

Spirit of adventure

Task 1 Applying for an expedition - A myth

Read this advert which was placed in a British newspaper by the explorer Ernest Shackleton at the turn of the last century.

'Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.'

- Where do you think he was going to?
- How many people do you think applied for this job?
- What sort of person might apply?
- Would you consider doing it?

Task 2 How adventurous are you?

Complete this questionnaire about yourself

Look at the following activities

- Trekking in the Himalayas
 - Mountain biking in Bolivia
 - Parachuting
 - Deep sea diving on a coral reef
 - Snow boarding in the Andes
 - Travelling down the Amazon on a boat
 - Hunting and camping with rangers in African safari parks
 - Swimming with dolphins in Florida
 - Teaching in a remote village in China
 - Going on an expedition to Antarctica
 - Crossing a desert in a jeep
 - Sailing from Europe to America in a boat race
 - Walking across the top of the Sydney Harbour bridge
 - Looking after rare snakes and lizards on a farm
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- Put a tick next to the ones you would love to try
 - Put a cross next to the ones you would be too nervous or scared to do
 - Compare your answers to your partner
 - How much do you have in common?
 - Who is the most adventurous?

Task 3 Spirit of adventure

Read the article and answer the questions.

- What is a gap year?
- Who is taking a gap year?
- Why are they choosing to take a gap year?
- What sorts of work do students do during a gap year?

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Prince William had one and worked for a charity in Chile. Prince Harry is about to finish his 'year off' after spending last Autumn in Australia on a sheep farm. For the last few months the young Prince has been working with disadvantaged children and Aids sufferers in Lesotho. More than 200,000 young Britons are now choosing to take a gap year at the end of their secondary school studies. Some people are also taking gap years at the end of their university course.

A gap year used to be called 'a year off' because the people who chose to do it were taking a break from their studies. It can be stressful to go from Primary tests to Secondary school exams and then straight on to Higher Education without ever having a rest. It also gives you a chance to think about your future, make plans and decide what type of work you would like to do.

Nowadays there are so many different voluntary projects world wide and so many British and International charities looking for helpers that students have little trouble finding something useful to do during their gap year. Employers now look closely at the experience of new graduates. A gap year can be great fun but it also looks good on your CV. Some volunteers might find themselves alone in far away places or working in a team under difficult conditions in a jungle, up a mountain or in a very poor country. They all agree that this adventure is a very important part of growing up.

Task 4 The choices on offer

Look at the descriptions of gap year jobs for next year.

Africa and Asia Venture: Do an intensive teaching course with us in London and then spend 3-4 months in helping in village schools in Tanzania, Uganda, Botswana or Nepal. Accommodation, food and a local salary included. Become involved in sports training at some teaching centres.

African Conservation Experience: Work for 6-9 months on a game reserve in Southern Africa. Help with elephants, assist local vets and monitor animal migration. Training in horseback riding given at the start of the contract.

Changing Worlds: Work for 3-6 months in an orphanage. Opportunities exist in Australia, Canada and New Zealand and in India or Chile.

The Year in Industry: Work for 9-12 months in a UK industry in the Business, Science, Engineering or IT sectors. Well paid and with special training as part of the job.

Outreach International: Help teach art and craft or dance on volunteer projects in Mexico and Cambodia. These placements include work with disabled and special needs children. Language training given at the start of the contract.

Trekforce Expeditions: Go on a 2-5 month expedition to collect important scientific data in the South American jungle. These projects are tough and very rewarding. Volunteers spend weeks away from inhabited areas.

- Which job or project appeals most to you?
- What types of skill might you learn during the year?
- Which types of project seem to be the most adventurous?
- Is there any place you would absolutely not like to go to? Why?

Task 5 Packing for your trip

You have just received the following letter:

'We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted on our conservation project in a remote part of Tanzania. Your living conditions will be a basic hut and the climate is tropical. Communications with the nearest town is by helicopter once a month.'

- Make a sensible packing list of essential items to fit in a standard sized back pack.
- Write the questions you are going to ask the returning volunteer when you meet them in London.
- Think of two potential difficulties that a Western teenager might have during this work placement.

Task 6 Describe your dreams and ambitions

Imagine that you are allowed to go anywhere you wish and do any type of work or course of study. You may prefer to stay at home or you may wish to travel alone. You may like to start your first job as soon as possible.

- What would you do? Describe your first year in as much detail as possible.
- What would you like to do when your schooling or studies finish?
- Do you have any special dreams?
- Do you have any ambitions for your future?
- Do your parents or family share your hopes and ambitions for your future?

Task 7 Discussion questions

Do you agree or disagree with these statements about young people?

- Taking a gap year is a luxury for lazy students who want to do nothing for a year.
- Working before you go in to Higher Education is a useful experience.
- There are too many opportunities open to young people and this makes them indecisive.
- 18 years old is far too young to be travelling alone in distant countries.
- It is not a good idea to have a gap after school because you might lose the habit of studying.
- Parents do not allow young people enough freedom to experiment with jobs and their studies.
- Going away from your parents at 18 is a character building experience and very beneficial.
- The gap year is for people who cannot decide what to do with their lives.
- Going to dangerous places is not an adventure it is foolish.
- Students who have a gap year are probably more mature than those who do not.
- Parents who do not allow their children a chance to go abroad without them are very selfish.