



Creative Summer Planning in the Time of Social Distancing

It can feel like everything has changed during Covid-19. Sports are cancelled, your classroom is actually your living room, and your friend-group hangouts take place on...well, Google Hangouts. One thing that hasn't changed, though: competitive college applicants find productive, enjoyable ways to engage with the world around them.

Start by Setting Goals

Think about what you intend to accomplish. It's easy to get wrapped up in the path – the summer program, the college class, the internship. But many opportunities from previous years aren't going to be available this summer or are going to be in a radically changed form. So, consider what you want the **outcome** to be. Do you want to know more about a particular subject? Do you want to have helped people? Do you want to develop a skill? Those all can be done without leaving your house.

While you're brainstorming your best summer, keep in mind that colleges consider your activities within the context of what's possible. No college expects you to travel to a far-away summer program during a pandemic. Family obligations have always been a productive way to spend time, too. Family caregiving is a perfectly valuable and productive activity – just ask college admissions officers.

Building Out a Summer at Home

Try something enjoyable, productive, or new to you. Consider taking an online class at your local community college; organizing a thank-you letter-writing campaign for nurses; or asking a parent to show you how to change the oil in your car.

Follow your own interests. Read a book a week, attend a virtual screenwriting workshop, or create an interactive map of the Star Wars universe. Do something that makes you happy.

Think about how you can engage in professional or college planning. Learn to code (and see if you can answer the eternal question: Python or C++?). Use College Board's Big Future tool to research colleges or access the ACT Academy for practice tests.