

## Considering a Gap Year before College

### What is a Gap Year?

A Gap Year is when a student chooses to wait a period of time (usually six months to a year) after graduating from high school and before starting college.

### What do I do during a Gap Year?

Gap Year programs can involve a variety of activities: credit or non-credit study, community service, travel, work internships, or a combination thereof. There are also several programs available abroad. You can use your time to explore an interest, perform community service, live independently, and develop specific skills. The possibilities are nearly endless depending on what type of program you choose.

### What Reasons are there for considering a Gap Year?

- You want to work in a particular area of interest to see if you really like it.
- You want to learn more about yourself and pursue new interests.
- You want to want to save money and have some life experience so you will be ready to take full advantage of your college experience.
- You have pushed yourself so hard through high school that you are “burnt out” and you need a break after the admissions process.
- You want to head to college with a clearer idea of your path of study.
- You are excited about the wealth of opportunities that a Gap Year offers
- You want an opportunity to live independently, away from family and friends.

### What are my Gap year Options?

There are many structured Gap Year programs and some programs you can structure yourself. Most require a financial obligation, so many students may need to work first to raise the funds necessary to travel or participate in a particular program. Whitman’s CIC has information on some Gap Year programs. You can also hire an educational consultant to advise you on various programs and how to apply; however, most resources are available online and a consultant is not usually necessary. Discuss financial expectations with your parents.

### Should I still apply to college during my Senior Year?

*Even if you are committed to doing a Gap Year after high school, it is important to still complete the college application process if you have some particular colleges in mind.* It is much easier to apply to college while you are in high school and have easy access to resources such as your School Counselor, teachers (for recommendation letters), and the CIC. Many colleges now allow you to defer for a year with a well-planned Gap Year; *however, it is important to check with each of your college choices to see if they accept deferrals.*

## Resources on Gap Year Programs

### Books:

Taking Time Off Colin Hall & Ron Liebe 1996 Noonday Press

The Gap Year Charlotte Hindle, Joe Bindloss 2005 The Lonely Planet

Taking a Gap Year Susan Griffith 2003 Globe Pequot Press

Your Gap Year: Everything You Need to Know to Make Your Year Out the Adventure of a Lifetime Susan Griffith 2008 Globe Pequot Press

The Gap-Year Advantage: Helping Your Child Benefit from Time Off Before or During College (Paperback) Karl Haigler, Rae Nelson

### Websites:

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

[www.gap-year.com](http://www.gap-year.com)

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

Programs: *(additional information is also available in Whitman's CIC)*

[www.interimprograms.com](http://www.interimprograms.com) (Holly Bull)

[www.dynamy.org](http://www.dynamy.org) (Greg Cappello)

Students Partnership Worldwide: [www.spw.org](http://www.spw.org)

AmeriCorps [www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org)

Youth Service America [www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org)

Peacecorps [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov)

Earthwatch [www.earthwatch.org](http://www.earthwatch.org)

### Articles

- “Eye on the Goal” Ian Shapira Aug 5, 2007 Washington Post
- “The Gap Year” Ian Shapira, Marlyn McGrath Lewis, Holly Bull Aug 6, 2007 Washington Post Magazine
- “Students evaluate gap-year program” March 4, 2008 The Daily Princetonian
- “You will face who you are’: A guide to doing good for gap year” March 28, 2008 National Post, Canada
- “No Gap Year program for Pre-Frosh” March 6, 2008 Stanford Daily
- “A Cure for the College-Bound Blues” March 7, 2008 New York Times