



**COLORADO  
COLLEGE**

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## **Top Ten Reasons to Consider a Gap Experience Between HS and College**

### **#10 Self-Directed Learning**

*Have you dreamed about what you would like to be learning instead of what you have to be learning?*

A gap year is about you deciding what is the best use of your time. A time to experience a possible career, pursue social justice service, learn a life skill (like a language or money-management), see the world, or earn money for college.

### **#9 Deepen Your Passions**

*Do you have an interest that could grow if you had more time for it?*

Many students find themselves overscheduled between academic studies, extracurricular activities, work or family responsibilities, and--in the senior year--college applications. During a gap year, you can dedicate more time and emotional space towards growing your talent in an activity that means a great deal to you.

### **#8 Save for College**

*Would you like to be able to help your parents meet the expense of college and reduce student loans?*

A gap year does not have to be about spending money. There are many opportunities to earn money during a gap experience, both in the US and abroad.

### **#7 Social Justice**

*Do you want to learn how the world works and how you can make a difference?*

Many gap experiences are structured around service and give first-hand experience with those populations and communities in need. See <https://serviceyear.org/> for a comprehensive listing.

### **#6 Second Language Acquisition**

*Would you like to take your foreign language skills to the next level, perhaps even to fluency?*

Immersion is the best way to learn a language. There are many opportunities, both in organized programs or on your own, to live abroad and even earn money, in a non-English speaking country.

## #5 Career Exploration

*Are you certain about your future career?*

High school teaches important material, but rarely do students learn about potential career choices. The daily experience of a job is often very different from the theoretical idea of it. A gap year can be a good way to “try out” that career through internships or other work-related experiences. This can translate into more focused work in college that helps you graduate on time and with the correct training.

## #4 Experiential Learning

*Are there places in the US or the world that you have always wanted to explore?*

The world is a big place. Learning about different places, people, and cultures gives you skills that will aid your work in the classroom and likely in your career. There are many ways to travel as an individual or with a structured program during a gap year.

## #3 Wellness

*Have you been feeling anxious, stressed or depressed?*

College only tends to make these emotional health issues worse. A gap year can help you learn about yourself and how to manage your health issues and practice self-care without the added stress of college.

## #2 Graduate From College in Four Years

*Did you know that only 60% of students graduate from college within 6 years?*

Preliminary research shows that students who take a gap year are more likely to graduate from college in four years, and they report higher satisfaction with their major and their career. People worry that a gap year might be expensive. It is far more expensive to pay for six years of tuition.

**And the #1 reason to consider having a gap experience is: YOU!**

Let's face it, you have worked hard to get yourself to this point of your life and educational career. You probably cannot remember a time when you were not in school and were not being told what you should learn, what was important, and what you should be doing with your time.

Wouldn't it be great to do something that, for a change, has *nothing* to do with enhancing your candidacy for college? Focusing on personal development can also help you approach your college education with a greater sense of maturity, focus, and balance. Surveys of former gap year students indicate that you will not lose the hard-earned study skills that you have developed during high school. Other studies have demonstrated that, on average, not only do students who have a gap year experience perform better academically than those who don't, they actually do *better* than would have been predicted!

Just about everyone can profit from stepping off the educational treadmill. It does not need to cost a lot of money. Yes, some of the gap programs out there can be expensive, but many of them offer financial assistance. Or you can structure your own experience that could involve making money, traveling, and doing volunteer work for a while. Just think about what you would *most* like to do with some time off, and then figure out a way to make that possible. It is very likely that you will get a lot more out of your college experience as a result.