


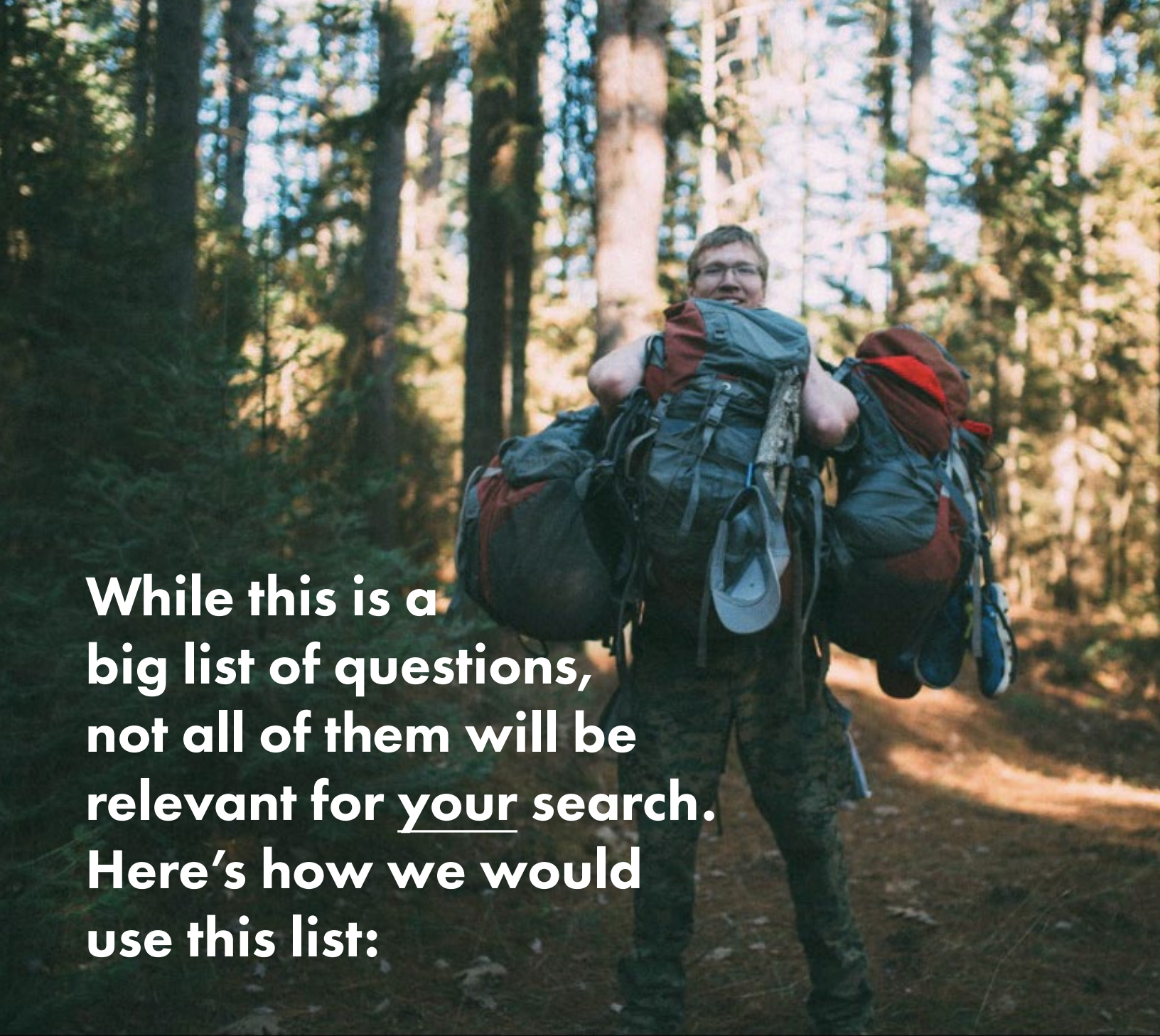


37 Questions to Ask

WHEN CONSIDERING A GAP YEAR



For many, “where do we start?!” is the first question that comes to mind when considering a gap year. If you’re asking too, you’re not alone!

