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A+ Test Prep and Tutoring Newsletter

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Have You Considered a Gap Year Program?



Gap year. Are you familiar with this term? Gap year typically refers to a transitional year between high school and college during which a student takes a break from school and works or volunteers either in the United States or abroad. It can also refer to a break taken during college or after college. Although taking a gap year is much more common in Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, it is gaining popularity in the United States. This newfound interest in gap year can be attributed in part to the increased

emphasis in American culture on community service. Attaining a certain number of service hours is sometimes even a prerequisite to high school graduation. A gap year can be a wonderful way for a young person to gain a new perspective on life, learn about another culture, language, or social milieu, or delve into the working world. Some benefits are pragmatic--earning money and learning new skills--while some are more intangible--discovering a new passion or finding a new sense of purpose and maturity. Whatever the motivation, there are myriad possibilities available to students seeking this experience; in fact, an entire industry has sprung up around the "gap year" concept.

Traveling overseas has its own special allure, and many students choose to spend their gap year doing public service abroad. One of the drawbacks of service abroad can be the expense. There is the cost of travel, vaccinations, health and medical evacuation insurance, housing, and a passport or visa, not to mention program fees. A *New York Times* article estimated these costs could be as much as \$12,000. That being said, there are many wonderful opportunities to work in education, conservation, and public health.

- In Seville, Spain you could work for Amnesty International, or the Red Cross.
- In Calcutta, India, you can teach brothel children in a red-light district.
- In Somaliland, you can work in a maternity hospital run by an extraordinary woman named Edna Adan.
- In Valparaiso, Chile you might work for a local public health organization.
- In the Dominican Republic you could help out at a rural work site run by the Peace Corps.
- In Shanghai, China you could teach English to the "floating migrant children" at a state-run elementary school.
- In Bangladesh, a well-respected development organization, [BRAC](#), is starting an internship program.

Spending a gap year in the United States, although less exotic-sounding, can be just as rewarding. For example, [City Year](#) is a well-known domestic educational service program whose motto is "Give a year. Change the world." It recruits young people between the ages of 17 and 24 to serve for a term of ten months. City Year corps members serve full-time at one of 17 urban locations across the United States. Corp members might tutor, mentor, run an after-school program, or lead a youth leadership program or vacation camp. In exchange, a corps member receives a weekly stipend to help with living expenses. In addition, at the end of the term of service, he or she will receive an education award of \$4,725 to be applied toward a college degree, graduate school, or an existing or future qualified student loan. Leadership development, basic health insurance, a uniform, and a cell phone are also provided during the year of service.

Taking time off between high school and college is viewed positively by most colleges, graduate schools, and future employers. Having pursued a gap year shows the type of initiative and perseverance and fosters the maturity that colleges want to see. Princeton University, for example, has championed the notion of a gap year and is in the process of creating a program to begin in 2009 that would send a tenth of incoming freshmen for a year of social service work in a foreign country prior to stepping foot on campus. Many employers realize that having spent time abroad helps in today's global marketplace. And a gap year can translate into better grades. A recent study by two economists at the University of Western Australia indicates that students who take a year off scored an average first-year university mark 2.3% higher than those coming straight from school. The increase was even greater for males who were underachievers: they scored an average 3.7% higher if they took a gap year.

A gap year is not for everybody, but it can be a beneficial learning experience for those who choose to follow this more circuitous route to college. Whether you choose a structured program or create your own game plan, go abroad or stay stateside, you will undoubtedly be a more focused, mature individual for the experience and approach your college years with a renewed sense of purpose.

For more information about gap year, visit the following websites:

[Gap Year](#)
[Taking Off](#)
[CIEE](#)
[Enrichment Alley](#)
[City Year](#)
[CCI Exchange](#)



Matthew Katz
Pennsbury High School
330 Point SAT Score Increase

A+ Test Prep and Tutoring helped me improve my SAT score from 1500 to 1830! For me, A+ was not only a refresher course on what I studied years back, but helped me gain plenty of test-taking tips. My math tutor, Bob Beckelman, refreshed my memory on all the math content that was on the SAT. His lessons were relaxing and fun. He taught me how to manage my time wisely and not fall for traps. This helped me work more efficiently and not make careless mistakes. The hints that were most useful to me related to the Algebra section. This is because I was a bit rusty in this area. Mr. Beckelman stuck with me and explained everything clearly and in-depth.

My reading and writing tutor was Bob Roach. These lessons were a bit more hectic because I knew very little. Not only did he have a ton of patience, but he showed me how to find sentence errors, be a better writer, and read for purpose. In the reading sections, Mr. Roach taught me how to find the main theme of a piece of writing. One major hint was to look at the line that the question referred to and read the surrounding sentences so that I could pick the correct answer. Not only did this improve my SAT score, but it helped me become a better reader. Now I feel more confident in English class.

In the writing section he taught me how to analyze sentence structures to find errors such as subject-verb agreement and parallel form. And on my essay portion Mr. Roach trained me to set up the essay in a logical manner. He also told me what type of examples I should use within my essay. My essay score jumped from 5 to 8.

To sum it all up, I am very thankful that I went through A+'s One-to-One SAT Preparation Tutoring Program. It helped me succeed on the SAT and gave me confidence and tips to improve my reading, writing, and math skills. Thank you, Bob Roach and Bob Beckelman, for teaching me.



With our one-to-one tutoring, you can participate in all your favorite summer activities AND get a leg up on academic skills, study skills, and test preparation!

Programs Offered:

- Make-up Credit Courses
- Accelerated Credit Courses
- Study Power/Study Skills
- PSAT/SAT/ACT Preparation
- SSAT/ISEE Private School Admission Exam Preparation
- Math Booster
- Vocabulary Booster
- Write Better Essays
- Academic Subject Tutoring (any subject)
- Wilson Reading System

Call today! 215-886-9188



A+ prides itself on its excellent team of tutors who represent a wide cross-section of backgrounds and professions, and *Anson Han* is no exception. Anson has been working for A+ for three years tutoring a multitude of subject areas: SAT & ACT Prep, Study Power, all levels of math--from elementary school to the college level--and the sciences (chemistry, physics, and biology). Anson was born and raised in Rhode Island, but is of Chinese descent and speaks Cantonese. He is a 2003 graduate of Boston University with a B.S. in Computer Systems Engineering.

Anson thrives on his very busy schedule as a tutor because he likes helping students problem-solve, boost their grades, and help attain the SAT or ACT scores they need in order to attend the college of their choice. Working with students in such a wide variety of subject areas keeps him sharp and will ultimately help him prepare for the GREs that he will be taking in a year or two, since Anson plans to attend graduate school to become either a licensed structural engineer or an architect.

In addition to being an A+ tutor, Anson works full-time as a Construction and Architectural Project Manager for Eureka Metal & Glass in Northeast Philadelphia. Prior to holding that position, he did IT work for a retail company and was an Operations Manager, a hectic job that he describes as being on-call 24/7.

When not tutoring and working, Anson is an adventure-seeker. He enjoys rollerblading, mountain biking, running, white water rafting, skiing, and hitting the amusement parks in summer to enjoy the latest thrill ride. (He is currently mustering up the courage to try sky diving.) Anson lives in downtown Philadelphia near the Art Museum and enjoys city life and the proximity to both New York and Washington, D.C.



A+ Test Prep and Tutoring provides in-home One-to-One Test Prep and Academic Subject Tutoring throughout the Delaware Valley.

We also partner with schools and social service agencies to provide test preparation, remedial reading and math, and study skills courses to students throughout the region. For more information please contact me at 215.886.9188.

Daniel Ascher, M.Ed.
President

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