

SkillBridge Starter Toolkit

The free toolkit two high schoolers actually used to land internships, build a network, and get ahead — no paywalls, no trials that charge you in two weeks.

We built this from the inside. Every tool here is genuinely free, checked June 2026. Where "free" has a catch (like a library card) we say so. At the bottom: the "free" tools that are actually traps.

1 Get real experience (when you have none yet)

- **Forage** — free virtual job simulations from real companies; do real intern tasks in a few hours, earn a resume/LinkedIn certificate; no application, 16+. theforage.com
 - **Start your own thing** — a club, project, or event at your school; "founder" beats "member" on every application; free, ungatekeepable.
 - **Your city's Summer Youth Employment Program** — many cities run paid teen summer jobs; search "[your city] summer youth employment"; free to apply, usually paid.
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2 Get certified (free certs you can actually list)

- **HubSpot Academy** — free marketing/sales/content certs, a few hours each, employer-recognized; certs + exams 100% free. academy.hubspot.com
 - **freeCodeCamp** — free no-paywall coding certs (web design, JavaScript, Python), real projects, shareable cert; nonprofit, no card. freecodecamp.org
 - **Google Skillshop** — free Google Ads & Analytics certs straight from Google. skillshop.withgoogle.com
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3 Learn any skill (free libraries)

- **LinkedIn Learning** — 16,000+ courses, free with a public library card (free digital card available online in minutes), completion certs. linkedin.com/learning
- **Khan Academy** — free academics + a careers section; nonprofit. khanacademy.org
- **Coursera** — audit almost any university course free; cert costs money unless you apply for financial aid. coursera.org

4 Build your resume and portfolio

- **FlowCV** — clean ATS-friendly resumes, unlimited watermark-free PDF downloads, no trial/card/paywall; first resume free forever. flowcv.com
- **Google Docs** — simplest free option; free resume templates → PDF. docs.google.com
- **Canva** — free for visual portfolios/mockups/graphics; for the actual resume use FlowCV or Docs (Canva's fancy templates can confuse application scanners). canva.com

5 Find the actual jobs and internships

- **Indeed** — biggest job board; filter part-time/entry-level for teen-friendly roles. indeed.com
- **Named programs worth knowing** — NASA High School Internships (16+), Microsoft High School Discovery Program (paid), and similar run every summer; competitive but real; search the program name + "high school."
- **Forage (again)** — when you can't land a formal internship yet, a finished simulation is the next best resume line.

6 Network and LinkedIn (our whole thing)

- **LinkedIn** — free, and the highest-leverage account a high schooler can make; opportunities come through people, and this is where they are. linkedin.com
- Pair with LinkedIn Learning above, and follow us — we post how to set up a profile that isn't empty, how to message strangers without being awkward, and how to get replies.

"Free" tools that are actually traps

- Zety, Resume Genius, Resume.io — cheap trial that auto-renews to ~\$24–26 every four weeks; use FlowCV instead.
- Rule: if a "free" tool wants a credit card before you've made anything, close the tab.

This is the shortlist we actually recommend. New guides go out in The SkillBridge Brief. Free from SkillBridge — joinskillbridge.com/resources