



# 10 Myths About Gap Years

# 1. I CAN'T AFFORD A GAP YEAR.

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*Any student on any budget can take a gap year. A gap year is simply defined as a time of experiential learning after high school taken to deepen one's practical experience, professional skills, and personal awareness. Notice there's no pre-req for money spent, adventures taken, or places traveled. Your gap year doesn't need to break the bank.*





## 2. I'LL FALL BEHIND MY FRIENDS.

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This is high school thinking, where your grade once determined who you would hang out with. Once you get to college, that idea is in the rearview mirror. It doesn't matter if you enter college at 18, 19, or 20 years old. If anything, you'll start college more confident, motivated, and ready to make a return on the investment.



## 3. IT'S NOT COOL.

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Ok ok, hold up. Building work experience, traveling, discovering who you are and what you want to do with your life...those are incredible, cool experiences to have in your life. Taking the road less traveled doesn't mean you're weird. Showing interest in a gap year means you're confident, curious, and committed to growth. *That's cool.*

## 4. IT'S TOO LATE TO FIGURE OUT A GAP YEAR.

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False. Even if you're reading this in the final month of your senior year, you have options. Whether you build your own experience or find a program, we guarantee there are incredible options waiting for you. Don't be afraid to reach out and ask programs if they're still accepting applications even if the deadline has passed.

## 5. IT'S A WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY.

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Well, it might be a waste of money if you mess around all year and don't purposefully choose experiences that are going to grow you. But, if you select or plan a well-crafted gap year, it'll be worth every second (and penny).





## 6. A GAP YEAR WON'T HELP ME GET AHEAD IN LIFE.

What's your definition of getting ahead? Making more money, getting a prestigious job, living "the dream"? These aren't bad things in and of themselves—let's just look below the surface. What helps you "get ahead"? Growing in confidence, independence, and motivation. Knowing why you're doing what you're doing. Building a solid set of relationships that will help see you through the ups and downs of life. That's exactly what a gap year will help you do.



## 7. I'LL TAKE A GAP YEAR AFTER COLLEGE.

You might—and that would be awesome. But if you're feeling the pressure now to jump right into college, think about what it might feel like to complete college and not go immediately into the workforce—especially if you had to take on debt. That's pressure. Taking a gap year after high school will help you make the most out of your college investment.

A person is rock climbing a stone wall. They are wearing a red helmet, a grey sweatshirt with 'CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC' printed on it, and a blue climbing harness. They are smiling and looking to the right. The background shows a vast, hazy landscape of hills and trees under a bright sky.

## 8. A GAP YEAR WON'T CHALLENGE ME.

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So not everyone wants a huge challenge out of a gap year. For some, it's more of a time to recharge batteries before jumping into the rigors of college. However, if you are one who wants to grow, there are programs and experiences that will offer that opportunity. Learn a new language, travel with a team, serve another people group—you'll grow in ways you never expected.



## 9. A GAP YEAR IS JUST A "YEAR OFF."

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If you spent a year sitting on your couch playing video games and streaming shows, yes—that would be big off time. However, if you pick a solid program or intentionally structure your experience (whether it's at home or abroad), a gap year is anything but a "year off." While it can still provide an opportunity to step away from academics and recharge before continuing to college, a good gap year will require you to go all in.

## 10. A GAP YEAR WON'T LOOK GOOD ON MY COLLEGE APP.

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Wait a minute—[have you seen this article](#)? It lists the 35-top gap-friendly schools. From scholarships to stipends to easy deferral processes, these schools make it easy to go the gap year route. Plus, a gap year shows admissions counselors at any college that you're more likely to approach your education with a purpose and a plan. You've taken your educational path into your own hands and are ready to make the most of the college experience.



**Vanguard is the Christian, liberal arts gap year of Wheaton College that takes place at the HoneyRock Center for Leadership Development.**

VISIT TO SCHEDULE YOUR VISIT, EMAIL [VANGUARD@WHEATON.EDU](mailto:VANGUARD@WHEATON.EDU)

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