

Why Take a Gap Year?

because the research says you should

THE TOP TWO REASONS STUDENTS GIVE FOR TAKING A GAP YEAR:

- Burnout from the competitive pressure of high school
- A desire to find out more about themselves

HERE ARE MORE REASONS, based on the latest research, why you should take the leap and experience a semester with *Where There Be Dragons*.

1. Research shows that students who take a Gap Year graduate with higher GPAs than their peers and are more satisfied with their careers. This advantage held when controlling for socioeconomic background or academic performance in high school. *Clagett, 2011. See: http://thechoice.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/12/27/clagett-gap-year/?_r=0*
2. 98% of colleges and universities accept deferrals for planned Gap Years. In fact, Harvard, Princeton, University of North Carolina, Colorado College (to name a few) encourage it because students enter more focused, mature, and passionate.
3. A majority of students now take five or more years to complete their college educations, while a majority of Gap Year students graduate in four years. If you think a Gap Year is expensive, try 6 years of college tuition.
4. 70% of Gap Year students go on to do a Study Abroad. But Gap Years are different: they occur at a developmental stage in which big decisions are being made. Gap Year students take time to reflect and experience a larger world with real consequences BEFORE making decisions about the rest of their lives. Study Abroad is a terrific experience, but it usually takes the form of academic study in the four-walls of a classroom... just in another country. Gap Year programs are holistic and largely experiential; students learn about place and global issues, but more significantly they gain clarity on who they are, what they believe in, and what they're capable of achieving.
5. More than 90% of students who do a structured Gap Year program enroll in university within one year of their time-off. While working for a year or traveling alone can be a valuable experience, the same outcome doesn't necessarily apply. Students who take the time to **PURPOSEFULLY** discover what makes them passionate tend to perform better on GPAs, are more motivated, involved in campus activities, and are better contributors in college and beyond. When the researchers tried to identify what were the major factors distinguishing a designed-program from mere time off, they discovered two factors that made the Gap Year a transformative experience:
 - a significant home-stay experience in another culture
 - excellent mentorship