

A Year Off from School: Facts about Gap Year and Why U.S Colleges are Adopting This European Trend.

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The period between the junior and senior year of high school can be an anxious one for those who plan on making an investment in their future by attending a four year or two-year postsecondary institution. Responsibilities like taking standardized tests, finding the best strategy to appease that one teacher that you've despised for four years, making a good report on that letter of recommendation, listing resources, conversations with the school counselor about PSEO, which courses to take that will favor college admissions departments, and submitting transcripts are all factors when getting into college. But apart from being corrupted by parents, teachers, and counselors is the struggle to find a balance between school, work, and extracurricular activities, especially for seniors who are exposed to a wide range of opportunities in order to balance life and school while enjoying their last year.

What if prom and high school graduation aren't enough when recognizing how hard you've worked for the past four years to get that high school diploma? Or you may graduate, but don't get that acceptance letter because of a bad transcript. Are you physically and mentally ready for college? If not, why not take a "gap year?"

Gap year is a year long

break where students take time off from formal academic learning to engage in activities like working, volunteer work, traveling the world for job purposes or to study their major abroad in another location..

Some choose to intern at the career of their choice or simply to improve

themselves so they feel more confident and mentally ready when they return to school in the fall. Studies show that students

who take a gap year learn more about themselves

and the world around them and are more mature

and ready to learn when they get to college. Gap years can be taken

at any stage in a lifetime but is typically between high school

and college.



Countries like the United Kingdom and other parts of Europe have encouraged this practice among their college bound students as a way to improve their language skills while getting accustomed to traveling and meeting people who could possibly move them forward in their career path. The rates are slowly rising in the U.S., as many college applicants are recently considering taking a year off, especially after learning that some of the nation's top-rated colleges like **Harvard, Princeton and Stanford** all approve of students that consider deferred admission. Gap year organizations hold annual/ monthly national fairs through *USA Gap Year Fairs* to students parents and college counselors that express interest in the program and give them information as far as tuition, housing and other financial information.

Advantages

- The opportunity to develop transferable skills like communication, leadership, time management, and decision making.
- Increases work experience through paid employment or voluntary work.
- Allows students to learn new crafts like surfing, learning another language, improving basic language, film-making, culinary arts and/or martial arts.
- Develop technology skills
- Learning to work with and as a team player.
- Increases confidence and independence by taking yourself out of your comfort zone.
- Maturity
- More engaged with their major
- Self- awareness and better prepared for college
- Permissible college resume and better application.
- Career Development
- Long-term relationships
- Useful list of contacts
- International friends
- Improve and gain basic life skills

Disadvantages

- Travel insurance is costly
- Loss of academic momentum
- Proper vaccinations
- Opportunity cost(Putting off work for school or other barriers that could lessen your income)
- Career delay
- Institutions look down upon students that use their time loosely - Too much fun instead or studying or career exploration.
- Prone to illness
- Lack of feeling satisfied while your old classmates are now in college
- May lose touch with the real world- going back to work or school
- Provider may be unreliable, unethical, dishonest, didn't fit your needs.
- May lose important documents like your passport, emergency contact information, drivers license, ID card, tickets, and insurance policies.

Types of Gap Year Experiences:

College Deferral- This can be one of two things. You apply to your desired college and they reply back stating that your application has been deferred meaning that your application is missing supplements like a final transcript in order to complete the admissions process and reserving your spot in their incoming class. In other cases, it simply means taking a year off from attending college that requires sending a letter to the college that you've been accepted stating your reasons for deferral and your plans during that time. It's best to get the stress of applying to colleges, filing your FAFSA, projects, tests and other hassles out of the way before you travel so everything can be ready to go when you return.

Post- Graduate year (P.G.) - This is a year spent, after high school, to go to boarding or independent school before college. When a student applies to a boarding school they will join the senior class along with other P.G. students during their term. Post- graduates snatch the opportunity to fill gaps on their transcripts, to take advanced courses, join clubs and to take extracurricular activities. Students may also attempt to get college-required subject areas that were not available at their high school. Some students elect to study at a boarding school instead of college as early as the fall of their junior year, others will do both. Postgraduates will be academically and socially prepared by the time they reconsider college after their time at boarding school and will be a stronger candidate to the schools they had in mind and new schools that will match their potential and knowledge to take on challenging courses. The transition may be hard for those that rebel against the idea of spending another year in high school while their friends are in college but will make them more appealing to schools in and out of their boundaries may even get more scholarships.

The reason why some colleges are interested in students that consider a gap year is the fact that college admission standards has gotten more strict on the applicants that apply not only because of selective colleges but how the requirements have changed over the years. In fact scholars have proven that a child is more successful in the classroom if they have a meaningful purpose upon attending in the first place in other words many don't correlate their interests with whatsoever their being taught in order to apply to life after school most for the sake of passing in order to move forward. Excessive hours of intercepting lectures, long note taking, in this day and age can often shift a student from real world experiences like what keeps one motivated or interested in learning about long term goals they plan for life after school. **Liberal Arts Education educates students with the skills they need to work in the real world while taking diverse courses that allows them to see the world in a broader point of view.(Visual Arts, Debate, Theater, Science, Culture, Art,etc).** Students also have the privilege to study a specific area of

interest while improving communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.

If you are considering taking a gap year, think out your plans and goals you have for yourself when you attend college.

Helpful Tip-Show parents how serious you are about your future by finding internships or volunteer work linked to your major. Show responsibly by comprising your college plans beforehand so you know what is expected when you return in the fall. Gap year organizations can be expensive, depending on your desired program. Consider tuition deferral to pay for it. (Send your college money to Gap Year)

If you're a parent with a child that has always struggled with school or simply wanting a better, open future for their child. A student that wants to get into a better school needs to follow the links below for more information.

Next Gap Year Fair

January 28, 2015

Groves Academy

6:00-8:00pm

Minneapolis, MN

usagapyearfairs.org

American Gap Association

www.dynamy.org

www.teenlife.com/category/gap-year

studiesabroad.com/gap

www.afsusa.org/study-abroad/gap-year

www.gapadvice.org

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