

Gap Year Activities



What is a Gap Year?

In previous years a gap year was traditionally seen as the activity of “taking time out before university”. Nowadays this is not the case and gap years can be taken before, during and after university or after a couple of years of employment. Gap years come under many guises - backpacking, a career gap, a short gap year, travelling, time out, a sabbatical - but they all mean the same thing.

A gap year is constructive time out in-between life stages. Examples could include travelling, volunteering, working abroad or a combination. Gap years are now seen as a way to:

- Improve your CV.
- Gain relevant work experience in a specific field, with employers actively employing people who have taken a gap year.
- Try new experiences and cultures.
- Work out what is important to you, getting a work life balance.

Top Tips for your Gap Year

1. Do your research - speak to people who've been there and done it. Have a search around the many informative websites and ask questions.
2. Take time to plan and prepare - it can take 9-12 months to plan your gap year and to raise the funds.
3. Budget, but don't get hung up on saving money at all costs so that you miss out on once-in-a-lifetime opportunities - have a reserve of money to fall back on. A gap year is about enjoying yourself - don't forget you can do that at home too!
4. Be open-minded - a gap year is all about new experiences and developing yourself both personally and professionally.
5. Use the time to make contacts - this is an important time to develop networks that could help you in your future career. Get on message boards and see if anyone is planning a similar kind of trip. Be friendly, get chatting, and start planning your gap year!
6. Most importantly, enjoy it...

(Extracts and information above taken from gapyear.com)

Gap Year Websites

- <https://www.ucas.com/discover/gap-years> Helpful information on gap years from UCAS.
- <https://www.gooverseas.com/> A site which provides an insight into working overseas and offers an extensive database of programmes including volunteering, internships and teaching opportunities across all areas from disaster relief to advocacy and human rights.
- <https://yearoutgroup.org/> The Year Out Group is an association of leading year out organisations that was formed in 1998 to promote the concept and benefits of well-structured year out programmes, to promote models of good practice and to help young people and their advisers in selecting suitable and worthwhile projects.

- <https://gapforce.org/gb/gap-year-programs> A site offering information on taking a gap year and a database of programmes.
- <https://www.wse.org.uk> World Service Enquiry provides information and career advice to people who want to volunteer or work in international development.
- <https://www.vsointernational.org> VSO is the world's leading international development organisation that uses volunteers to fight poverty and reduce inequality.
- <https://www.bunac.org> BUNAC offers a range of work abroad and volunteer abroad programmes. BUNAC has been helping young people work and volunteer abroad since 1962. Popular gap year destinations include USA, Canada, New Zealand, Nepal, Australia, Britain, China, South Africa and many more.
- <https://www.campamerica.co.uk> Camp America is a cultural exchange programme that gives you the chance to spend your summer living and working on a summer camp in the USA.
- <https://www.britishexploring.org> British Exploring takes young people on charity expeditions to the world's most extreme and remote locations.
- <https://raleighinternational.org/> Raleigh International runs meaningful sustainability projects which are designed to create a positive impact in the communities and areas in which they take place, and will increase the leadership, teamwork and employability skills of volunteers. Volunteers are trained and supported throughout the programmes which can include community, environmental and adventure projects. Raleigh's vision is to create a global community of inspired young people committed to working together regardless of age, social background, culture and nationality, to build and maintain strong and sustainable communities across the globe.
- <https://www.workaway.info> International program providing platform allowing opportunities for members to arrange homestay and cultural activity.



Note: Travel regulations have changed since Covid-19 and Brexit. Please check with the relevant authorities to determine latest requirements before making plans.

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