

School's Out: What Now?

Summer is a great opportunity to do something that might interest and challenge you. You can [volunteer](#), attend a [summer school program](#) or find a [summer job](#).

When deciding what to do with your extra time, don't lose sight of your goals for the future. These easy steps can keep you at the top of your game, energized and ready to meet the demands you'll face in the fall.

1. Keep up with the news.

Reading is a key to academic success. It's the best way to build vocabulary, improve reading comprehension and gain skills in analyzing text. And reading newspapers and magazines — in print or online — has additional benefits: you'll learn about current events and become a more knowledgeable and well-rounded individual.

2. Take a class.

Consider exploring an area of interest that you don't have time for during the school year. It may mean learning something new to you, such as another language — or gaining in-depth knowledge in an area you're familiar with, like advanced chemistry. Either way, you'll be able to strengthen your organizational, homework and study skills as you delve into an exciting new area. Get more information about [summer school learning programs](#).

3. Join or form a book club.

Keep up with contemporary authors in addition to exploring [the classics](#). Participating in a book club is a great way to become comfortable with sharing your thoughts in a group setting, a common activity in advanced-level classes. You can also hone your organizational and leadership skills if you're responsible for the club's reading selections, meetings and discussions.

4. Keep a journal.

The more you write, the easier writing becomes. Keep a diary or blog, and you'll boost your composition skills naturally. You'll learn about your own writing style as well as the rules of grammar and effective sentence structure. You'll also have an outlet for creative self-expression. As you compose tales about your vacation, work experiences and personal relationships, you may even find the perfect topic for one of your college-application essays.

5. Volunteer.

Volunteering gives you an opportunity to show what you're really made of. There's no shortage of organizations that can use a helping hand. Hospitals, nursing homes, animal shelters and food banks are just a few places that need energetic and caring volunteers. The benefits are mutual: while you help others, you can improve your interpersonal skills as well as practice good time management and scheduling. Learn more about [volunteering](#).

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