

# GAP YEAR MANUAL for Educational Counselors

## Educational Modes for High School

**Optimistic** = the class has less than 15 students and the teacher LOVES being a teacher at that school. The rest of the class challenges each other to develop and grow through a self-driven curiosity about all subjects. It's free because it's a public school.

**Realistic** = hope for a GREAT teacher who has the time and passion to engender a deep and genuine enthusiasm for their subject to each of their students. There are 30-35 students in a class.

**Pessimistic** = there are 60 kids in one class and the teacher uses a scantron 4000 to arbitrarily assign grades. Students have bar codes to identify them.

**Traditional** = lecture. Four walls. Fluorescent lights. The teacher's nose whistles every time he exhales through it. Students play on their phones, text messaging and watching videos during class.

**Progressive** = students learn because they're CURIOUS about the thing their studying. They are in small classes, gaining an understanding of the core material by asking questions, working cooperatively, reading, listening, and physically experiencing the subject. Superhero capes are issued en lieu of grades.

carpe diem education



## Primary reasons to take a "Gap Year:"

1. Address issues of **ACADEMIC BURNOUT**. ... let the well fill again
2. **GET INTO A BETTER UNIVERSITY**. Universities mostly understand that students who have completed a Gap Year will be more invested, be better community members, and have better GPA's. Students often will use their Gap Year to fuel better admissions essays, and even change their university choice having gained clarity and purpose.
3. Re-ignite a sense of **CURIOSITY** for learning at-large. Assigned workbooks and state-dictated materials often rob students of their own curiosity for a subject.
4. **INTERNATIONALIZE THEIR WORLDVIEW** and see how others do this thing called "living" and what they call doing it "successfully." Experiment and identify their own "best way" of living.
5. **GAIN LINGUISTIC FLUENCY**, explore a possible career in-action, gain cultural competency, ...
6. Find **THEIR REASON** for being college aside from the fact that "it's just a smart thing to do," or "everyone else is doing it."
7. Ground the past 12 years of academic knowledge with **RELEVANCE EARNED BY EXPERIENCE**.
8. **DO SOMETHING CHALLENGING**. No one can really know what they're made of until they face a challenge: traditional schooling is normally built to insulate.
9. **GET LAUGHED AT** by host families because you just said you were "pregnant" instead of "embarrassed."
10. **GET DIARRHEA** and learn to integrate and cherish a body that's until now been a seat-filler rather than a person.
11. Learn about **DIFFERING ENVIRONMENTS** and different cultural relationships to them.
12. Understand what it is to be an employee and worker in **A GLOBAL MARKETPLACE**.
13. Add to your **MARKETABILITY** as an employee.

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## Helpful Information

A Few Gap Year Programs	Resources	Safe Travel
<a href="http://www.carpediemeducation.org">www.carpediemeducation.org</a>	<a href="http://www.interimprograms.com">www.interimprograms.com</a>	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>
<a href="http://www.leapnow.org">www.leapnow.org</a>	<a href="http://www.servenet.org">www.servenet.org</a>	<a href="http://www.travel.state.gov">www.travel.state.gov</a>
<a href="http://www.globalroutes.org">www.globalroutes.org</a>	<a href="http://www.goabroad.com">www.goabroad.com</a>	<a href="http://www.inext.com">www.inext.com</a>
<a href="http://www.youthinternational.com">www.youthinternational.com</a>	<a href="http://www.wwoof.org">www.wwoof.org</a>	<a href="http://www.insuremytrip.com">www.insuremytrip.com</a>
<a href="http://www.andeo.org">www.andeo.org</a>	<a href="http://www.volunteer.org.nz">www.volunteer.org.nz</a>	<a href="http://www.statravel.com">www.statravel.com</a>
<a href="http://www.wheretherebedragons.com">www.wheretherebedragons.com</a>	<a href="http://www.globalservicecorps.org">www.globalservicecorps.org</a>	<a href="http://www.kayak.com">www.kayak.com</a>
<a href="http://www.afsusa.org">www.afsusa.org</a>	<a href="http://www.thesca.org">www.thesca.org</a>	<a href="http://www.ratemystudyabroad.com">www.ratemystudyabroad.com</a>
<a href="http://www.cityyear.org">www.cityyear.org</a>	<a href="http://www.transitionsabroad.com">www.transitionsabroad.com</a>	<a href="http://www.nols.edu/wmi">www.nols.edu/wmi</a>
<a href="http://www.mapthegapinternational.org">www.mapthegapinternational.org</a>	<a href="http://www.idealists.org">www.idealists.org</a>	
<a href="http://www.masaisrael.org">www.masaisrael.org</a>	<a href="http://www.americorps.gov">www.americorps.gov</a>	
<a href="http://www.rusticpathways.com">www.rusticpathways.com</a>	<a href="http://www.usagapyearfairs.org">www.usagapyearfairs.org</a>	
<a href="http://www.seamester.com">www.seamester.com</a>	<a href="http://www.lonelyplanet.com">www.lonelyplanet.com</a>	
<a href="http://www.belcamino.org">www.belcamino.org</a>	<a href="http://www.powells.com">www.powells.com</a>	
<a href="http://www.elcasalbarcelona.com">www.elcasalbarcelona.com</a>	<a href="http://www.takingoff.net">www.takingoff.net</a>	
<a href="http://www.gapyearsouthafrica.com">www.gapyearsouthafrica.com</a>	<a href="http://www.timeoutadventures.org">www.timeoutadventures.org</a>	
<a href="http://www.nols.edu">www.nols.edu</a>	<a href="http://www.isic.org">www.isic.org</a>	
<a href="http://www.yfu-usa.org">www.yfu-usa.org</a>	<a href="http://www.wiserearth.org">www.wiserearth.org</a>	

