




6 Steps to Find the Right Gap Year for You

AN EASY STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE





If you're trying to decide between a few gap years (or even between a gap year and college) this guide is for you!

TAKE A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO EVALUATE DIFFERENT OPPORTUNITIES AND SEE WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU.



The Game Plan

STEP 1

Determine
What Matters
Most

STEP 2

Choose
Categories

STEP 3

Complete
the Chart

STEP 4

Take a
Guess

STEP 5

Average
and Rank

STEP 6

Reflect &
Connect



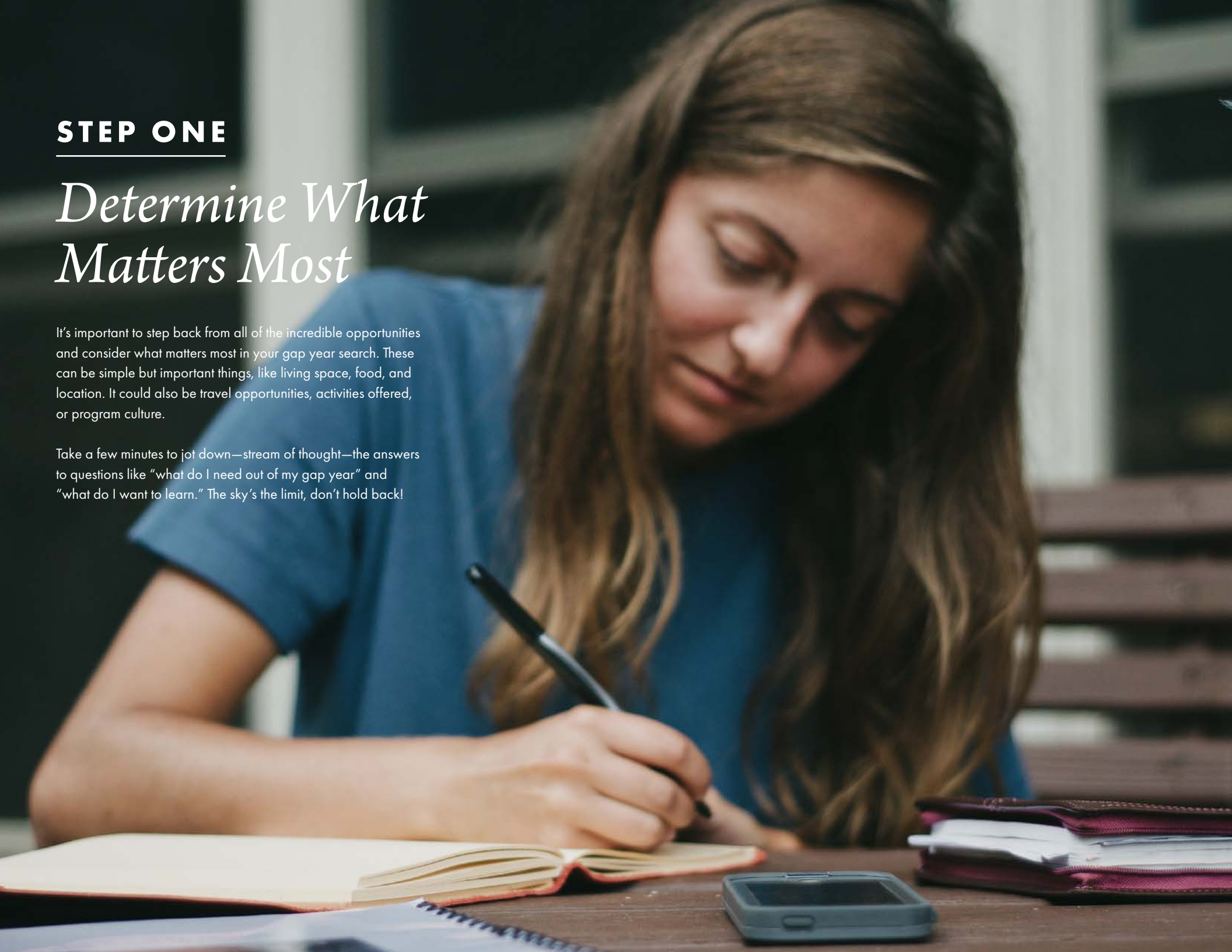
Take a deep dive into the process —>

STEP ONE

Determine What Matters Most

It's important to step back from all of the incredible opportunities and consider what matters most in your gap year search. These can be simple but important things, like living space, food, and location. It could also be travel opportunities, activities offered, or program culture.

Take a few minutes to jot down—stream of thought—the answers to questions like “what do I need out of my gap year” and “what do I want to learn.” The sky's the limit, don't hold back!



STEP TWO

Choose Categories

After naming what matters most in your gap year, we recommend boiling it down to 5-7 themes or categories. If you include many more, it starts to get complicated!

For example, if you said that location was important, make that a category. If seeing the world was high on your list, make "travel" a category. While we've included some examples to the side, make sure that they line up with what you have prioritized.

ACADEMICS

LIVING SPACE

WORK EXPERIENCE

COMMUNITY

FAITH

**PROXIMITY
TO HOME**

FOOD

ACTIVITIES

COST

LOCATION

CULTURE

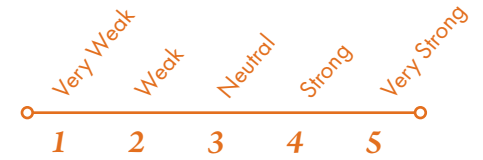
TRAVEL

CLASSES



STEP THREE

Complete the Chart



Write your categories across the top row and the gap year programs down the left column. Go ahead and fill them in—use the small boxes for a score from 1-5 and the bigger box to write a note or two. What made this score higher than average? Lower? Was there something that stood out in that particular category?

Yes, the boxes are small...this is to help you really focus on what's most important!

