

YOUR BEST

SUMMER EVER



WRITING

FARMING

MENTORING

TREKKING

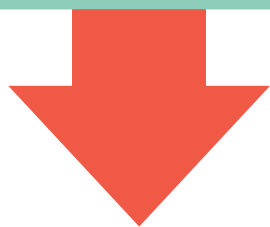
PUBLISHING

“It must be nice to have summers off.” How many times have you heard *that*? Only other teachers know just how short summer is, with much of August devoted to planning for the new school year. Read on to learn how to make the best of your break!

17 Fresh Ideas for
Exploring, Making Money,
and Preparing for Next Year

Plus, a reading list that hits all the marks! *By Samantha Cleaver*

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6 Ideas for Exploration

1. COAST-TO-COAST TREK

Beth Kruger, a sixth-grade teacher in Chicago, spent last summer biking with her family from coast to coast. They pedaled 60 to 90 miles each day, through Minnesota, North Dakota, Wyoming, and ended their trip on the Oregon coast. "It was one of those adventures I never have time to do," says Kruger. Coming on the heels of her fifth year of teaching, the trip was also a needed mental break. When she was on her bike, she says, "I could let my mind relax."

Bike Trek



Trip to Peru

2. YOUR CITY, ON PENNIES A DAY

One perk of teacher-dom is discount passes to museums, zoos, and other institutions. Use your time off to explore your area on the cheap, whether it's the Philadelphia Zoo, free entry to museums around Chicago, or SeaWorld's Educator Pass for Florida teachers. (Find deals for institutions in your area through your board of education website.) If you're headed out of town, STA Travel offers teacher discounts on airfare. Most tickets require an international teacher identity card (ITIC), which you can get at myisic.com.

3. TRY ORGANIC FARMING

Dying to go beyond your backyard tomato plants or rooftop herb garden? Volunteer for a few days or a few weeks with Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms, also known as WWOOF-ing. Past volunteers have WWOOF-ed their way through the Tuscan countryside, maintained orchards in Vermont, picked berries in Alaska, and farmed macadamia nuts in Hawaii. Register at wwoofusa.org for access to a directory of host farms. Farmers will provide you with room and board for each half-day's volunteer work. No money is exchanged. Instead, says program manager Tori Degen, "WWOOF-ing is a way to travel cheaply and still have the feeling of getting away and doing something new."

4. TEACH DISABLED KIDS IN PERU

The Manos Unidas (MU) Caminos Nuevos school in Cusco was established for children with disabilities. As a volunteer at the 70-student school, you might help set up a classroom or develop learning activities. When you're not working at the school, you can visit nearby Macchu Picchu, hike through the Andes, or explore the Cusco region's valley towns. Check out manosunidasperu.net to sign up. (Spanish is not necessary but helpful.)

5. BE A MUSEUM VOLUNTEER

Want to see a different side of your own city? Volunteer at a local museum and delve into a topic you love. For example, help facilitate science programs as a M is for Museum volunteer at the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh (carnegiemuseums.org), or use your art skills to get involved in the Carnegie's Art Children's Studio classes. Contact your favorite local museum to see how you can help this summer.

6. TACKLE HUNGER

Pitch in with Feeding America to work on an issue that probably affects at



Book Club

PHOTOS (LEFT TO RIGHT): MANGO PRODUCTIONS/CORBIS; PICTUREGARDEN/CORBIS; DAVE AND LES JACOBS/BLEND IMAGES/CORBIS



Farming



Volunteer



Publish Plans



Extra Cash

least some of your students. In 2010, 37 million people, including 14 million children, benefited from the group's programs. Across the country, Feeding America (feedingamerica.org) works with more than 51,000 distribution programs that provide food to children who receive free or reduced-price lunch during the school year. Contact your local food program to spend a few hours each week preparing meals, serving food, or working with kids during mealtimes.

3 Ideas for Making Money

7. TURN LESSON PLANS INTO CASH

TeachersPayTeachers.com is an online marketplace of more than 600,000 teachers who author and sell their own work. While about 12 percent of the content is free, teachers have earned more than \$5 million on the site, according to founder Paul Edelman; on average, teachers earn \$300 each month selling the best of their lesson plans. But to make money, you have to put in the time. "Teachers are looking

for materials that are classroom tested and ready to go," says Edelman, "stuff that works because it was created by teachers with real experience and know-how." So gather those lesson plans and materials that most engaged your students and sharpen them for use in any classroom.

8. BE A SUMMER SITTER OR TUTOR

SitterCity.com connects people with babysitters, nannies, pet sitters, elder-care providers, and tutors. During the summer, says public relations director Mary Schwartz, one-third of the caregivers on SitterCity are teachers. Being a teacher is a definite benefit, she says. As you set up your profile, include any certifications, training, and specific skills that set you apart. Once you have completed your profile,

and it has been verified, it will be posted and you can then start paging through jobs that seem like a good fit. Be sure to use the SitterCity rate calculator to figure out how much to charge. The national hourly rate is \$11.55 for sitters, says Schwartz, but it varies depending on location, qualifications, and other factors.

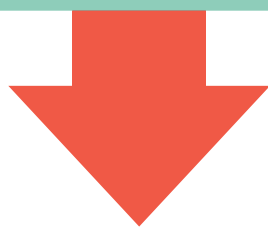
9. HOST A STUDY GROUP

Put your student management skills to work over the summer by setting up a profile on Care.com, a website that matches parents' needs to your expertise. Managing editor Katie Bugbee recommends posting your skills in bullet points and including ideas for parents. One idea: Suggest a study group for a grade level or a topic you love teaching. For example, "Willing to facilitate groups of four to six students to eliminate summer slump in elementary reading." Or perhaps you have an idea for a cool way to delve into science or math. Post it on your profile and see who bites.