A person with glasses and a backpack walking on a forest path. The person is wearing a green and red backpack and a hat. The background is a dense forest with tall trees and sunlight filtering through the leaves.

While this is a big list of questions, not all of them will be relevant for your search. Here's how we would use this list:

Ask "What's Important?" Star the questions most important to you. What would impact whether you attend a program? Are there categories you just don't care about? Cross them out to make this list yours!

Ask yourself the questions first. What are your ideal responses? Dream up the answers and note them. While there's probably not one gap year that checks all the boxes, with all of the options out there you're sure to find one that gets pretty close!

Ask the program's leadership team...and everyone else. When you're visiting the program, don't just ask questions of the Program Director. Talk with everyone you meet. If you can't visit the program, ask to be connected with current or past participants. We always encourage prospective gap year students to ask anyone they meet a question. It helps to hear from a lot of different people.



STUDENT LIFE

These questions get at the “in between” moments of a gap year – when you aren’t traveling, working, adventuring – what are you able to do?

1. What do participants normally do on weekends?
2. How much time is structured vs. free?
3. Can you describe what kind of person is a good fit for your program?
4. What’s a day in the life like...a week in the life?
5. Are participants allowed to take weekend trips off-site?
6. Can I bring a car?

COMMUNITY

Most gap years have a heavy community component – spending a lot of time with the same group of people. Ask these questions to get an idea of what kind of community you’ll be joining.

7. How many participants are in the program?
8. What’s the age range of people interacting with gap year participants?
9. What’s the age range of other participants in the program?

10. Do you have a structured mentorship/discipleship process?

11. What does church involvement look like?
12. Am I able to get involved in local events, activities, and/or ministry opportunities?



Here's the list!

TRAVEL

From 100% globe-hopping itineraries to day trips, gap years vary greatly in the type(s) of travel opportunities they offer.

13. What kind of trips does your program offer?

14. Is there any pre-trip training or preparation that takes place?
15. What do participants say are highlights of their travel experiences?
16. Why does your program offer travel?



WORK

Some programs have a work component to build your work experience, help you afford the program, or both. It's important to understand what kind of work you're be doing before you start your year.

17. What does an average day of work look like?
18. Who would I be reporting to?
19. What skills can I learn with this work?
20. Will I walk away with any certifications?
21. What are the typical "highs" and "lows" participants note about their work experience?

ACADEMIC

While academics shouldn't be the primary purpose of a gap year (if it is, just go to college!), many programs weave in academic elements. Some even offer transferrable college credit!

22. Can I earn any transferrable college credit through your program?

23. What kind of content do you teach?
24. How many hours a week do participants spend reading and writing for class?
25. Do participants learn online, face-to-face, or mixed methods?
26. Are participants hearing from guest speakers, full-time program staff, or a mix of both?

FINANCIAL

You usually have to pay for a gap year. Ask your program how they're equipped to offset the cost.

27. What scholarships do you offer?
28. Are there any opportunities to work during the year to cut the cost of the program?
29. Can we set up a payment plan to distribute the costs over the year?
30. Can I use funds from a 529 college savings plan to pay for this program?



VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

This is maybe one of the most important components of a gap year. How does the program help participants discover their vision for what's next? These questions will show a program's capacity to help participants discern their next steps.

31. How do you define "vocation"?
32. How does your program support participants through the college discernment process?
33. Will I have time to apply to colleges while in the program?
34. Who guides the college application process?
35. Can participants make college visits during the program?
36. How does your program introduce participants to various vocations?

37. What do most participants do after completing your program?



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

APPLY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS,
VISIT WHEATON.EDU/VANGUARD

CONNECT TO CONNECT WITH OUR TEAM,
EMAIL VANGUARD@WHEATON.EDU



**WHEATON
COLLEGE**
For Christ & His Kingdom