Insert your top criteria here

Insert the programs here

PROGRAM							
Vanguard Gap Year							

STEP FOUR

Take a Guess

Before adding up the scores, compare the programs. What do you see?
How do you feel? Can you already start to see a standout?

STEP FIVE

Average and Rank

Now it's time to average the scores and rank the programs. As you're doing this, note some of your first reactions. Were you surprised about the program that came out on top? Excited? Anxious? Don't ignore your gut feelings!





STEP SIX

Reflect & Connect

After averaging and ranking, sit back and reflect. What program took the lead?

If a clear winner didn't emerge, narrow it to your top two or three and continue your research. Here are a few ways to get additional information:

- Ask to talk with current or past program participants and/or their parents.
- Visit the program in person. If you can't, ask to connect with the program staff over a video chat so you can talk face-to-face.
- Review a day or week in the life schedule to see how these big categories or themes would appear in the day to day.

PRINTER FRIENDLY VERSION

To complete the process, print these two pages (pages 9 and 10) of the document.

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Academics	Proximity	Location
Living Space	to Home	Culture
Work Experience	Food	Travel
Community	Activities	Classes
Faith	Cost	

STEP THREE

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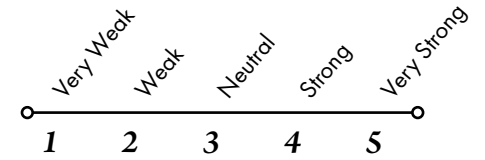
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Complete the Chart



Insert your top criteria here

Insert the programs here

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Vanguard Gap Year							

A group of students is playing basketball on an outdoor court. In the foreground, the lower legs and feet of several players are visible as they move. In the background, a player in a maroon shirt is dribbling the ball, while others are in various positions. The court is green and surrounded by trees. A sign in the background says "PLEASE STA".

**Vanguard is the Christian, liberal
arts gap year of Wheaton College.**

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