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## Assembly Instructions

Step 1: Open the box (and recycle all unused paper).

Step 2: Address everything to the students first. We've found that parents often become overly involved with their students' process and inadvertently reinforce a belief that "students can't decide for themselves" thereby undermining this process from the get-go.

Step 3: Answer the following questions.

- a. What needs to happen to make college a reality after their Gap Year? Do you need to defer, take a leave of absence, or arrange for a Consortium Agreement? What deadlines and deposits need to be paid to secure their position? It's best to have a plan post-Gap, but many times students find a better-fitting college as a result of their Gap Year so establishing communication while the student is gone to save time and impart deadlines are vital.
- b. How long does the student have for the Gap Year? It's best to think about a Gap Year within the existing academic structures for both framing and continuance purposes. Semesters work best and allow for at least two experiences, with summers to work and earn money.
- c. Do they want to go with a group or alone? Have they historically fared better in teams or alone? Where would be best for them to grow?
- d. How much structure do they need? Will they be able to go it alone and fend safely for themselves? If they need to go to a doctor do they have the wherewithal to ask the right questions and advocate for their own best interests?
- e. Where do they want to be? Think languages, communication-potential back home, environmental attributes, etc. USA? Latin America? Europe? Asia? Africa? South Pacific? Antarctica? The Moon?
- f. What do they want to do? Teach? Wildlife? Arts? Environmental work? Study a language or cooking? Learn green building? There is no "right choice," and often students can choose multiple options within the same organization/setup. Planning for time to wander and perhaps be a tourist is a good (and realistic) idea.
- g. What's the budget? Do they need to find compensation with room and board? Are there currency conversions that work in the students favor? Do they need to work first? Are there airfares and other expenses to factor? Will they be using part of their college tuition? What scholarships and FAFSA monies are out there?
- h. Is it important to get college credit? Doing so opens financial aid doors, but if done poorly can inhibit their ability to get the most out of their Gap Year.

Step 4: Find the right program.

- a. Go to [www.usagapyearfairs.org](http://www.usagapyearfairs.org) to get a look at most of the options that are out there. If going with a program, we suggest finding those based in the US for better accountability and communication. Also, for less-structured programs or for the do-it-yourself-er you can visit [www.goabroad.com](http://www.goabroad.com), [www.woof.org](http://www.woof.org), [www.transitionsabroad.com](http://www.transitionsabroad.com), [www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov), or [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org). Don't be afraid to inquire with your own personal relationships too.
- b. Do your due diligence: call the organizations and ask for references.
- c. Google the organizations and seek write-ups or reviews.
- d. Don't discount something that's "out there" without first having done the research. Many people only think of the dangers from 30 years ago without knowing what's currently going on.
- e. Apply to those that hold the student's interest and have any necessary safeguards parents dictate. Most are done as rolling admission, and the height of the Gap Year admissions takes place usually April - July for the fall semester.

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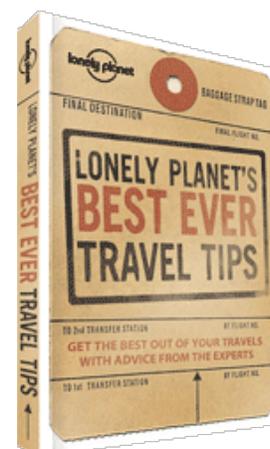
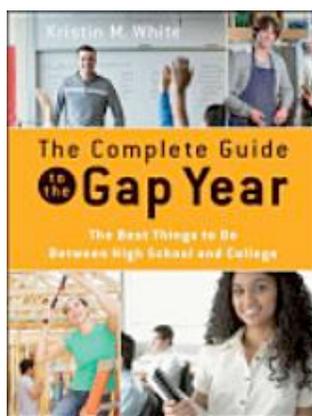
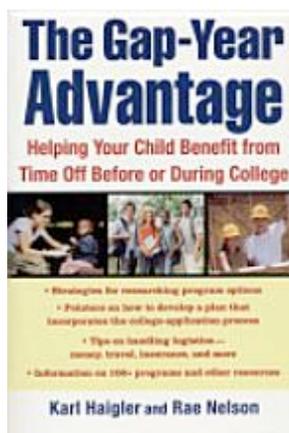
Step 5: Do a happy-dance because you're halfway there.

