

Find the Perfect Summer Job

How to Get Started

Summer is a great time for you to earn money for college, pursue interests and gain experience through paid or volunteer jobs, internships and other activities. It can also help when you're applying to colleges — college admission officers see meaningful summer activities as a demonstration of commitment and responsibility.

Tap Your Network

One of the best ways to find job opportunities is by asking people you know — networking. Start with your family, friends, teachers and counselors. If you've already got something in mind, tell them. They may have suggestions and know people you can contact for more information.

Here are some possibilities to think about:

1. Exploring a Career

Now's a chance to test the reality of a job against your expectations. Start by calling businesses and organizations in a field you're interested in to find out if they need any help. Even if they don't, they may have suggestions you can use to continue your search.

2. Offering your Services

During your job search, you may find a potential employer who just can't afford to hire you. You may want to offer your services for free — in other words, try to arrange an unpaid internship. In return you'll get great skills, perhaps a letter of recommendation and maybe even an offer of a paid position in the future.

3. Becoming an Entrepreneur

There are many businesses you could create and run. For example, if you know a foreign language, people may pay you to teach them how to speak it. If you're good with animals, you could spend the summer as a dog-walker. Start calling people now and see if you can line up a few clients. Keep in mind that being your own boss has its rewards, but it also means hard work.

4. Getting More Involved

If you already have a job that really interests you, consider asking not just for more hours but for more responsibility. Use the summer to expand your experience and knowledge. Sticking with one organization or job gives you depth and breadth — and shows you've made a real commitment.

5. Volunteering Your Talents

Spending a summer pitching in at a local charity or community organization is a great way to learn about yourself and others. And it can help you develop leadership skills that last a lifetime.

6. Developing Skills

Doing something constructive with your summer vacation doesn't necessarily mean getting a traditional job. Maybe you're really into acting or sports and you want to devote your full-time energy to formally developing those skills. You can find special programs in almost every area of interest. Or consider taking a college class during the summer; most colleges allow high school students to enroll, and many have summer semesters.