

A Many students in the UK take a gap year after school and before going to university. In fact about 250 000 do every year. Most of them want to combine travel with making money or doing *voluntary work. But whatever their reasons, students need to think carefully about what they do. There are a number of advantages to taking a gap year.

B First of all, it gives people time to decide what degree they want to do and what job they want to have in the future. It also allows them to learn more about the world, for example, learning different languages, experiencing different cultures and seeing landscapes they have never seen before.

C However, many people argue that travelling for a year is just a long holiday. It is also expensive and it might be better to spend the money on education. Some students also forget how to study during their gap year and find it hard to study again when they return home.

D In conclusion, there are a lot of advantages and disadvantages in taking a gap year. In my opinion, a gap year is a valuable experience, but one whole year is too long.

*Voluntary work is work that you do because you want to, not because you have to do it. Volunteers work to make things better and are not paid for what they do.

WRITING

THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF A GAP YEAR

1 Read the text and answer the questions.

- What is a gap year?
- What are the advantages of a gap year?
- What are the disadvantages of a gap year?

2 Read the text again and match the functions 1–4 with the paragraphs A–D.

- giving the writer's opinion
- listing the bad things about a gap year
- introducing the topic
- listing the good things about a gap year

WRITING SKILLS

PRESENTING AN ARGUMENT

3 Read the text again and answer the questions.

In my opinion However For example First of all

- Which word introduces the opposite idea?
- Which phrase shows what the writer thinks?
- Which phrase helps lists one of many points?
- Which phrase introduces an explanation?

4 Complete the paragraph below with words and phrases from activity 3.

There are some benefits to spending a year travelling. ¹ _____, you can visit more places than in a one or two week holiday. ² _____, you cannot spend time in the Amazon rainforest, climb the snowy Himalayas and relax on the sandy Australian beaches in one week. ³ _____, people who have spent a long time travelling feel bored. They don't enjoy travelling by plane, boat, train and bus anymore. ⁴ _____, people who can travel for a year are very lucky but they need to plan carefully.

5 Read the essay title and write a paragraph about it. Use the model in activity 4 to help you. Use *First of all*, *For example*, *However* and *In my opinion*.

Gap years are an important experience. Do you agree or disagree?

Write 100 – 130 words.

