BridgeU Summer Activities Journal

How to use this journal

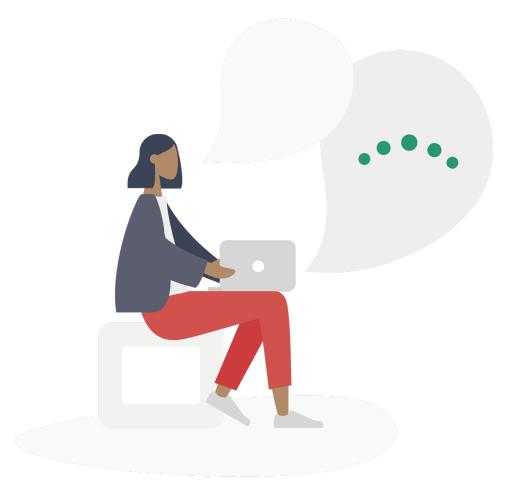
COVID-19 has thrown many students' summer plans into disarray, with internships, family holidays, and other summer activities being cancelled around the world.

We know this presents some students with a problem. Summer holidays can be a great opportunity to learn new skills or just pursue an activity that will leave you with some meaningful & valuable experiences.

If you've found yourself with nothing to do over the summer, this journal gives you some ideas of things you can do to stay productive and strengthen your university applications - even if you have to stay at home!

You shouldn't feel under pressure to take on all of the activities in this book - instead, it's designed to give you some inspiration and help you think critically about your skills and experiences. If you manage to complete even one or two of the tasks ahead, you've had a successful summer and you'll have some great insights and experiences that will likely strengthen your eventual university applications.

So without further ado, let's get stuck in...



Activity #1: Take an online course or workshop

If you have had your internship or work experience cancelled, you can still learn something this summer! Choose one skill you want to gain - whether it's coding, learning a language, creative writing, or anything else.

Then, take a look online and see if you can find an online course or workshop that can start teaching you this skill. If you don't know where to begin your search, try <u>Coursera</u>, <u>FutureLearn</u>, or <u>Class Central</u>.

When you've finished your course, answer the following questions.

What skill did you choose to gain this summer?

Summarise the main things you learned on your course. Did you learn any other skills you weren't expecting?

Think about your university aspirations. How does this skill make you a better candidate for your chosen course?



Activity #2: Read around your chosen subject

Whether it's writing an application essay or attending an interview, universities love it when you've done some extra reading around your chosen course - that's not just what you learned at school!

Choose an article or essay that's related to the subject/major you want to study at university. Once you've read it, have a go at the questions below.

Which article did you choose and why? What interests you about this topic?

Summarise the main arguments of the article in bullet points.

Did you find the article persuasive? Do you agree or disagree with the author's arguments, and why?

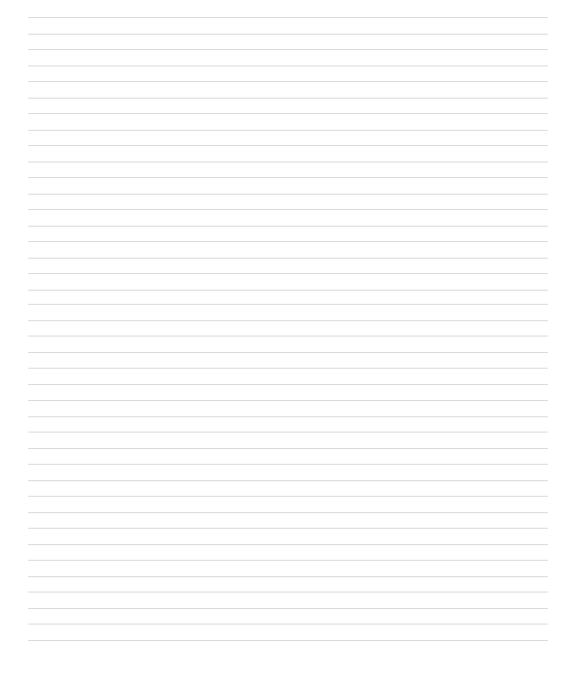
How does this article relate to other topics you've covered in class?

