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Learning Outside the Box



With the school year now behind us, thoughts of textbooks, homework, and

Goal!

Congratulations to Jesse Cohen, Cheltenham High School, Class of 2008. Between December, 2006 and June, 2007 Jesse's SAT score improved dramatically. Jesse's overall SAT score jumped from 1400 to 1800, for a total increase of 400 points! Way to go, Jesse!



The Road to College

In our continuing series, each month we publish a checklist, organized by grade level, to keep high schoolers on track with their academic and college prep activities.



FOR ALL HIGH SCHOOLERS:

- Review the final grades on your report card and identify any subject areas where you would like to improve. Consider tutoring this summer to strengthen those weak areas.

- Read about something you are interested in. Do you love horses? NASCAR? Mountain climbing? Pick up a book about something you love.

exams are quickly forgotten. But learning does not have to stop once summer begins. Here are some fun, inexpensive activities students can do in the weeks ahead to fend off boredom, stretch their minds, and learn some new things in the process:

- If your child is not an avid reader, have him listen to books on tape or CD. Libraries have adapted to this increasingly popular mode of "reading" and carry a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction titles. This can even be a shared family activity, especially good on long car rides! Some libraries have gone even further to embrace modern technology and now offer a service whereby audio books can be downloaded onto your computer or iPod.

- Parlez-vous français? Learn or stay current with a foreign language by listening to tapes and CDs and watching foreign movies (or an American movie that has subtitles in foreign languages). Today there is much more foreign-language labeling on all sorts of consumer products than there used to be, so your teenager can even practice his French or Spanish by reading the label on a tissue box or a detergent bottle.

- Are you a history buff? Watch a film set in a historical time period that interests you, or take a walking tour of Philadelphia and learn about its rich history. There are many places of historical interest within a day's drive of Philadelphia, including Gettysburg and Valley Forge. A bit further away but worth the visit are Jamestown (celebrating its 400th anniversary this year) and Williamsburg.

- Check out what's happening at your local library. Many offer free courses and lectures in subjects such as journaling, chess, and genealogy. A lot of libraries have fun reading clubs for younger children and host writers' support groups and book discussion groups aimed at young adults.

- Challenge yourself by doing crossword and Sudoku puzzles, or match wits with contestants on *Jeopardy!*

- Visit the zoo, a museum, or a nature center.

- Develop life skills! Show your teenager how you balance your checkbook, then let her try it the next month. Let your son or daughter plan, shop for, and cook a family meal. Help perfect their driving skills by sharing tips on some of the finer points, including parallel parking and driving etiquette.

- Get an early start on your summer reading list.

FOR JUNIORS:

- Even though applying to colleges is more than a year away, it's not too early to start looking into schools that may interest you. Try using the following "college match" service that helps students narrow down their choice of colleges: <https://www.collegedata.com> (This site is endorsed by [NACAC](#), a professional organization of college admissions officers.) If you are planning a family vacation near a college that interests you, visit that school while you are in the area.

FOR SENIORS:

- Applying to colleges is just around the corner, so begin now in earnest researching colleges online. Try this college matching service: <https://www.collegedata.com> to see which schools appeal to you in terms of their location, size, and educational environment. Together with your parents, formulate a game plan: make a list of desirable colleges, visit those schools' websites to find out about scheduling a tour and/or an interview, and then plan an itinerary accordingly to visit those colleges this summer. Request applications and create a filing system at home for organizing these materials.

- If you plan to retake the SAT or ACT in the fall, set aside time in your schedule to study for it. Call the A+ office at 1-877-730-7200 to learn about our excellent test-prep programs.



Useful Websites

[Cap4Kids](#) This is the website of the Children's Advocacy Project of Philadelphia. It offers information on a wide array of programs and topics, including after-school programs, camps, education, parent resources, teen resources, and more.

[Teens' Top Ten Books](#) This annual list is published by the American Library Association and is the result of "teens only" voting.

[Selected Audiobooks for Young Adults](#) This is a great starting point for exploring audiobooks.

[Reading is Fundamental](#) This excellent website is presented by the nation's largest children's literacy organization. Sign up for RIF's free e-newsletter, find out about contests and literacy games for kids, and browse many booklists compiled by leading children's literature experts.