

EDUCATION UPDATE

June 2013 | Volume 55 | Number 6

How to Stimulate Summer Learning Pages 1-6-7

How to Stimulate Summer Learning

Willona M. Sloan



Studies show that during the summer break, students tend to lose some of the important academic gains made during the school year. Although most kids wouldn't normally opt to study during the warm, leisurely months, there are plenty of ways to keep them engaged in reading, math, science, and art on their own.

In addition to the wide range of activities provided by community resources such as library branches or summer day camps run by the local city or county, kids can also take advantage of online educational games and resources that keep them learning at their own pace. Hands-on projects and activities, stimulating educational games, interactive websites, and exciting videos and readings that satisfy their curiosity will make learning feel less like a chore and more like summertime fun.

Artsy Websites

Art Games

The Albright-Knox Art Gallery, in Buffalo, N.Y., has created a stimulating, art-focused website. Kids can design their own abstract paintings online, learn about pioneering artists, and discover painting techniques. Teachers can download activities and lesson plans.

Marvel Kids Comic Creator

Many kids would jump at the chance to create their own Marvel comic. With this comic creator, they can choose from a host of heroes and villains and design paneled comic strips or even 22-page books. While practicing artistic mastery, kids experiment with storytelling techniques such as crafting dialogue, writing humor, and creating suspense. What better way to learn while being entertained?

NGA Kids

The National Gallery of Art (United States) website for children is both informational and fun. Highlights include the Photo Op program, which is an interactive introduction to digital photography and image editing. Kids can use the virtual camera to snap pictures and then experiment with photo-editing tools to create photographic masterpieces. In addition, they can create virtual paintings, assemble collages, and delve into art history.

For Curious Kids

Wonderopolis

Kids are curious. They have questions. Each day, Wonderopolis explains a new "wonder" of daily life, such as how to create a harmony, why zebras have stripes, and where the buffalo do roam. The wonders span dozens of categories from candy to weather to pop culture. Kids can learn, discover, and imagine with this website from the National Center for Family Literacy.

Food

Pass the Plate

What better way to encourage kids to snack on healthful food than teach them how to prepare it themselves? The Disney Channel's Pass the Plate resource offers nutritious recipes from all over the world.

Literacy and Language Arts

Word Mover

Young people stay busy; they're always on the go. With the Word Mover mobile app by the National Council of Teachers of English, children and teens can create "found poetry" by choosing from word banks and remixing famous works.

Nature and Science

iWASWondering

The website <http://iWASWondering.org> is inspired by the middle-school-age biography series Women's Adventures in Science. Sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences, iWASWondering outlines achievements by women in science and provides a timeline; brief biographic info; and interactive games such as the virtual telescope, AstroScope.

National Geographic Kids

It's impossible to list all of the exciting features that National Geographic Kids and National Geographic Little Kids provide, but to name just a few, there are high-quality photography and videos where kids can encounter animals and explore natural environments; links to encyclopedic references, resources, and homework help; and craft ideas, puzzles, and quizzes.

National Geographic Education is in beta form and provides hands-on activities, lesson plans, and other teaching and learning resources, including news and blog posts from real-life adventurers and explorers. Kids can read up on current events, get their hands dirty with fun experiments, and find answers to tough questions.

Science NetLinks

Check out the K-12 science education resources from the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Kids can tap into interactive and vibrant games, listen to podcasts, and get help with hands-on activities. They can learn about the inner workings of the body, understand gravity, and read science news written for young readers.

All-Around Educational Websites

These websites offer lessons in reading, math, geography, and other academic subjects in a range of educational areas.

Oxford Owl

Oxford Owl, by Oxford University Press, offers resources, texts, and games to support literacy for children up to age 11 and math for children 3-7 years old. With more than 250 free e-books to choose from, kids of all reading levels can find something that interests them. Children can print, illustrate, and construct their own picture books; play games to test their reading comprehension and improve their memory; and even learn how to use math when cooking.

PBS Kids

A consistent leader in children's programming and learning tools, PBS Kids offers an array of fun ways to engage kids, including videos from shows such as *Word Girl*, *Arthur*, and *The Electric Company*. Kids can create their own comic strips, create and mix global beats, test drive a space flyer, or experiment in the Inventor's Workshop.

USA.gov Kids

Kids can find out what it's like to be a national park ranger with the WebRangers game, practice cryptology and code breaking with the CryptoKids game, explore the 50 states, discover careers in the health field, learn tips for saving money, or listen to the stories of Peace Corps volunteers. This collection of U.S. government-funded websites offers something for every child.

Great Websites for Kids

Still haven't found what you're looking for? Don't despair. Great Websites for Kids has dozens of recommendations that will interest young people. A compilation of exemplary websites geared toward children from birth to age 14, the directory is curated by members of the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association. [eu](#)

Learning Links

[Art Games](#)

[Great Websites for Kids](#)

[Marvel Kids](#)

[NGA Kids](#)

[National Geographic Kids](#)

[National Geographic Little Kids](#)

[National Geographic Education](#)

[Oxford Owl](#)

[Pass the Plate](#)

[PBS Kids](#)

[Science NetLinks](#)

[USA.gov Kids](#)

[Wonderopolis](#)

Word Mover is available for free through iTunes.