

Top Summer Programs For High School Students In 2021

An increasing number of selective colleges are beginning to scrutinize how applicants spend their summers during high school. Some parents, in response to this trend, have blown thousands of dollars on summer programs that may provide for an enriching experience, but do little to distinguish their child from the rest of the applicant pool. Today, the majority of competitive colleges offer at least one pre-college program inviting high school students to explore campus, visit with faculty, and even take courses during the summer months. Most summer programs are nothing more than “cash cows” and will accept any high school student able to pay the bill. Participation in these summer programs will be viewed by your prospective colleges as evidence of wealth, rather than evidence of any special ability—even if these programs happen to be offered on an Ivy League campus. As such, they do NOTHING to improve your admission prospects.

However, there is a growing minority of selective summer programs that select high achieving high school students strictly on the basis of merit. A number of these programs are offered for free or at relatively low costs, and will prove an impressive addition to your college application. The following is a list of top summer programs for high school students:

[Bank of America Student Leaders](#)

[Boston University – Research in Science & Engineering \(RISE\)](#)

Canada/USA Mathcamp

Carnegie Mellon – Summer Academy for Math + Science (SAMS)

Cronkite Institute for High School Journalism: Summer Journalism Institute

Foundation for Teaching Economics – Economics for Leaders (EFL)

Garcia Scholars – Stony Brook University

Girls Who Code Summer Immersion Camp

Hampshire College Summer Studies in Mathematics (HCSSIM)

Indiana University – Young Women’s Institute

Jackson Laboratory – Summer Student Program

JCamp - For Journalism students

LaunchX

Massachusetts Institute of Technology – Minority Introduction to Science and Engineering (MITES)

MathILy – Bryn Mawr College

MDI Biological Laboratory Summer Research Fellowship

Michigan Math and Science Scholars

Michigan State University – High School Honors Science, Math and Engineering Program (HSHSP)

MIT Research Science Institute

Monell Center Science Apprenticeship Program

National Institutes of Health – Summer Internship in Biomedical Research (SIP)

Ohio State University – Ross Mathematics Program

Princeton University – Summer Journalism Program

Program in Mathematics for Young Scientists (PROMYS)

Simons Summer Research Program

Stanford Institutes of Medicine Summer Research Program (SIMR)

Stanford University Mathematics Camp (SUMaC)

Telluride Association Summer Program (TASP)

Texas Tech University – Clark Scholars

University of Iowa – Secondary Student Training Program (SSTP)

University of Notre Dame – Leadership Seminars

University of Pennsylvania – Leadership in the Business World

U.S. Air Force Academy – Summer Seminar

U.S. Coast Guard Academy – Academy Introduction Mission (AIM)

U.S. Military Academy – Summer Leaders Experience

U.S. Naval Academy – Summer Seminar

Yale Young Global Scholars

Note that participation in one of these “best summer programs” is not essential to earn admission into a selective college. For example, spending your summer at a local job or internship, or completing a for-credit college course, can prove just as impressive. However, students seeking an exciting summer experience outside their area, while improving their college applicant profile in the process, are advised to explore the above.