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### **Should students take a year off between high school and university?**

In Britain, a gap year—a year off between the end of high school and the beginning of university—has been a rite of passage for school-weary, under-experienced high school students. It is considered a way for students to spread their wings and gain some much needed personal growth before committing to the world of higher education.

In the traditional sense, the gap year is viewed as a year of carefree travel, but gap year supporters have come to see it as necessary (3) to having a successful higher education experience. In a single year students can:

- Gain hands-on work experience
- See the world
- Make new friends
- Volunteer
- Develop hands-on school skills
- Make money for school
- Reassess priorities
- Personal growth
- Build resume

### **Gap Year and the Credit Crunch**

With rising tuition fees, taking a year off to earn school money can be a wise move for those with limited financial resources. With average tuition costs rising every year, creating a nest egg to fund the next four years makes strong economic sense.

But parents and critics of the gap year worry that students will lose school motivation and won't want to return to school after a year off—that the time away will have a disruptive effect on school goals and motivation.

But the opposite might just be true—in fact, certain colleges (1) are getting on board and even recommending that students defer their acceptance for a year as a way to prevent the freshman “burnout” rate that has become a growing issue (2) in the US.

Colleges that support a year off (4) report that students return from the gap year refreshed, re-vitalized, and better prepared to face four years of schoolwork.

### **Should Your Teen Take a Gap Year?**

Any student that is feeling overwhelmed by school choices, finances, or issues of motivation should consider the benefits of a gap year.

Students considering taking a gap year should work with current guidance counselors, parents, and even schools being applied to in order to work out a plan to earn hands-on experience, save money, and return to their studies with a renewed focus and confidence.