

Summer Programs



The Benefits of Summer Programs for Teens

High school summers are a time to explore new interests, master skills, and gain independence. Students who participate in a meaningful summer program can significantly increase their college and career readiness in ways that are not possible with other activities. With a little advance planning, a student can fit in an interesting summer program along with a job, sports, or other summer plans.

What is a summer program for high school students?

Summer programs for high school students differ significantly from traditional summer camps for younger children. They are usually geared to a specific interest and vary widely in terms of length, cost, and geographic location. They can be offered at a college, at a school, in a community center, or in the case of a travel program, in various places “on the road.” Interest categories range from academic subjects, to performing & visual arts, to travel and language courses, to community service. These programs range in length from two weeks to two months. Local summer programs are usually less expensive because they don’t include room and board. Many costlier programs offer scholarships to deserving students.

What are the benefits of participating in a summer program?

Adolescence is the time when a child’s adult personality begins to emerge. Summer programs—

overnight ones in particular—allow students to practice being away from home and becoming independent. Group living experience is very helpful before college! Career-oriented summer programs help students to decide if a particular interest is, or is not, a possible college major. Travel and community service programs help students become aware of the world around them and give them context and purpose to their own lives. **Interesting summer experiences make great topics of conversation and can inspire students to write insightful college essays.**

How to find a summer program

- Create a budget or a price range before searching for programs
- Speak to guidance counselors at your school
- Network with other parents and students with similar interests
- Search on TeenLife.com

How to evaluate a summer program

- Ask for references from students *and* their parents
- Review the program’s guidelines, requirements, and restrictions
- Check for accreditation. Summer programs at colleges are not usually accredited but you can ask questions about the same criteria: www.acacamps.org/media-center/how-to-choose/safetytips

Summer programs cater to many interests:

- Adventure/Trips
- Architecture
- Arts
- College Prep
- Community Service
- Computers & Technology
- Engineering
- Environmental Conservation
- Foreign Language
- Leadership
- Math
- Science
- Sports
- Technology
- Theater
- Travel

Just go to TeenLife.com and enter your interest in the search bar. Then filter for “Summer Programs” in the left column. All summer programs that match your search will appear in order of relevance. Request information from those that interest you and mention that you heard about them from TeenLife!

Additional Resources

WEBSITES

- TeenLife.com (www.teenlife.com/summer)
- American Camp Association (www.acacamps.org)
- Enrichment Program section in Naviance’s Family Connection portal

BLOGS

- TeenLife Blog: Summer (www.teenlife.com/blogs/tags/summer)
- American Camp Association Blog: Parents Place—Search for “Teens” (www.acacamps.org/blog/parents-place)
- Summer Camp Culture Blog (www.summertimeculture.com)

SUMMER PROGRAM FAIRS

- Search for summer program fairs at your local high school or college. Many list these fairs on their websites
- American Camp Association Camp Fairs (www.acacamps.org/camp-fairs)

VIDEOS

- American Camp Association YouTube (www.youtube.com/user/AmericanCampAssoc)

BOOKS & GUIDES

- TeenLife Guide to Overnight Summer Programs (<http://guides.teenlife.com/summer>)
- *The Best Summer Programs for Teens: America’s Top Classes, Camps, and Courses for College-Bound Students* by Sandra Berger

Questions? Email us at info@teenlife.com or search our summer program blogs and listing pages for more information