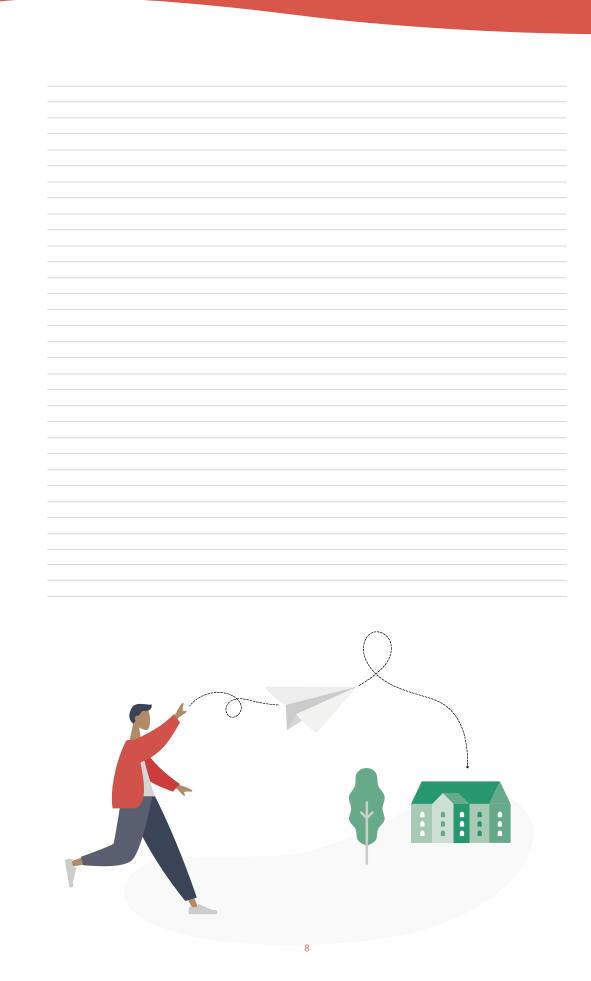
Activity #3: Read some fiction!

Though it might not relate directly to your university course, there are many benefits to reading a book in your spare time - it can help you develop critical thinking, creativity and <u>even compassion/empathy.</u>

So, take a look through your bookshelf or download a new eBook, and get reading! (If you want some suggestions, try these lists from the <u>BBC</u> and <u>Time Magazine.</u>)

As you're reading, write down any thoughts you have. Are there any themes, characters, or uses of language that really stand out to you?



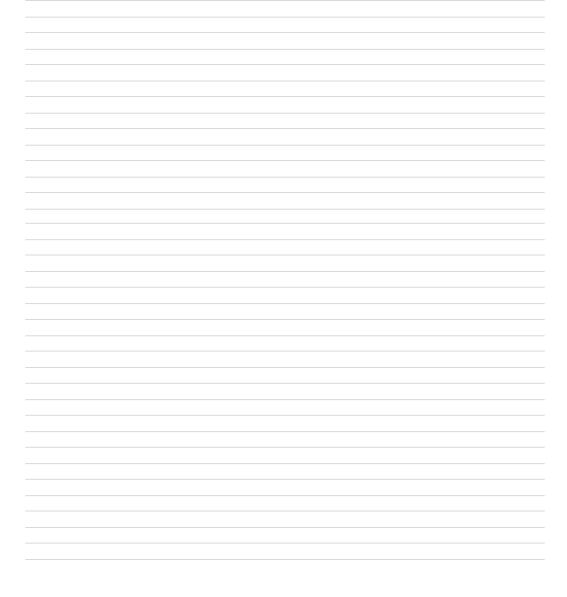


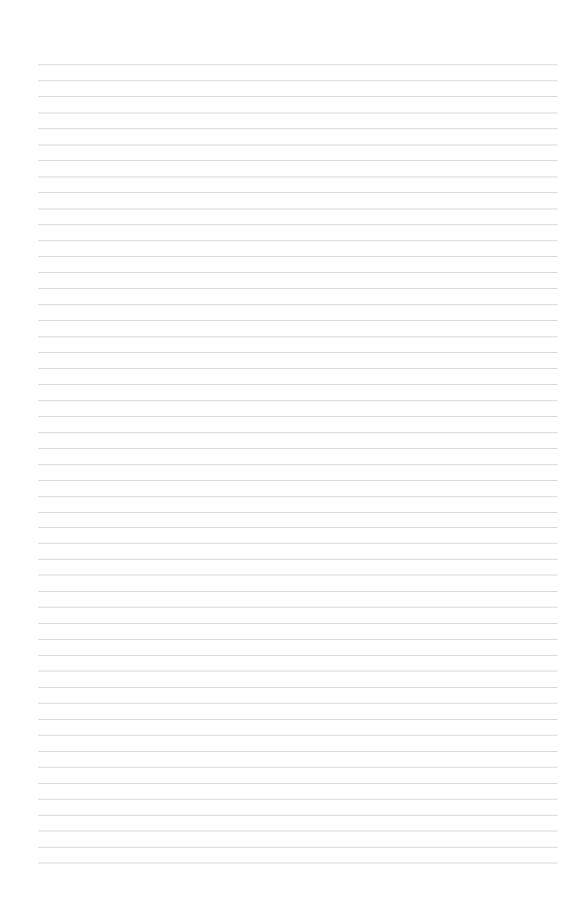
Activity #4: Volunteer locally or online

Though you might not be able to physically volunteer for a charitable/community organisation this summer, there are still plenty of ways to help your community. In many countries, neighbourhoods and local governments have set up volunteer groups to run errands for those who are self-isolating, organise food bank collections, or even just have phone calls with people who are lonely.

