SHOULD YOU TAKE A GAP YEAR BEFORE COLLEGE?

A Checklist

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Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, numerous students have started to consider whether or not they should take a gap year before college. While many admitted candidates have deferred, there is also a large portion of high school seniors who are planning to take gap years even before they have started applying to college. If you fall among this group, and you aren't sure whether or not a year off is for you—and if you'd be able to use it effectively—use the questions in the checklist below to guide you.

	Is there a particular project or idea you have that you wish to pursue instead of starting college?
	Have you always wanted to start your own organization?
	Do you want time to pursue a passion, such as working on a novel?
	Do you have specific learning goals out of your gap year?
	Would you be okay with spending your gap year working a remote job or internship?
	Do you hope to graduate college by a particular age?
	Are you okay falling a year behind most of your high school peers?
	Are you only interested in a gap year because your friends are planning to take one?
	Would you be willing to attend college classes if they're all online at least your freshman year?
	Would you be able to submit a better college application if you applied after a gap year?
	Would you lose academic momentum if you took a gap year?

	Do you need to save money?
	Would a gap year truly help your resume?
	Do you have money saved to fund your gap year plans?
	Are you okay with taking a gap year during a year when travel is restricted?
	Would a gap year help better prepare you for college?
	Would you be able to successfully answer what you did in your gap year for college supplemental essays that ask you to elaborate on your time off?

Think carefully about these answers. If you've answered "yes" to questions such as "would you be willing to attend college classes if they're all online at least your freshman year" or "is there a particular project or idea you have that you wish to pursue instead of starting college," a gap year may be the right choice for you. However, if you're only planning a gap year because your friends are doing so, then this is probably not the right call. Weigh the pros and cons carefully and make the best decision for yourself and your future. Good luck!