Summer Camp. A summer camp exists for almost every interest, whether it's basketball, computer programming, drawing or biology. It's good to get away from home a bit and explore your unique self. Look for community organizations that offer special workshops over the summer as well as traditional camps.

Volunteer. Colleges and scholarship committees love students who volunteer and get involved with their communities. It's also a great way to meet new and interesting people and learn about new and different career fields. In addition to becoming an active member of your community, you'll also learn more about the world and other people.

Part-time Jobs. Who wouldn't love to have some extra cash lying around for a rainy day? Having a summer job not only puts some money in your pocket, but also offers you the chance to explore a career that you are potentially interested in. You'll gain valuable experience and perhaps even gain a few contacts who can be references later on.

Read. Ok, so this one may sound a little more like schoolwork, however reading is important for both the academic and the social world. Reading improves your vocabulary which is one of the categories tested on college entrance exams like the ACT or SAT. Reading is one of the best ways to increase your knowledge so choose from a mix of classic and contemporary fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama. If you need ideas visit your local library or search online for "college-bound reading list" or "college prep reading list."

Research colleges. Visit various college websites to get a free tool for the type of school that fits you best. Try to visit a few campuses; visit while summer classes are in session so you can see what it might be like to attend. If you know someone taking summer classes at a local college, ask if you can tag along and experience the college classroom.

Improve academic skills. Find a tutor for the basics if you want to improve your grades for next year, or look for classes your high school doesn't offer. Learning centers and many community colleges offer classes year-round either online or in small-group and individual sessions.

Get involved. Some school and community activities run through the summer. Without the added pressure of homework, you might have the time to do something new or take on different responsibilities. Leadership roles teach you to work with others and to be organized, and they look great on scholarships and college applications.

Search for Scholarships. Even if it's too early to apply, finding scholarship you qualify for is time well spent. You can choose activities and classes that will help you win scholarships later if you know the award qualifications ahead of time. You'll also be a step ahead of those who wait until senior year to begin their search.

Practice life skills. Soon after high school graduation, you'll be living somewhat independently. Prepare by learning how to do your own laundry, shop on a budget and cook simple meals.