Step 6: Know your resources.

- a. Health: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). Most places overseas have medical considerations.
- b. Safety: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). The State Department issues Travel Warnings and has Safety sections for each country. The State Department, however, is well known for taking a most-conservative path with travel warnings and recommendations.
- c. Insurance: make sure they check to see whether their insurance covers them while overseas. If not there are some great travel insurance products like [www.insuremytrip.com](http://www.insuremytrip.com) or [www.inext.com](http://www.inext.com).
- d. Communication: email is available EVERYWHERE. Cell phone coverage can be most consistently purchased overseas for the cheapest and greatest experience.
- e. Funding: [www.carpediemeducation.org/financialaid.php](http://www.carpediemeducation.org/financialaid.php). With information about Federal, State, private, and non-traditional funding sources. There are some Federal scholarships that will cover \$5,000 for an overseas program with credit, and others that will cover an entire year's program costs with credit and some service afterwards. In the UK, US, and Australia there are less-stringent guidelines that enable Gap Year students to get work visas.
- f. Travel: [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com) or [www.globalvisiontravel.com](http://www.globalvisiontravel.com). Airfare is the bane of many people's trips, but it's almost always best to purchase a round trip ticket and change a return ticket.
- g. Gear: Save time, the environment, and look less like a newbie by buying gear from army surplus stores, Goodwill, the Salvation Army, and other thrift-stores.
- h. Information/literature: [www.powells.com](http://www.powells.com) is the nation's largest independent bookstore and does online retailing of any book a student could need for their trip. [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com) is also a great resource for online information.

Step 7: Prepare your student.

- a. Make sure their passport is valid for 6 months AFTER the last day of travel.
- b. Make arrangements for any visas and vaccinations. Build or buy a small medical kit.
- c. Book airfare. Do this at least a month in advance and take advantage of student-only fares.
- d. Arrange for a Visa Debit card and a backup credit card.
- e. Have the student register their itinerary with the State Department.
- f. Arrange for an arrival pickup. Times of transition (jet lag, environmental, etc.) are when travelers are most at risk. Language Schools often can arrange this and if traveling alone are a great way to settle a bit and get oriented to the area.



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## Certification and Compliance

Unfortunately there are no certification or compliance bodies yet for Gap Year organizations. Many programs are new and tailor to one or two specific locations, whereas others will run short-term programs that have a constantly rotating house and no set limits. In any case, the inclusion of an organization in [www.usagapyearfairs.org](http://www.usagapyearfairs.org) doesn't indicate a better or worse program, only that they can pay their bills. There are new websites cropping up like [www.ratemystudyabroad.com](http://www.ratemystudyabroad.com) that are building steam and will likely be the next best thing until a certification body arises.

## Limited Warranty

Sadly, there are no warranties :-). However, students unanimously report that even when their Gap Years don't go flawlessly and according to plan, they're extremely glad for having taken them.

## Battery Replacement

Yes, this is a strong reason for doing a Gap Year.

## Troubleshooting

Gap students in the Haigler survey returned to college generally within six months after their Gap year, with a (re) ignited passion for learning, and the ability to connect formal education with "real-world" experiences. (In the survey, 90% returned within 1 year and 80% within 6 months – the other 10% generally had solid reasons, e.g., taking an extra Gap year, family illness, etc.).

A study by two economists at the University of Western Australia, Elisa Birch and Paul Miller, found students who took time out scored an average first-year university mark 2.3 per cent higher than those coming straight from school. The study found the positive effect of a Gap year on academic performance was strongest for males who were underachievers: these students scored 3.7 per cent more if they took a Gap year.

In the United States, experts say the increasing stress of college admissions makes parents nervous about any kind of unusual path. "These are families that somehow see this as not part of the grand plan," said Gail Reardon, who founded a Boston company, Taking Off, that helps students plan Gap years. Adds Lee Stetson, dean of admissions at the University of Pennsylvania: "Not wanting to break stride is the American way." [...] "I don't think there's any rational explanation to just run to college," [Gerrit Lansing, a student who took a Gap year] said. "There's no reason. It's just what everyone does."

60% of Gap year graduates said the experience either "set me on my current career path/academic major" or "confirmed my choice of career/academic major"). About 66% also said they took their academic work "much more seriously" or "somewhat more seriously" after their Gap year.

Milkround is a commercial "graduate recruitment firm" that has been in the forefront of U.K.-based research on the impact of Gap years. (The U.K. term, "milkrounds," refers to employment interviews conducted by graduate recruiters.) The Milkround graduate recruitment Gap year survey asked 378 respondents if they believed their experience had made them better candidates for employers. Of the 50 percent who had already taken a Gap year, the overwhelming majority (88 percent) said "yes," their Gap year had "added to their employability."

Of those surveyed who were already out of college and in the workforce, almost 75% reported being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" in their jobs. The major reasons for job satisfaction provided were personal growth experienced and the opportunity to help others solve problems (with status and financial security rating much lower). The former statistic compares very favorably with other "twenty-somethings" where majority report low job satisfaction.