

"TAKING OFF" GAP YEAR READER

Read the article about students who have traveled the world before going to university. For questions 16- 30, choose the students (A - E). The students may be chosen more than once.

Which student(s)

Need not have worried about health? (16) _____

Says he wanted to be more adventurous than his friends? (17) _____

Had to delay the start of his trip? (18) _____

Was concerned about an aspect of his preparations for the trip? (19) _____

Gained unexpected benefits from a limited budget? (20) _____

Changed his original plans in order to explore another place? (21) _____

Found different ways of earning money while he was away from home? (22) _____

Was unaccustomed to traveling alone? (23) _____

Wanted to avoid having a fixed program? (24) _____

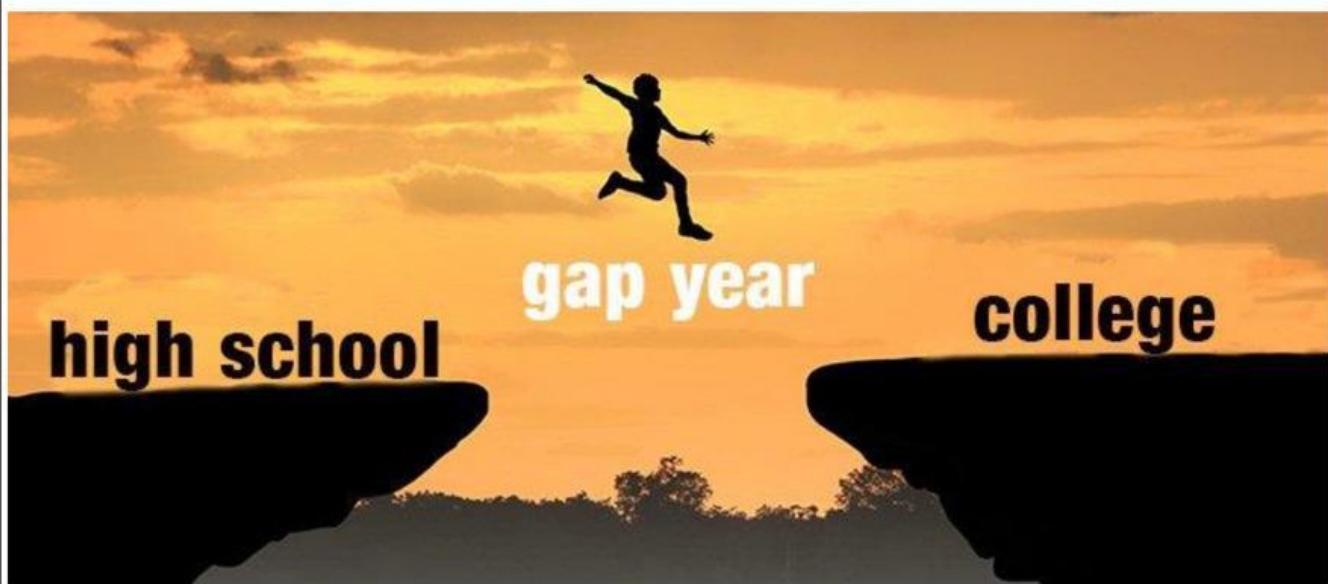
Changed his study plans as a result of his experiences abroad? (25) _____

Found accommodation through some colleagues? (26) _____

Was forced to alter his route? (27) _____

Were aware of personal security when traveling? (28) _____ (29) _____

Disliked the restrictions of limited budget? (30) _____



Five young people remember their "gap year" experiences, when they traveled the world between finishing school and going to university.

A Tom Baker After my exams, I read through all the gap year literature, but I'd had enough of having to turn up to lessons every day at school. So I flew to New Zealand, without any structured plans, just to see what happened. I had to live very cheaply, so I didn't use public transport, preferring to hitchhike the long distances between the towns. I was amazed how generous people were. I was always being picked up by strangers and invited into their homes after nothing more than a conversation at the roadside. My hosts invited me to climb volcanoes, go trekking with them, even play a part in a short film. In a way, I learned just as much about life as I did when I was at university back in the UK.

B Robin Talbot It all began when I was on summer holiday staying at a friend's house in New York. By the autumn, I was convinced I didn't want to leave and I stayed there for a year. I worked three days a week in a bar and two nights in a restaurant, which gave me plenty to live on. The Brazilian band that worked in the bar offered me a room in their apartment, and we played Salsa music and had barbecues all summer. I realized eventually that I couldn't be a waiter forever, so I came back to university.

C Mark Irvin - I couldn't face another three years studying straight after school so, like many of my classmates, I decided to do a round-the-world trip. I wanted to set off at the end of the summer, but it took six months of working before I had enough money. I'd planned my route so that I'd be traveling with friends for part of the way and alone the rest of the time. In Japan, I met some incredibly generous people who invited me into their homes. I found their culture fascinating. But in Australia it was less interesting because it was more difficult to meet the locals, as I could only afford to stay in hostels and these were full of British travelers like me.

D Simon Barton - Going to Latin America was quite a courageous decision for me, and the first time I had traveled without a fixed route or any companions. I was worried that my last-minute Spanish course would not be enough. I was originally planning to fly to Mexico, then go overland by bus to Belize, but a hurricane intervened and it was too risky. So I went by bus to Guatemala. The people were very friendly, but as I'm blond-haired and blue-eyed they started a bit, which didn't bother me. I just smiled. I dutifully

kept all my important stuff on me, as suggested in the World Travelers' Guidebook, but I didn't run into any trouble at all. And despite what I thought might happen, I ate anything and everything and didn't have any problems. It was great! I'm already saving for my next trip.

E Andrew West - Everyone I knew was going to Australia, but I wanted to go somewhere more exotic, less predictable. I went with "Quest Overseas", who arrange gap-year holidays. I started in Ecuador with a three-week Spanish course, then went off trekking in the Andes, which was tough. It's a good thing I had my first-aid kit, I was covered in scratches! I had arranged my flight back, but I put it off to go touring in Mexico for two weeks with some friends I'd made. My advice would be, plan ahead, but don't worry if things change. Keep your cash in various places in your clothing, and take advice about the places to avoid at night. I never felt scared, I just enjoyed the adventure. And when I came back I decided to do a degree in South American History, which I'd never have considered before. I thought living in a flat again would be dull, but in fact I'd had enough of always being on the move.

