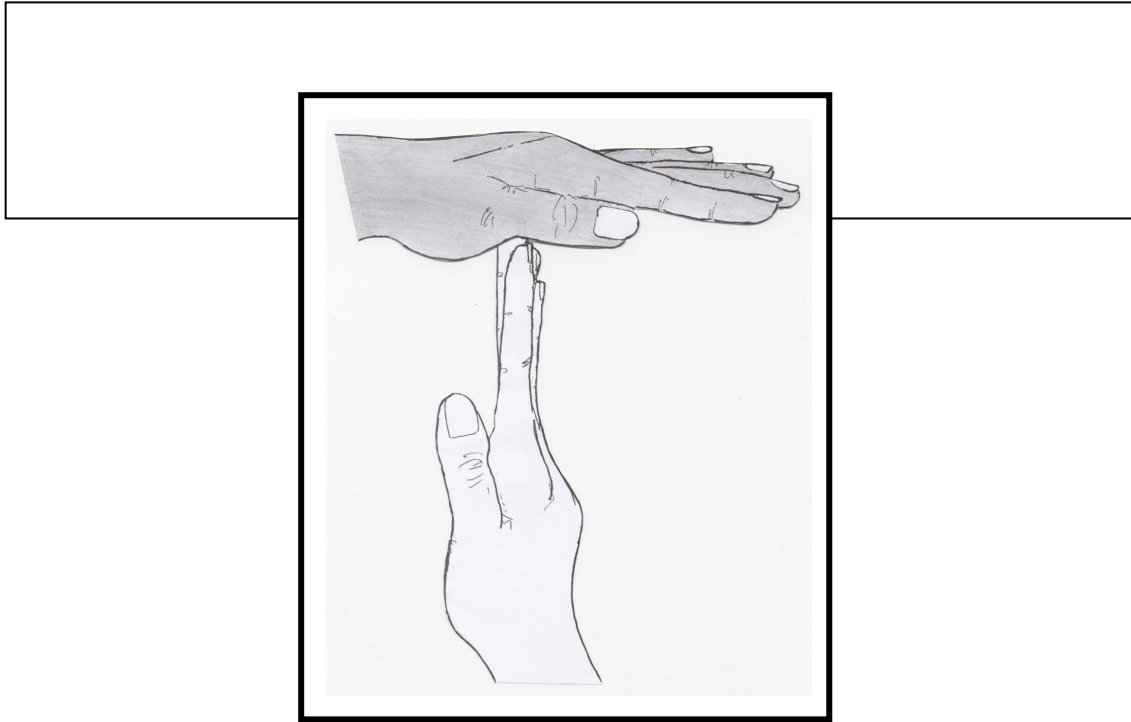


Time Out

Making the most of your Year Off



Devised by GuideLight

www.step1.co.uk

Introduction

Many students who have just graduated from High School do not want to immediately continue their studies. Some are tired of studying or might not feel the motivation to go to university as they do not even know *what* they will be studying. Other students feel an urge to do something for the environment or for other people as they have been focusing on their own life for many years. Graduation is a perfect moment to take a year off. There might never be another gap in one's life to spend a certain amount of time doing something very different from the other years. Taking a year off does not merely include a change of environment but it will change you as a person in many positive ways. Nowadays universities truly value students who have been a year abroad and they often prioritise such students over others when reading application letters.

Over the past decade it has become far more common for students to take a year off after High School. Gap years are no longer considered to be a waste of time, but have proven to aid in the process of maturing and to open up one's world. Unfortunately there are certain doubts that withhold people from taking such an opportunity. Often parents wonder whether their son or daughter would find the motivation to continue studying after their gap year. Some parents are worried about the safety of their son or daughter when going abroad and even students themselves are sometimes afraid of being alone for a while far away from home.

From interviews we found that the great majority of students who participated in a gap year programme were even better motivated to go to university than their peers. Some students missed an academic challenge throughout their gap year. Other students had time to think about their future goal in life and found the drive to start the long road towards that goal.

Taking a year off in a country abroad basically means; "standing on your own feet." The student will have to take his/her own decisions, cope with problems by him/herself, and plan his/her own time each day.

Going to developing countries is a true eye opening experience. Students do not only learn about other cultures but they will realize who they are and how privileged they are in their life back home. The fear of being alone in such countries is always big, but once abroad, the student will discover that he/she is not alone and that there are many international students world wide who take a year off and become true companions.

When planning a gap year, think about what you want to learn, where you want to go, how big your budget is, and how long you are planning on staying away from home. You could learn a language or you could teach a language that you already know. You could undertake an apprenticeship in a company to find out what type of profession you would like to focus on in the future. There are opportunities to do archaeological work or architectural work. Especially in third world countries there are many orphanages, hospitals and soup kitchens that are in desperate need of volunteers. Consider combining work with travel.

In this programme you will find many inspiring ideas and names of gap year organisations that offer fantastic opportunities world wide.

*"I never knew there was so much you could learn about yourself;
a gap year is an enriching experience for everyone!"
(a volunteer in Ecuador and Mexico)*

Planning your Time Out

There is no doubt that almost everything one undertakes in his/her gap year will contribute something to his/her life. This could be from building a school in Zambia to sailing with handicapped children in the Caribbean. The choices these days are countless.

Time Out will reveal what could be suitable for you to undertake in general and it shows a long list of activities corresponding to a list of almost 100 Gap Year organisations that provide these activities.

1. Survey

The survey you have completed on the Internet has been based on 7 areas in which you might want to develop yourself.

