

# How to Get a High School Internship



Internships are an option that too few high school students consider. But they should.

**Featured Author:**

**Maya Moritz**



Maya Moritz is a senior at Westfield High School in Westfield, NJ. She hopes to major in International Relations with a minor in Spanish at a school in the D.C. area.

This past summer, she worked as an intern with a Capitol Hill think tank.

During the year, she participates in Model UN, Science Olympiad, Write on for Israel and runs the tutoring program she co-founded, Connections through Education.

Maya is politically active and enjoys yoga, travel, hiking, cinema and fiction.

**More articles from this author:**

[How to Impress Potential Colleges](#)

[Creating a College Essay Outline](#)

[Obtaining College Recommendation Letters](#)

**Maya Moritz**  
**September 09, 2014**

For a high school student, the summer feels like a vast stretch of joyous relaxation after months of thankless essays and never-ending flashcards. Two and a half months each year are set aside solely for rest and rejuvenation.

However, boredom can quickly settle in, and two and a half months is a long time to spend tanning in your backyard. Many students will go to camp, find employment or set out on a teen tour.

While all of these options are worthy and have considerable benefits, internships are an option that too few high school students consider. But they should.

Why is this?

## **Why Internships?**

Well, first of all, internships allow you to glimpse into a career. Students considering veterinary medicine may work at their local vet, future investors may contact local firms, etc.

On one hand, the internship may show you that this is in fact your destiny, and then will serve as wonderful experience for your resume. On the other hand, you may decide that this industry is not for you, thus allowing you to refocus your efforts on a more appropriate field.

Moreover, an internship provides access to exclusive environments and exposes interns to the current state of the world in whatever career you may be considering. For example, my summer internship with EMET allowed me to visit Capitol Hill on many occasions, sitting in on meetings and learning the impact of think tanks.

Additionally, internships allow you to make connections you may not have made as a waiter or on a kayak trip. At my internship, I met activists and policymakers working for the same causes I hope to advocate for in the future.

Last summer, I volunteered in a pulmonology lab in Columbia. There, I interacted with scientists and researchers who taught me the intricacies of research, biology and the scientific process.

While an internship can have some “grunt work” elements, such as filing or stereotypically getting coffee, these less interesting jobs are often balanced by information gleaned from access to the daily nitty-gritty and more individualized assignments.

Truly, an internship exists for every profession. If the job exists, then somewhere an internship is available. This is especially true if you have access to an urban center. Two summers ago, my lab was located in New York, and this summer I lived in Baltimore to commute into Washington, D.C. each day.

## **How to Get an Internship**

Now that you see the opportunity, connections and access available via internships, you may be wondering how to obtain one.

More often, organizations seek college or graduate students. However, with enough zeal and interest, any high school student can find an internship.

First of all, narrowing down your search to only a few fields may improve the quality of your search. If we take the example of a possible future writer, the student may search for local authors, writing workshops or publishing houses.

For organizations, many websites will describe the type of intern they desire. Often, they will specify the minimum age requirement. If not, a professional-sounding call to the organization can yield answers and will show interest.

For smaller settings or individuals, emails and phone calls will probably be required. Remember to sound interested, engaged and professional, because some that are hesitant to hire a high school student may reconsider if the potential candidate sounds very mature.

Also, your best resources are sometimes the people around you. Family, family friends, or the parents of your peers or teachers may know of possible internships or contacts.

Most importantly, your school may have connections to local internships.

## Questions About Internships

Clearly, there are factors that hold many students back from pursuing internships. The first may be the desire for the financial gain of a job, but still wanting to help their resume and start considering a field.

Well, paid internships for high school students are rare, but do exist. With slightly more determined searching (and very polite questions about the payoff), a money-conscious high school student can find themselves being paid to intern.

What about those in more isolated areas? Such students have two options. The first is to be a little less selective in their search and stay local.

The second is to stay with family, as a friend of mine decided to do when she worked for a lab in Boston.

And if students are unsure of where they see themselves? Their options are open, so that they may choose an internship in engineering, politics or business, maximizing the chance that they will find exactly what they are looking for.

## An Overview

While an internship offers a boost for your resume, valuable learning experiences and important connections, students should remember that an internship is work.

Whether or not your time is compensated, by pursuing an internship you have agreed to whatever responsibilities come with the position.

If you cannot see yourself coming in on time, giving the job your all and appearing enthusiastic even if your friends are hanging out that day, then maybe a serious internship is not for you, or a less formal one would be preferable.

Most importantly, an internship will provide a productive, interesting environment during which you learn, grow and come out a better-informed and more experienced person.