



# College Keystones



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A College Planning Relief Publication

## I'm bored, there's nothing to do!

It's summer time, school is out, pools are open and if you listen very closely you can hear students all over the place saying, "I'm bored, there's nothing to do!" Well here are some solutions to your high school student's boredom that will have very positive impact on their college planning. Many students have very hectic schedules during the school year that often don't allow them to take advantage of some of the ideas below. Don't let this summer go by without having your high schooler check a couple of these activities off the list.

Schedule at least two or three career interviews. These can be done over coffee or lunch and are intended to allow your son or daughter to talk with someone in a job or profession that they believe they might want to pursue. I would suggest that you help them develop a list of questions to ask. This will allow your student to get real world feedback, both good and bad. Conversations like this will help develop options for majors and careers that are most likely to coincide with your student's interests and aptitudes. Most adults are more than willing to take 30 minutes or so to help out a teenager considering their future. Friends, neighbors, church members and friends' parents are all good options to find someone in a particular profession.

Taking a personality/career assessment test such as the Birkman is a great use of time during the summer. Tests such as this will help a student better understand what they are going to be challenged by, what will stimulate them, what type of environment or job will stress them, etc. This data can then be used in conjunction with the selection of majors to put a college/career plan together that will most likely lead to long term success. These tests generally cost around a few hundred dollars and can be completed in less than an hour or so.

Job shadowing is also a great summertime activity. While the career interview gets them some good feedback, the job shadowing immerses them in the job for a day. I can't think of a better way to see if a career is the right fit than to live in it for a day or two or maybe even a week! Finding willing volunteers is as simple as asking around. Again I think you will be surprised at how willing people are to help out an interested student.

If your student is struggling in a particular area of study or even if they just want to improve their abilities, consider hiring a tutor over the summer. Why lose the three months of the summer when this time could be used to drive up GPA which may ultimately lead to more merit based aid or simply acceptance at more colleges. This can be done a couple of times per week and won't intrude terribly on the student's summer but could indeed have a huge impact on academic success.

Community service time is often a requirement for graduation and if not it certainly looks good on college applications. Summer is a great time to get involved. No magic here other than to jump on something right away. If it gets pushed to the back burner unfortunately the summer may be over before anything gets done.

These are just a handful of ways to take advantage of this summer's downtime. I would suggest talking about these things with your son or daughter and collectively determine which ones make sense to pursue.

Enjoy your summer!

We are in the business of helping families through the major life transition of sending their children to college. For many, it will be the most expensive time of their lives and, if not handled properly, could cost them their retirement. If you or someone you know needs the help and guidance of a trained financial professional, don't hesitate to contact your local College Planning Relief Advisor. Remember, you shouldn't have to choose between your child's college and your retirement.