

Summer Activities for BUS Students

While a homework-free summer can seem like a daunting hurdle when planning for tutoring sessions, it also presents a unique opportunity for learning. Summer allows tutors the time to help students explore their interests while filling in learning gaps. Whatever you decide to do for your sessions, consider your student's interests when planning activities, and try to incorporate them whenever possible. The more engaged your student is, the more likely they will actively participate and look forward to tutoring each week.

The activities below were developed with students aged 14-18 in mind, but they can be modified for middle school students as well. Remember to keep things fun and relevant to your student!

1) Article Analysis

Selection

- Possible topics: political, social, cultural, or academic
- Must include an argument or debatable opinion (i.e. it is not simply based on facts).
- Select it together if the internet is accessible from your location
- Make sure the article is relatable and from a reputable source

Analysis

- Read and discuss the article with your student
- Strive for active comprehension.
 - You want your student to not only understand what he/she has read, but to engage with the information in some way (agree, disagree, relate to own life, think of other examples, etc.) Make sure to have a dictionary or cell phone on hand for any difficult or unfamiliar terminology.

Expand the activity

- The second week, bring another article with a different viewpoint on the same topic, if possible. Work with your student to compose a short essay/response piece on the third and fourth weeks.
- Additional resources: [Ways of Responding to a Text](#).

2) Write for an Audience

Goal

- To show students not all writing is for school. Writing can be a fun and engaging practice when your student selects his/her own topic, purpose, and audience.

Introduce Activity

- For week 1, introduce the idea of writing based on interest for a public audience.
- Discuss your student's interests with him/her. Maybe your student is passionate about sports, social issues, movies, food, fashion, or technology. Emphasize that your student can add his/her voice to the conversations about any of these topics.
- If you have internet access or are working in a library, you can investigate what people are writing about these topics together. (Make sure to keep reading materials age-appropriate.)

Brainstorm

- Once you have identified a topic, ask your student what they might want to say about the topic. Maybe student 1 wants to share her expertise with fellow sports fans, or maybe student 2 is angry about an unfair policy at school. Student 3 might have a passion for a particular TV show and want to share his thoughts.
- What your student wants to say will help determine the format of the message. For instance, in the case of the sports-loving student, she may want to consider writing an article or recap on last night's game for a sport's magazine. For the student in the second example, maybe a letter to the school newspaper editor about the disliked policy would be the right choice. The third student might consider writing a review for a television blog. The point is to get students thinking about how to convey their interests, thoughts, and passions to other people for a purpose.
- Be sure to find and read some examples of newspaper articles, blog posts, etc. with your student to familiarize them with different genres: ask, how is a letter to the editor different from a newspaper article, or a blog post, or a review?

Execution

- Once your student is ready, he/she can begin writing. This project can be spread out across many weeks, depending on your student's age and abilities. For students who have difficulty writing, keep the 'final product' short, and praise for effort.
- Think about 'publishing' your student's edited piece online--either submitted to a newspaper, magazine, or blog, or as a review on Rotten Tomatoes or IMDB, etc.
- Be creative, and your student will feel a sense of pride and accomplishment.

3. Film Review

- Watch a movie together or separately and have your student write a review for publication on Rotten Tomatoes, IMDB, or another movie website/blog. As in lesson 2 above, be sure your student understands what a review should look like before they begin writing. Read some examples together, and once your student's review is finished, consider publishing it!

4. Read and Write-Along

- Identify one of your student's main areas of interest, and get a book on the subject. Alternatively, find a novel you'd both like to read. (Make sure to keep books age-appropriate.)
- Plan how to break down the text into increments over the summer, and read along with your student each week.
- Discuss the text and incorporate short written assignments as you see fit. (For example: do you think the main character is a hero, why or why not?)