More Summer Fun

PHOTOS (CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT): SHAWN O'CONNOR/TETRA IMAGES/MEDIA BAKERY; MICHAEL KAI/CORBIS; ROB LEWINE/TETRA IMAGES/CORBIS; BEAU LARK/CORBIS

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5 Ideas for Preparing for Next Year

10. HOST A PLC BOOK CLUB

Which literacy strategies do you want to kick up a notch, and in a way kids will love? Vocabulary instruction? Small-group time? Organize a professional learning community “book club.” Have members come prepared to brainstorm ways to forge an inspired literacy community. Rather than searching blindly for books on Amazon, look at the bounty of resources from Corwin (corwin.com), ASCD (ascd.org), and Scholastic Teaching Resources (scholastic.com). Before the last day of school, connect with your team, choose a book, and set your first date.

11. GET TO KNOW THE LATEST KIDS’ LIT

Spend some of your time this summer reading the latest literature your students are likely to love. The American Library Association (ala.org) has top



Test Tech

picks from a committee of children’s book experts, librarians, and teachers. Or start your journey at the local library. However you spend your summer, says Mary Fellows, president of the Association for Library Service to Children, “keep engaging with reading. Don’t rely on what you did last year because there is such great literature and the formats are evolving.”

12. EXPERIENCE TECH LIKE A STUDENT

Summer is a perfect opportunity to sit down with the tech you’re thinking about bringing into your classroom. Experience an app or tool as a student would, to figure out how to best use it in your classroom, says David Vinca of eSpark Learning. Ask yourself questions like: Will this be a one-on-one tool or used at centers? Can it engage students while I facilitate instruction? What tools can be accessed from home, like eSpark or Khan Academy, to extend the learning day?

13. BECOME A TECHNOLOGY LEADER

It’s easy enough to figure out how to use your iPad, but integrating it into the curriculum is a different story. EdTech Teacher (edtechteacher.org) hosts summer trainings in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Atlanta. Two- and three-day sessions like Using Google Docs in the Collaborative Classroom or Leveraging Technology to Create



Mentor

Differentiated Learning Environments will take your tech integration to the next level. The cost is about \$200 per day (not including room and board); check to see if you can get a grant to cover at least part of it.

14. MENTOR A NEW TEACHER

Ask to mentor a new teacher. Take the teacher out for coffee and share lesson plans, behavior management strategies, and favorite literature. If you’re feeling burned out by June, talking with a new teacher will reenergize you for the first day of school.

3 Ideas for Short Summer Breaks

15. START AN “ANNUAL TRIP” TRADITION

Just because your school’s on a year-round schedule doesn’t mean you have to forgo a summer getaway. Make it a ritual by, for example, camping at a different national park each summer. This year, head off to Yosemite; next year, Shenandoah or the Badlands. A week in the wilderness beats two months of watching TV.

16. STOCK YOUR CLASSROOM

Before break, take an inventory of your classroom and jot down a wish list of books, furniture, or technology. Then, set up projects on donorschoose.org or a profile on adoptaclassroom.org. Taking a day or two to advocate for your classroom will pay off later in the year.

17. CONNECT WITH OTHER TEACHERS

Sometimes the best way to reinvigorate your teaching is by connecting with colleagues. Join the Scholastic Teachers Facebook group (facebook.com/ScholasticTeachers) to connect, “like,” and post questions or comments about your favorite books, lesson plans, and ideas.

Books for everyone

SUMMER READING, WITH A TWIST

Some classic hammock reads, along with books to pass on to your kids and to use for professional development.

For You

- ▶ Fiction: *The Cat's Table*, by Michael Ondaatje, follows a boys' adventure on an ocean voyage. *The Night Circus*, by Erin Morgenstern, tells a story of love and magic. Karen Russell's *Swamplandia!* is an imaginative tale set in an alligator theme park.
- ▶ Nonfiction: James Gleick's *The Information* is a history of information and how it's transmitted. *The Swerve*, by Stephen Greenblatt, looks at how a book-hunter's find changed the world. Mark Adams takes readers to ancient Peru in *Right Turn at Machu Picchu*.

For Your Students

- ▶ Science: *Bring on the Birds*, by Susan Stockdale, provides a colorful intro for junior ornithologists. Susan Shee's *Do You Know Which Ones Will Grow?* explores the differences between living beings and objects. *All the Water in the World*, by George Ella Lyon, teaches kids about the water cycle.
- ▶ History (older readers): Sally Walker's *Blizzard of Glass* investigates the Halifax explosion of 1917; Ed Young's *The House Baba Built* looks back at his childhood in China. *Bootleg*, by Karen Blumenthal, tackles the Prohibition era.

For Professional Development

- ▶ *The Next Step in Vocabulary Instruction*
- ▶ *Month by Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom*
- ▶ *The Next Step in Guided Reading*
- ▶ *Teaching Reading in Middle School, 2nd Edition* □

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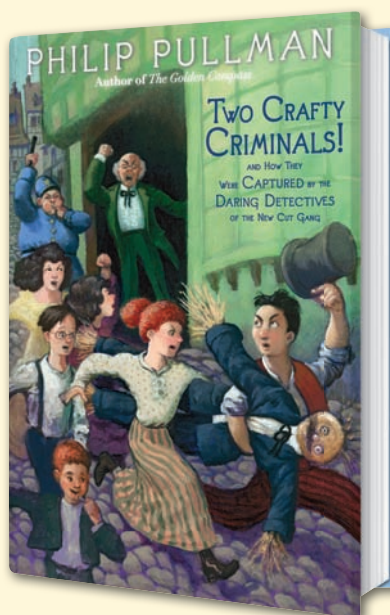
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