

TRANSITION GUIDE

What Next?

Tips on transitioning to post-gap year life



GAP YEAR
ASSOCIATION



Welcome Gap Year Alums!

Now that your gap year has wrapped up, we would like to welcome you as a member of the community of gap year alums. We know that re-entry can be challenging and that integrating your learning is important. We hope this guide will help support you.



By Gap Year Alums for Gap Year Alums: This guide provides concrete steps and suggestions for the transition process. As you explore the following content, assess what feels like the appropriate next step for you; whether it be studies, employment, interning, volunteering, or traveling, etc. This transition guide is not finite, but does provide a substantive list of recommendations that former gap year students have found to be useful.

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01 Process your gap year

Reflect on your experience and what made it meaningful.

UNPACK YOUR YEAR

- Be patient and take time to reflect.
- Acknowledge that the transition will have high points and challenges.
- Journal and sort photos. Be creative as you revisit and reflect.
- Listen to this [Post-gap year Transition Webinar](#) to help validate the emotional and practical aspects of adjusting to change.



TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

- You might feel different from your friends and family. Consider what journey they've been on while you were away.
- Be kind to yourself as you develop a post-gap year routine and new activities.
- Be mindful that it takes time to readjust to family roles.
- Reverse culture shock is real. If you lived in a different culture, expect to feel a bit disjointed in reconciling the two.

RECONNECT WITH OTHERS

- It may be difficult to convey your experiences.
- Develop different story versions for different audiences.

02 Share your story

Apply your experiences to benefit yourself and others.

SUGGESTED VENUES

- Listen to Voices Project stories and submit your own! [Voices Project Form](#)
- Explore Gapyearly to read other gappers stories, submit your own, and become a mentor! [gapyearly.com](#)
- Participate as a program alum at a USA Gap Year Fair. [usagapyearfairs.org](#)
- Share your experience on social media to inspire others. To pitch a unique story, visit [GapYearRadioPodcast.com](#)



BLOGGING & VLOGGING

- Write a blog post for your program's website about your experiences.
- Create a blog or vlog to share to your personal networks.
- Promote your experience during Gap Year Exploration Month.
[#explorethegapyear](#) [www.gapyearexplorationmonth.com](#)

LIVE YOUR STORY

- Pursue passions developed on your gap year with a volunteer opportunity or job.
- Become a member of local clubs or organizations aligned with your values.
- Join a movement that matters to you.

03 Find your community

Check out these options for finding other gap year alums.

Facebook



Join the Gap Year Alum Community Facebook group to share stories, post memories, share resources, and seek support.

[Visit the Facebook group](#)

Gapyearly



Gapyearly is a community made up of former gappers. The site is useful for sharing information, expanding the gap year community, and mentoring prospective gappers.

www.gapyearly.com

College Club



Meet like-minded students in your college club. No club? Contact your student activities center or the Gap Year Association to get support for starting one.

04 Join the movement

As an experienced gapper, help spread the word and assist others in planning their own gap years. Here are some suggestions to consider.



- Serve as a spokesperson at your high school to share your experiences.
- Join the Gap Year Association as a "student member" for \$25/yr for more resources and the opportunity to join a committee.
- Work with the GYA to plan a local gap year alum event.
- Contact your local media to share your story.
- If appropriate, be a resource for your gap year counselor or program provider.
- Get involved in Gap Year Exploration Month each February.

www.gapyearassociation.org

www.gapyearexplorationmonth.com



Reintegration was the hardest part of my gap year. GYA gave me a community with which to share and affirm my experiences, as well as tools to amplify my voice. Now more than a year after my gap year, GYA helps me to continue that spirit to support other gap year students who may be going through similar things. - Ameena H.



Translate your experience

College, career, and the world after gap year time.

You've unpacked, processed, connected, and become a member of the gap year community. These steps enable you to consolidate your gap year benefits and knowledge in a manner that will empower you in your education and professional pursuits.



My gap year time showed me the best version of myself by allowing me to explore the stories of the world, and giving me the wonderful gift of witnessing those stories become my own. I started to see different parts of the world as my home and my responsibility. That is why I chose to study sustainability in college.



- Jonah C.

05 Your education

Your gap year provided an opportunity to learn more about yourself and how you fit into the world. How can your experiences inform your educational choices?

WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF?

- What experiences from your gap year most excited you?
- What did you learn about challenging yourself?
- What inspiration did you find on your gap year?
- What new passions or skills have you developed?



CHOOSE YOUR PATH

- Choose a class that relates to your gap year experience.
- Explore a topic that interests you.
- Take a college course outside your comfort zone.
- Join clubs related to your educational interests.
- Explore passions outside your major.
- Seek mentorship; build relationships with your professors, your advisor, and older students.

“Three years after returning from my gap year, I continue to apply my experiential education to my college education.”
- Elle M.

OFF CAMPUS

- 70% of gap year alums study abroad in college.
- Plan your study abroad with intentional curriculum choices.
- Consider both domestic and international internships.
- Own your learning by tapping into your gap year skills.



06 Your career

Build upon the positive impact from your gap year. How can your gap year experience inform your professional path?

Did you know?

- 84% of gap year participants reported that their experience helped them acquire skills to be successful in their career.
- 77% of former gappers said their gap year impacted their career decision.
- 75% felt it helped, or would help, with regard to employability.
- More research on the gap year experience is available [here](#).

