

Taking Time Off After Vassar



Office of
Career Development

Vassar College

Why take a year off? What's in it for you?

- An adventure of a lifetime
- Improve career prospects
- A chance to gain new skills
- A break from academic study
- Independence
- A chance to help others
- Time to earn money
- Broaden horizons

What do you want from a year off? It's important to think about your aspirations and needs to decide how and where to spend your time.

- Domestic?
- Developed or developing country?
- Work experience?
- Voluntary or paid?
- How long? A year or a few months?

What can you do in a year off?

- Gain career experience with an internship
- Teach
- Earn money
- Take a language course
- Live and study overseas
- Go on an expedition
- Experience a new culture
- Relish freedom
- Volunteer overseas or in the US in social, environmental or developmental projects

What do graduate schools and employers think of a well-used year off?

- Improves communication & non-academic skills
- Wider understanding of the world
- Shows initiative and independence
- Demonstrates ability to work with others
- May have relevance to graduate program or organizations goals

Possible drawbacks

- Loss of academic motivation
- Cost
- Some choices involve an element of risk

Book Resources

- *Delaying the Real World: A Twentysomething's Guide to Seeking Adventure* by Colleen Kinder
- *International Voluntary Work* by Victoria Pybus
- *Taking a Gap Year* by Susan Griffith
- *The Back Door Guide to Short-Term Job Adventures* by Michael Landes

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Career Brief: Job Search Resources

Domestic Volunteer and Outdoor Programs

Mickey Leland Hunger Fellows Program
<http://www.hungercenter.org/>

Alaska State Parks Volunteer Program
<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/vip/vvi.htm>

Roadtrip Nation
<http://roadtripnation.com/>

National Park Service Volunteers-In-Parks
<http://www.nps.gov/volunteer/>

CoolWorks
<http://www.coolworks.com/volunteer/>

City Year
<http://www.cityyear.org/>

New York City Urban Fellows Program
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcas/html/employment/urbanfellows.shtml>

48 Hour Films
<http://www.48hourfilm.com/>

Americorps
<http://www.americorps.org/>

Wilderness Volunteers
<http://www.wildernessvolunteers.org/>

Farm Sanctuary
<http://farmsanctuary.com/>

Job Monkey
<http://jobmonkey.com/main/index.html>

The MacDowell Colony
<http://macdowellcolony.org/>

Outward Bound
<http://www.outwardbound.org/>

International/One-Year Opportunities

The International WWOOF Association
<http://www.woof.org/>

Backdoor Jobs Worldwide
<http://backdoorjobs.com/worldwide.html>

Changing Worlds
<http://careerbreak.com/Home.aspx>

Trek Force
<http://trekforce.org.uk/>

Venture Co.
<http://www.ventureco-worldwide.com/>

Transitions Abroad
<http://www.transitionsabroad.com/>

Dave's ESL Café
<http://www.eslcafe.com/>

BUNAC
<http://www.bunac.org/>

Working Abroad
<http://workingabroad.com/>

Jobs Abroad
<http://www.jobsabroad.com/search.cfm>

Green Corps
<http://www.greencorps.org/>

Year Out Drama
<http://www.yearoutdrama.com/>

Idealist.org
<http://idealist.org/>

Workanywhere.com
<http://anyworkanywhere.com/>

Popular Programs

JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching Program)
<http://www.jetprogramme.org/>

New York City Teaching Fellows
<http://www.nycteachingfellows.org/>

US Peace Corps
<http://www.peacecorps.gov/>

Teach for America
http://www.teachforamerica.org/flash_movie.html