

## Stand-Out Summer Ideas for Teens

The right set of summer activities can really boost your admissions profile. Summer is a crucial time to discover your interests, activate your passions, and take your endeavors to the next level. Here are eight “off the beaten path” summer ideas we love:

1. **Volunteer:** But not just *any* volunteering. Don't pick what your friends are doing, or what is closest! Find real ways to engage with your community. Is there a need you have seen? An issue you care about? Choose accordingly. Remember: Admissions officers love students who start their own projects rather than joining one that already exists.
2. **Participate in summer programs:** But not *any* summer programs. Similar to choosing a volunteer activity, taking the time to reflect on what type of program is the best fit will help you define yourself and develop. Participating in summer programs during 9th and 10th grade can provide the path to more independent activities later in high school. Consider summer programs the foundation you will build upon in future years.
3. **Start a small business:** Love to make jewelry, bake, or play ping pong? How can you turn your interests and hobbies into a viable business venture?
4. **Get an internship:** This usually involves a significant amount of advanced planning. Reach out to people you know and see if there are opportunities in your field of interest. Ask family friends, teachers who know you well, friends, and other connections you have.
5. **Get a job:** Never underestimate the real life experience of a summer job, for both your own personal development and admissions essay gold!
6. **Start a blog or YouTube channel.** What issues or current events need further discussion? What current projects and interests would you like to share? What connections and communities do you want to create? Starting a blog or YouTube channel is a creative and exciting way to do all of this and more!
7. **Self-designed independent projects:** Know your passions and explore them with a self-directed project. Admissions readers love to see this type of direction, maturity, and independence.
8. **Read!** Don't underestimate the importance of focused time spent immersed in critical reading. Regularly read articles in magazines such as The Atlantic, Harper's, and The New Yorker. Read the news every day and stay informed on world events. Not only will this practice help you develop your own critical thinking skills and stay aware of current events, but you will also develop as a writer and find new ways to discuss what interests you.