

Step-by-Step Guide for Athletes to Get Ahead Academically This Summer

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– [Randy Robertson](#))

“Reading, writing, arithmetic...social studies makes me sick!”

Has anyone else ever heard this little jingle?

It was a popular one back in my grade school days, and one I would occasionally find myself humming through high school. And I was even one of those kids who enjoyed school.

For the most part.

The truth of the matter, however, is that like school or not, as a high school student-athlete, it's imperative you stay on top of your academic game over the summer. It's one of the best – and easiest – things you can do with some of your extra free time. And I promise: you will be so happy you did it when the school year rolls back around and you don't feel completely underwater.

So if it's one of the best and easiest things you can do, how do you do it? “Reading, writing, arithmetic...” is part, but not all of it.

Check out my step-by-step guide for athletes to make the most of your summer academically in preparing for the grade ahead.

Step 1: Talk to an upperclassman, (or someone who just completed the grade you're entering in the fall).

It could be a sibling, a friend, a neighbor. Buy them a coffee and pick their brain about their year academically. Bring your class schedule for the coming year to share with him or her. Take notes. Some good questions to ask may be:

- What was your biggest challenge this past school year?
- Is there a particular teacher I should prepare for in a certain way?
- Do you have any suggestions on how to get ahead with a certain teacher?
- Is there any reading you suggest getting a jump on?
- If you could offer me one piece of advice going into my (freshman/sophomore/junior/senior year) at our school, what would it be?

Take the sit-down seriously and clearly state that you're grateful for their time and help. If they are off to college in the fall, it may also be a good idea to get their email or other contact information. They might be able to give you support next year, or give you [another perspective on playing a sport in college](#).

Step 2: Do some reading and writing.

I can hear you groaning from here.

I'm sorry. I know this is not what you wanted to hear, but reading is literally like hitting the gym for your brain.

If you know what will be required reading next year and you want to get ahead, you may want to start there – just be sure to take ample notes so you can recall the information when it comes up in class.

If you don't know what you will be reading next year, ask friends or family members for suggestions, or Google recommended books on topics that interest you. Or check out our founder's [top recommendations on books that have impacted his life](#).

Find something you enjoy reading and commit to taking the time to do it. What better way to entertain yourself while you're poolside on in a beach chair? It's a win-win...just be sure to pack the SPF.

Step 3: Volunteer.

For one morning, for an entire day, weekly, whatever you can fit in.

Giving back works to your advantage in so many ways, in addition to helping others.

It is awesome to have on a college application or to mention in discussion with a college coach and will help set you apart as a student-athlete with great character.

It's also been proven that helping others makes you feel better about yourself. You'll feel a new kind of gratitude for things you may take for granted in your own life, and will help you interact with strangers or different kinds of people than you are normally around, which will help you in social situations at school, and in putting yourself out there with college coaches throughout your recruitment.

My high school required students to put in a certain amount of volunteer hours before graduating so I speak of the benefits first hand. Volunteering is also super fun to do with friends – research an opportunity and get your crew or teammates in on the give back with you!