

## Three Things Teens Can Do This Summer To Boost Earning Potential

Believe it or not, summer break is right around the corner. For many teens, they've already got a very simple plan: Sleep in, hang out with friends, and stay up late. If you're looking for a break from the norm, consider taking this summer to do some self-improvement that will have a positive impact on your life for every summer yet to come. If you want to do something this summer that may increase your first adult paycheck, let's start with these three fun activities!

### Learn a foreign language

We live in a global society. Whether you want to go into sales, machinery, medicine, or anything in between, someone in your industry is going to be translating between foreign-language speakers and English speakers. That someone is going to make quite a bit of money!

While the exact numbers on the bump in pay you'll get from speaking a foreign language are murky, experts estimate an hourly bump of between 5 percent and 20 percent! If your career plan ever falls through, you've also got those skills to fall back on, which makes you a viable candidate across a wider spectrum of new job opportunities.

If you don't know where to start, sites like **Duolingo** and **Open Culture** are excellent jumping-off points. There are dozens of YouTube tutorials on syntax, grammar, and expression in other languages, too. The only really wrong answer is not starting at all!

### Master a piece of software

Whatever job you hold in the future, it will almost certainly involve a computer. Learning to use a common piece of software can give you a serious leg up when it comes time to job-hunt. No, *World of Warcraft* doesn't count in this instance, though.

Look to programs with clear business applications. The Microsoft Office suite, especially programs like Excel and Access, are first steps. If cost is an issue, consider experimenting with Google's Docs, Sheets, and Forms. These are free and cloud-based, so you can keep playing with them on your smartphone when you're not home.

Skill with programs like Access and Sheets is the No. 2 most in-demand skill. These versatile programs can be adapted to a variety of interests. For example, while learning, you could track the statistics of your favorite baseball players, monitor the prices of hot clothing brands, or catalog your music library. The important thing is to start experimenting. Discover the capabilities and limitations of these popular pieces of software.

### Polish your writing skills

For many positions, the ability to communicate ideas clearly is of vital importance. Like any other skill, you get better at this the more you practice it. The only way to become a better writer is to write!

It matters less what you write than that you're writing. If you're looking for a project, National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) runs an online summer camp for folks who want to bounce ideas for the next great story. You can also try your hand at blogging, whether you want to talk about the NFL draft, new albums, or video games. Platforms such as **Blogger** and **Wordpress** are free to try and might connect you with other people who share your interests.

Your writing skills will probably help you with the job search, but they'll also be useful for the rest of your school career. Papers and essay tests will be a breeze, and cover letters and college application essays will help you stand out from the crowd. Just write, edit, and write some more!

Sources:

<http://blog.linkedin.com/2016/01/12/the-25-skills-that-can-get-you-hired-in-2016/>

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2414325,00.asp>

<http://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/interpreter-and-translator/salary>

<http://www.salary.com/should-i-earn-more-for-being-bilingual/>

<http://www.handsonbanking.org/financial-education/teens/boosting-your-earning-power/>