THE POWER OF GAP YEAR EXPERIENCES

- **EXPERIENCE** Reflect on how your gap year relates to your career choices and professional development.
- **SKILLS** Evaluate the soft and hard skills developed over the course of your gap year and consider how they translate into the work environment. Hard skills might include teaching, construction, research or design experience. Soft skills could include initiative, flexibility, team work, decision making, perseverance, risk management, and leadership.
- **RELEVANCE** Prepare to describe how your newly acquired values and skill sets will apply to your work environment with a future employer.



07 Change for good

As you move into your next chapter, take this time to intentionally align your values and beliefs with your day-to-day actions. Practice empathy and lead ethically.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Take the initiative to vote, stay actively and accurately informed, promote civic participation, and educate others by listening first.

GLOBAL CONCERN

Travel responsibly and act with social consciousness. Practice habits that benefit the globe. Help raise awareness and engage in action on important issues.

GIVE BACK

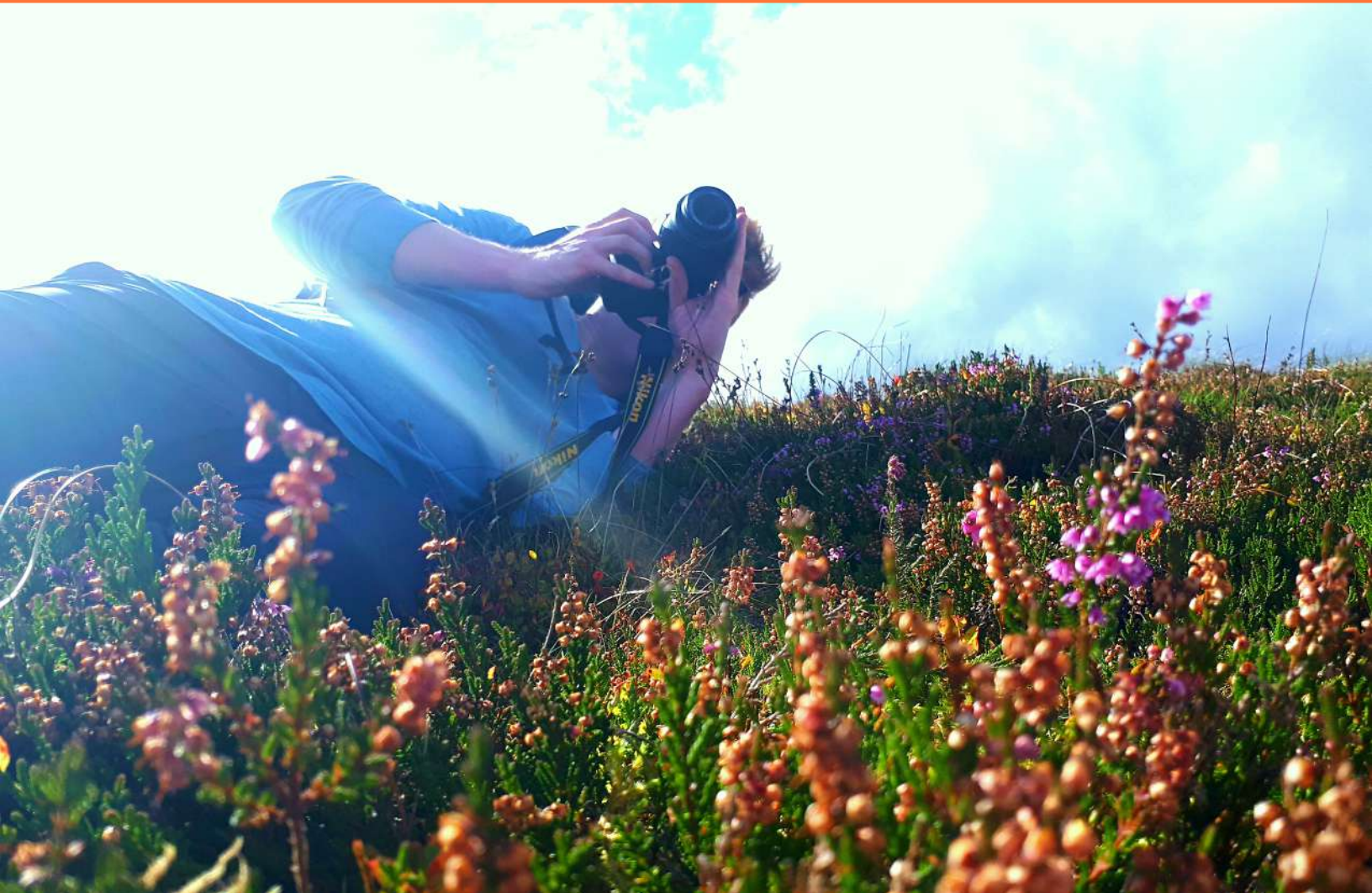
Volunteer your time and your skills to the community responsibly.

08 Resources

Stay engaged.

Gap Year

- [The Gap Year Association](#)
- [Gapyearly](#)
- [Gap Year Alum Community Facebook group](#)
- [Gap Year Certification](#)
- [Gap Year American Style: Journeys toward learning, serving, and self-discovery.](#) Haigler, K. and Nelson, R. (2013). *Included with GYA Student Membership



Gap Year Association

www.gapyearassociation.org

Special thanks to:

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- Jonah Cedar, Gap Year Alum
- Katherine Stievater, Gap Year Solutions

Stay in touch:

Gap Year Association

- Facebook: @GapYearAssociation
- Twitter: @gapyearassn
- Instagram: @gapyearassociation
- YouTube: <https://bit.ly/2RjLLOU>
- info@gapyearassociation.org



Learn more about
[Gap Year Exploration Month](#)

Photo Credits:

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* "Alum" is the singular, gender-neutral term for someone who has graduated from an educational institution."