2020 Toolkit
for School Counselors & Educators
#exploregapyear
What is Gap Year Exploration Month?

Gap Year Exploration Month, celebrated annually in the month of February, is a shared initiative of educators, experiential education experts, program providers, industry groups and others who want to promote the benefits of a gap year.

Gap Year Exploration Month exists to:
* Provide information about gap year opportunities.
* Celebrate gap year students and alumni.
* Recognize the significant power and benefits of deliberate gap year time.
* Increase community, business and governmental support for the gap year option.
* Educate high schools, colleges & universities, students and parents about the gap year option.

Gap Year Exploration Month evolved from the Gap Year Decision Day movement which began in 2017.
Why Promote Gap Years?

Short answer: We want to see more young Americans launching successfully into adulthood.

Gap year proponents know that taking intentional time away from the "classroom" before accruing college debt, starting a career, and choosing a life-path helps to facilitate perspective, purpose, and maturation. The life-experience gained from a gap year sets students up for success in the real world. Recent data echoes the sentiment that purposeful gap year time is beneficial to students.

Useful Gap Year Statistics:

* According to recent studies, gap year students perform better, academically, than traditional students once they arrive at college¹.
* 90% of gap year students begin college within a year of starting their gap year time².
* 88% of gap year graduates report that their gap year had significantly added to their employability³.
* 98% of gap year graduates report their gap year helped them develop as a person and allowed valuable time for personal reflection⁰.

¹ Research conducted by Bob Clagett ² http://online.wsj.com ³ Milkround graduate recruitment Gap Year survey, http://www.milkroundonline.com ⁰ 2015 National Alumni Survey conducted by Nina Hoe, PhD, in collaboration with the Institute for Survey Research, Temple University, and the GYA Research Committee

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2020 Educator Challenge: Share Gap Year Resources

Join school counselors and educators across the US in sharing helpful resources in February to educate students about the gap year option.

Next Steps:

1. Craft an educational email to your listserv with info about the gap year options. Here is some drafted language for you to include.

2. Your email could include:

- General gap year information and data (available in email template).
- Profiles of your school’s gap year alumni (when they graduated, what they did with their gap year and/or a quote about their experience).
- Information about your local USA Gap Year Fair, if applicable.
- FAQs about gap years or an interactive Q&A session with your students.
2020 Pre Departure Student Challenge: Instagram Contest

Are you a United States resident taking a gap year in 2020/2021?
Then apply for a $500 Gap Year Exploration Month Scholarship!

Next Steps

1. Create a short video to tell us **WHY** you are taking a gap year & **WHAT** you want to do. Video submissions should include:
   * Your name
   * Why you are inspired to take a gap year
   * Programs, places or activities you plan to do on your gap year
   * Creativity in your submission encouraged!

2. **FOLLOW @gapyearassociation on Instagram**

3. **POST your video and Use the hashtag #explorethegapyear**

4. **TAG @gapyearassociation**

5. Ask your friends and family to vote for you by liking the @gapyearassociation post with your video. Use hashtag #explorethegapyear in your posts!

6. One $500 winner will be chosen and announced March 15th. Video & Instagram engagement will be weighed in the judging process.
2020 Gap Year Alumni Challenge: Instagram Contest

Did you recently return from your gap year?
Apply to win $500 from the Gap Year Association

Next Steps
1. Create a short video to tell us about your gap year
   Video submissions should include:
   * Your name
   * What inspired you to take a gap year
   * Your biggest takeaway from your gap year
   * Must feature video and/or photos from your gap year
2. FOLLOW @gapyearassociation on Instagram
3. POST your video and use the hashtag #explorethegapyear
4. TAG @gapyearassociation
5. Ask your friends and family to vote for you by liking the @gapyearassociation post with your video. Use hashtag #explorethegapyear in your posts!
6. One $500 winner will be chosen and announced March 15th. Video & Instagram engagement will be weighed in the judging process.
## Additional Ways to Participate

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<tr>
<th>POST</th>
<th>BOAST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage your students to enter our scholarship contest! <a href="#">Info here.</a></td>
<td>Contact your gap year alumni and ask them to give a presentation at your school.</td>
<td>Get in touch with USA Gap Year Fairs to inquire about fair locations for 2021!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talk up your support of gap years on social media using: #explorethegapyear</td>
<td>Post gap year program posters and information on your counseling office bulletin board.</td>
<td>Offer to host an information session or schedule a panel discussion for students and parents.</td>
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Gap Year Resources

* **Gap Year Association**: Resource for data, accredited program listing and more information about gap years

* **USA Gap Year Fairs**: Fairs across the US in January & February

* **Go Overseas**: Program Reviews & Articles

* **Teen Life**: Program Reviews & Magazines

* **Go Abroad**: Program Reviews & Articles

* **GapYearly**: Resource for Independent Planning

* **Travel Access Project**: Scholarships & Country Resources

* **Gap Year Exploration Month**: Information and downloads

* **Streamable U Gap Year Webinar Calendar**
February 2020

gapyearexplorationmonth.com
#explorethegapyear

Questions?
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Thanks to Our 2020 Partners!

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