

Gap Year/Post Graduate Year/Interim Year

Not ready to go straight to college yet? Haven't really decided your path? Some students may defer their college acceptances and choose to take a year off between high school graduation and college, commonly known as a "Gap Year." It is important to spend this time "doing" something useful, constructive and creative, not simply "hanging out."

Students choose an interim or gap year for many reasons. It is a very individual and personal decision for each student and their family. Some reasons students may take a year off before starting college include:

- Students desire to experience and identify themselves as separate from their family or friends and may decide to travel on their own as an important step in their maturation.
- Students view this as perhaps the first time that they are exercising "choice" over their own lives for the next twelve months. Students are taking responsibility for themselves and their own decisions.
- Students may want a chance to focus on their interests and decide what they want to study in college. They develop independence and the ability to work on their own, create networks of contacts, and have a sense of accomplishment and pride when their year is completed.
- Some students may not be academically or emotionally prepared for the rigors of college. This break provides them an opportunity to develop the necessary skills for a successful college experience.

Taking a Gap year is not for everyone. If you are sure of what your college direction and major will be and feel confident in your abilities to thrive with the intense workload that college brings, you probably will want to continue to college right after high school. If you do decide to take a year off, you should still apply to college during your senior year in high school. If you receive acceptances, you can request to have the acceptance deferred for one year. Some colleges will allow deferral; others will ask that you reapply.

If you do decide to move forward with Gap year plans, make sure you select something to do that will be beneficial for you in your future. Options include volunteering in a foreign country, exploring different career paths, or improving your study skills. This will be an opportunity for you to be creative and get the most out of this year that you can!

Here are some programs you might consider:

American Field Service www.afs.org	Americorps www.cns.gov/amerikorps	Amigos de Las Americas www.amigoslink.org
Audobon Expedition Institute www.aei-audobon.org	Au Sable Institute for Environmental Studies www.ausable.org	British American Education Foundation www.baef.org

Bridges: Study Abroad www.bridgesstudyabroad.com	Broad Reach www.gobroadreach.com	Center for Interim Programs www.interimprograms.com
City-Year www.city-year.com	Dynamy www.dynamy.org	Earth Corp www.earthcorp.org
Earth Watch www.earthwatch.org	Full Sail Center for Recording Arts www.fullsail.com	Foundation for Foreign Study www.fffoundation.org
Habitat for Humanity www.habitat.org	High Mountain Institute www.hminet.org	ICA Journeys www.icajourneys.org
Global Quest www.gquest.org	Global Routes www.globalroutes.org	Ithaka www.ithakasemester.org
Interlocken/Windsor Mountain www.windsormountain.org	LEAPNow www.leapnow.org	Leysin American School-Switzerland www.las.ch
National Outdoor Leadership School www.nols.edu	NACEL Open Door www.nacelopendoor.org	Outward Bound www.outwardbound.org
Oxford Advanced Studies Program www.oasp.as.uk	Pacific Village www.pacificvillage.org	Peace Corp www.peacecorps.gov
Rotary International Exchange www.rotary.org	SeaMester www.seamester.org	Student Conservation Association www.sca-inc.org
Studio Art Centers International Florence www.saci-florence.org	Up With People www.upwithpeople.org	The School for Field Studies www.fieldstudies.org
TASIS Schools www.tasis.com	Where There Be Dragons www.wheretherebedragons.com	World Learning – The Experiment in International Living www.worldlearning.org
Youth for Understanding www.youthforunderstanding.org	Indralaya www.indralaya.org (Orcas Island, WA)	

Here are a few web sites with further information about planning a successful Gap year experience:

www.findagap.com

www.fastweb.com

www.takingtimeoff.com

www.wisemantech.com

www.takingoff.net

www.whereyouheaded.com

www.studyabroad.com

www.interimprograms.com

www.overseastudy.com

www.transitionsaboard.com

There are many boarding schools across the country that offers Post-Graduate opportunities for students. A good resource is The Association of Boarding School's web site: www.school.com.

Here are some publications you may want to review:

Taking Time Off, Colin Hall and Ron Leiber

Time Out, Taking a Break from School to Travel, Work and Study in the US and Abroad by Robert Gilpin and Caroline Fitzgibbons

Invest Yourself: The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities, by The Commission on Voluntary Service and Action

The Gap-Year Advantage, by Karl Haigler and Rae Nelson