Many charities are also recruiting remote volunteers including mental health charities, charities who are supporting the elderly or organisations that are helping the homeless. It's worth having a search online and seeing what's available in your country.

Take some time below to reflect on any volunteering you have done, what you learned from it, any new skills or competencies you've picked up, and how it made you feel.



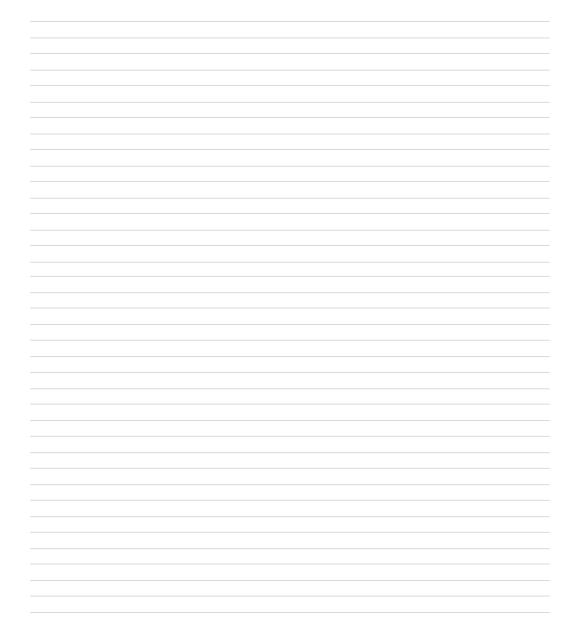


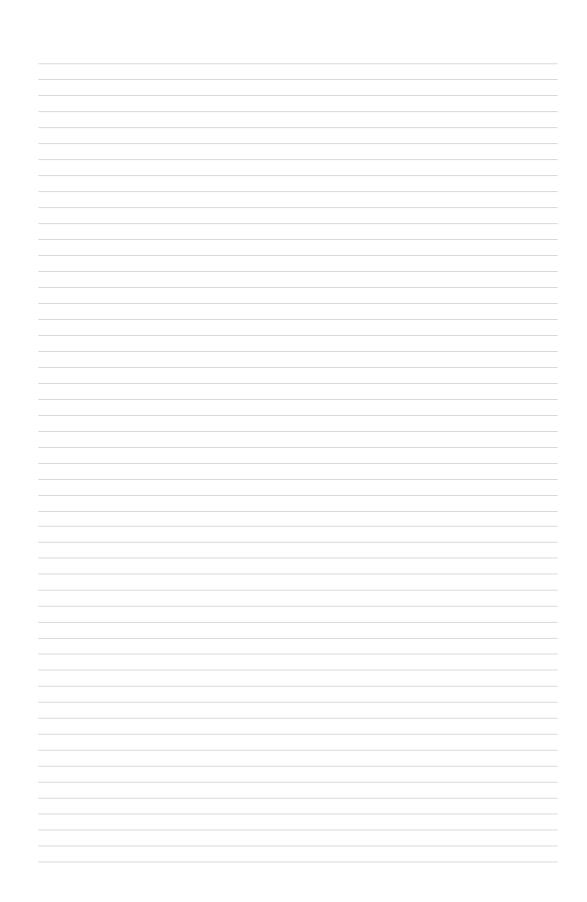
Activity #5: Move your hobbies inside!

Any well-rounded university applicant should have lots of hobbies and interests, as well as just academic ability! What do you enjoy doing outside of school? If you can't do it right now, chances are it'll have an online counterpart. Like playing sports? <u>Do a virtual workout</u>, Like going out to eat? <u>Learn how to cook your favourite dish at home</u>.

If you enjoy writing, why not start a blog on a topic or subject that you're passionate about - whether it's something you're studying in school, or a personal or extracurricular interest.

Make some notes below about what skills your hobbies have taught you, and how they can contribute to your university application.





Activity #6: Reflect on the last year

You might be thinking that COVID-19 has caused your year to be wasted, but that couldn't be further from the truth! We are living through what is perhaps one of the most pivotal times of our generation, and there's a lot we can learn from it. In fact, many universities' application essay prompts ask you to reflect on a life-changing event or a challenging time - this could be yours!

Spend a few minutes thinking about your experiences this year, and answer the following questions.

What changes have you had to adjust to during COVID-19 (e.g. a closed school, not being able to see friends)? How have these changes affected you?

What have you learned from having to take on a different way of life? Did you need to develop any new skills, or gain any new responsibilities?

How has your experience of this time changed your view on the world? Are there any obstacles you feel like you've had to overcome?



Additional notes



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