**GAP YEAR**



**WHAT IS A GAP YEAR**

A gap year is not an easy option, it does not mean taking a year out from University sitting watching TV or messing around with your friends. It can be challenging, exciting and worthwhile. Whatever you decide this could mean travelling, doing voluntary work, learning a language, conservation work or working to gain experience.

You can meet likeminded travellers and meet new friends to explore new activities and cultures.

To get the most out of your gap year it is best to be organised, plan ahead, find out as much information and be well prepared. If going abroad make sure your passport is up to date and you have the required visa’s (you can check with the Foreign Office), also you have the correct insurances. *Top Priority is your personal safety*.

*Whatever you decide make sure it is something you will find exciting & challenging.*

**WHO CAN TAKE A GAP YEAR**

Anyone can take a gap year, whether you want to do something different after school, when you have graduated or a career break.



**WHAT CAN IT DO FOR ME?**

There are many reasons for taking a gap year:-

* To broaden my knowledge of the world and experience other cultures.
* To meet new people from all over the world.
* Would like to work with conservation.
* Would like to build on my confidence and improve my communication skills.
* Would like to work in industry and learn new skills.
* Would like to learn new languages.
* Would like to work in different communities.

**WHAT CAN I DO?**

**Volunteering**

Volunteering is a really good way of trying out activities you are interested in and gaining new skills. You can do a variety of subjects in the UK or worldwide. There are agencies or charities that will sponsor you and that help you pay for flights and upkeep in return for a year of your time. This can be an amazing experience helping orphans in places like Africa or working in the rainforests in Asia.



**Work**

Taking a gap year can be expensive that is why working abroad can be a great way to fund your travels and does not always requires lots of skills. However this is an exciting way of building on your skill set and can learn as you travel. It is advisable to set up a job before you start your travels or find something when you arrive at your destination. (*Make sure you to find out about work permits).*

The other options you can work within industry where you are placed in companies where you can gain valuable knowledge, hands on work and get paid.



**Education**

After taking your exams and degree’s you might think I don’t want to do more studying. However studying something for fun or different subjects may help you refocus to decide your university or career path. Extra qualifications are always viewed favourably by potential employers or universities and gain valuable knowledge in your chosen path.



**Travelling**

Travelling as part or all of your gap year is a great way to expand your knowledge, opportunities and meet new people. Even if you start travelling alone you are likely to meet up with many people, some who become your lifelong friends. Along the way you can learn new languages, cultures, sports and enjoy the different environments. Funding your travel abroad can be the biggest problem, *start saving as soon as possible.* You can boost your funds by working while you are travelling.



**Planning a Gap Year**

* Decide where you want to travel, work or volunteer etc.
* Decide what you would like to do.
* Have you started to budget for your gap year?
* Do you have all the correct paper work re passport, work visas, working permits, insurance, tickets etc. It is good idea to leave copies with family/friends. *Keep all documents and passport safe when travelling*.
* Decide mode of transport.
* Check with your doctor for a health check and if you need any immunisations or medications.
* Are you taking an international debit card?
* Check re top ups for mobile phone.
* Decided what clothing, toiletries/other personal items you need. *Best to* t*hink minimal*
* Have you got a log book or diary to record your amazing experiences?
* Fundraising to support your gap year
* Are you ready to adventure?



**What do other people think?**

It has now been seen by families, universities and employers as an important step in personal development to gain a wealth of experience and knowledge. A good gap year can help build confidence and push your personal boundaries.

Universities

They recognise the opportunities and benefits this can offer, but they expect to see how constructively you have used your gap year. Before you go check with your chosen University towards taking a gap year and keep them informed. There is evidence students who have taken a gap year are less likely to drop out of their course.

Employers

They like the initiative as gap years can help build on academic/non academic skills that are vital in a work place e.g. can be a team player and the ability to work in new circumstances and environment. A gap year can also help develop key skills e.g. communication, problem solving and self-reliance. These qualities are highly sought after by employers.

Families

They may have mixed emotions about you leaving and can be worried, but if you plan wisely this will help allay any worries and perhaps involve them in your planning of your gap year.

SOME GAP YEAR ESSENTIALS ABROAD

Passport

Tickets

Insurance

ISIC Cash card

Work Permit (if required)

Camera

Phone

Top up Card

IPOD for long journeys

Toilet Roll

Wet Wipes

Micro towel

Sunglasses

Locks

Diary and Pen

Gaffer tape

Condoms

Medication



**THE WORLD IS OUT THERE FOR YOU TO EXPLORE**

**FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS**

Additional sources of information

[www.statravel.co.uk/gap-year-travel](http://www.statravel.co.uk/gap-year-travel)

[www.gap360.com](http://www.gap360.com)

www.RealGap.co.uk