- **Perseverance:** The ambition to achieve your goals
- **Social Skill:** The way you interact with other people
- **Leadership:** Being responsible and taking initiatives
- **Self Confidence:** Having trust in your abilities
- **Planning:** Scheduling and completing your tasks
- **Independence:** Having your own sound direction
- **Life experience:** The desire to learn about yourself in different situations

The outcome of the survey is based upon your responses to the questionnaire. It only reflects your answers regarding your personal perception at the present time. **Only the pages about fields in which your score was 'low' or 'tends to low' has been printed in the report.**

The report is meant to bring awareness to certain fields in which you might want to develop before going to college or university. Furthermore, it suggests how you could establish this. Please, do not forget to take into account your age and safety aspects.

Results

You are not compared to other students in this overview.

According to your own responses you might want to gain some more experience in the fields marked with

perseverance					
social skills					
leadership					
self confidence					
planning					
independence					
life experience					

2. Activities

Once you have read the information and looked carefully at the recommendations you can turn to the list of activities. You should read them all in order to make a selection of the fields that might appeal to you and that correspond with the areas you want to improve yourself. The list is not complete and perhaps you can think of other programmes. The list is only meant as a starting point and gives you an idea of what kinds of opportunities exist 'out there'.

The list will be updated regularly and we encourage students to inform us about new programmes such that we can distribute the information to other students.

The numbers behind the activities refer to the list of Gap Year organisations.

3. Gap Year Organisations

Here you find a list of about a hundred Gap Year organisations and their websites.

It also tells you the minimum and maximum time required for the programmes and where they operate in the world.

Before you start organising your gap year you have to work out a financial plan; even doing volunteer work costs money. It will help you to start saving early.

Again, this list will be updated regularly. If you come across an organisation that is not on our list, please send us an email and we will add it on.

4. General information

On this page you will find some general addresses of organisations that can help students find certain programmes and the name of an expert in organising gap year programmes, especially when applications have to be completed.

Life Experience

Please note that not everything will be fully applicable to you.

Life experience has a lot to do with coping with new situations in order to build up personal skills.

People with life experience have learned to anticipate well on circumstances. This has helped them to be flexible, respond adequately to problems, being able to take well considered decisions and many other important skills. Life experience can be gained at any time and anywhere.

High School students who want to have more life experience should not mind a challenge. Although many of them might have been exposed already to a lot of travelling, they have usually done this with the supervision of adults. When they start undertaking programmes by themselves they will be responsible for their own acting. This involves grabbing opportunities at the right time and sometimes making mistakes which is in both cases part of growing up.

Students who have experienced themselves in many different situations usually cope better with their new life at college or university. Due to the fact that they have matured they know more about themselves and therefore are likely to make good choices regarding subject selection and extra curriculum activities. They will not be reluctant as many others might be when starting something new. The word 'unexpected' or even 'adventure' has become familiar to them.

Instead of taking a gap year after graduating from High School, many students postpone this year until they have completed their degree course. At that time there might be personal circumstances such as a close relationship or a job offer that could cancel your plans, but it is nevertheless a good moment.

A lot of students have difficulties organising their gap year and therefore abandon the idea. You could regret this at some point. The list of activities later on in the report should be of support to your research.

When there are no particular fields in which you feel a need to develop during your year off, you can of course undertake anything that appeals to you. Do take into account your age and personality in other words, do not take any unnecessary risks but plan your year with a proper organisation.

Most students who have taken some time out are more motivated to continue their studies at college or university than others.

Those who want to take a year off because they feel that all the pressure and the academic work has been enough for the time being, are recommended to undertake something entirely different such as tracking, volunteering or working.

Students who would like to learn something and experience another culture at the same time for a certain period of time could register for example in Florence for an art course or go to a High School in Hungary for a year whilst staying with a family.

Please, take a look at the list of 80 activities and the 100 gap year organisations in this report.

List of 80 Activities

Accountant, internship	39	
Advertising, internship	39	
Agriculture	50/67	
Animal care	1/27/43/47/73/80/96/98	
Arabic	53	
Archaeology	1/40/45/46/47/50/86	
Architecture	39/57	
Art + Design	58/63/80/85/91/93/96/97/100	
ETC		

List of 100 Gap Year organisations

Nr	Name organisation	www.	Countries involved	Period of time
1	Teaching and Projects Abroad	teaching-abroad.co.uk/	many	1 to 9 months
2	Africa and Asia Ventures	aventure.co.uk	Africa, Asia	4 months
3	AFS	afs.org	many	6-12 months
4	Art History Abroad	arthistoryabroad.com/	Italy	
5	Au pair in America	aupairamerica.co.uk/	USA	12-13 months
6	The British Institute of Florence	britishinstitute.it	Italy	2-12 months
7	BUNAC	bunac.org/	Australia, Nw Zealand, USA, Canada, S.Africa, Ghana	2-12 months
	ETC			

General List of Gap Year websites

Planning:

www.responsibletravel.com

www.atlashealth.co.uk/gap-year-planning.php

www.get.hobsons.co.uk/advice/gap_planning

www.visual-planning.com

www.gapwork.com/gap-year-educator

www.gapyear.com/advice/planning_your_gap_year.html

www.yearoutgroup.org/

www.ivillage.co.uk/parenting/teens/teeneducate/articles/0

Combined information

Pay Away

www.payaway.co.uk/atd.shtml/

Youth International

www.youthinternational.org

Teen High School Study Programs

www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/study/teen/educationalprograms.shtml

John Mewissen

**Expert in planning and organising gap year activities.
John also has many years of experience in college and
university applications**

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