

Gap year vs. traditional schooling

Business



Old-fashioned or modern? Safe or risk taking? Traditional or contemporary? These are the underlying questions that daunt an average adolescent trying to make decisions in life. And in one particular sense, the decision to take a Gap Year between high school and college can be a stagnant but positive life decision. A 'gap year' is not a scholarly program, but an actual break in schooling between the two major higher learning institutions. It was a tradition commonplace in Britain, and as they've always had influence on American shores, the idea is starting to take motion in the states. What may be the best reason to take a year off can be simply to use it in the most productive way possible; whether that means a hands-on internship at an expected future workplace, or full-time volunteer work for the nation.

Another great idea for a gap year could be to legitimately find out what this 'real world' is like and pursue lifelong endeavors. Unfortunately, the most serious drawback could be actually not starting school back up again for any multitude of reasons. Regardless, the argument remains solid that taking a gap year before college would be the best option for anyone who wants experience, craves to foster community responsibility, and drives for the thrill of life. As stated, possibly one of the biggest reasons to break from the studies for a period would be to use that time effectively in, per se, an internship. Internships are really nothing more than getting a feel for a prominent position while being supervised and earning experience, and possibly making connections.

They can be paid or not, but the best reason to take one up is to show a future employer that you have experience before working the job. Barbara Luntz, a high school counselor explains the importance of the work, “

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Colleges want prior experience too; not just the employers.” An internship or two on your resume means you went above the safe havens of a classroom and went for the gold. As an alternative, you can also do volunteer work for your community, nation, or planet. Volunteer service is a great way to give back to the place that has kept you and may need some help.

One of these service programs is called City Year, and it is a national organization operated in several major cities around the US with one major goal; to promote the importance of education to the young. On their website is a quote most fitting; “ You must become the change you want to see in the world.” The quote is the words of Gandhi, but its meaning resonates effectively. One cannot only dream about a cleaner, brighter world. The courage and audacity must be found to go out and make it happen.

Secondly, taking a short time off for oneself can benefit others, but in other ways, may be used to spend time ‘ in the real world’ as the teachers love to say. But this idea goes far beyond getting a boring job and trying to make some income. Of the young people encountered in a recent survey, “ 8 out of 10 of the students said they wanted to travel the world.” After having studied for the last 14 years, still having the body able enough to do extraneous things, no major accumulated debt, and free from any legitimate responsibilities, what other better time do teens have than right then?

Leading to my next point, there is also a trend found in practically all humans, from the ages of about 3 to 92. The most interesting part is that this trend is not recent, but dates back very many millennias. The trend can at first be hard to comprehend, but here is a try; after working for long periods of time, people get tired.

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No significant medical reports have been found in this field, because by now it is common sense. Many students wait for release from high pressure stress in school to simply relax, enjoy their youth, and maybe catch a few extra hours of sleep to make up for the late nights finishing argumentative essays. The most prominent pop artist of the time, Andy Warhol, even goes to the extremes as saying, “ Life is a balance, and you only get to play hard if you work hard.” The sheer fact that further clarification is needed on said quote means that the author is not doing it right, and thus the paragraph will end. In a different gear, there are arguments against taking gap years and the offense will find that their only pliable excuse is that the students may not go back to school.

It’s seemingly understandable; life happens, people get caught up with work or babies or debt, and motivation to go back to school can be low. That’s fine, morale is a big factor in getting yourself to do something, but even Donald Roy says, “ I wish I would have gone back to school. I would have found a way to make ends meet.” Who is Donald Roy? Well, maybe he’d be more well known had he gone to college. The argument is flawed but never the less people still end up in this hole.

The solution? Diligence. “ Laziness is the enemy, and diligence is the cure.” If at least one or two classes is studied in this bridge of time, it will seem much easier to pick up more classes by the time registration comes up. To bring to an end, the debate on whether traditional schooling (going to college right after high school) versus a Gap Year is a solid one. The time can be spent working, partying, exploring, volunteering, studying even, or just plain doing

nothing. But the most important part is to make sure college is at the end of that tunnel by staying disciplined.

Freedom is a huge privilege, and to those who cannot handle it will suffer. These teenage years count exponentially in the future, so the decision has to be made. Go and get a taste of what the real world is really like.