

## International cultural knowledge

### Gap years

- 1 Work with a partner. Look at the pictures and describe what you can see. Would you like to do either of these activities? Why?/Why not?
- 2 **LISTENING** 1.02 Listen to a radio programme about gap years and answer the questions.
  - 1 What is a gap year?
  - 2 Who can take a gap year?
  - 3 When do people usually take a gap year?
- 3 **LISTEN** Listen again. Are these statements true (T) or false (F)?
  - 1 People didn't normally have a gap year in the past. T/F
  - 2 People often decide to have a gap year because they are tired of studying. T/F
  - 3 People who take gap years usually have a lot of money. T/F
  - 4 A gap year can help you to decide what course to study at university. T/F
  - 5 People normally prefer travelling short distances during their gap year. T/F
  - 6 You need to pay for everything yourself when you do volunteer work. T/F
  - 7 One way of spending a gap year is teaching languages. T/F
  - 8 Universities always prefer taking students who have done a gap year. T/F
- 4 **SPEAKING** What about you?
  - 1 What are the main advantages and disadvantages of having a gap year?
  - 2 Would you like to have a gap year when you finish school? Why?/Why not?

- 5 Look at these titles for texts about how five different people spent their gap years. Work with a partner. Predict what the people did.

A trip to remember for the rest of my life

2

Sun + snow = relaxation

A long way from home, helping people without a home

4

Boring but necessary

Opening my eyes to an amazing new world

- 6 Read this newspaper article about how the five students spent their gap years. Match the titles in 5 with the texts A-E.

- 7 Read the texts again. Which student(s)

- 1 planned his/her gap year for a long time?
- 2 didn't make any plans?
- 3 worked first and then travelled?
- 4 didn't work during his/her gap year?
- 5 learnt two languages?
- 6 enjoyed being with or seeing unusual animals?
- 7 says that the gap year has helped him/her to be more positive when things go wrong?
- 8 thinks his/her gap year encouraged him/her to work hard at university?
- 9 enjoyed living in bad conditions?
- 10 says that his/her gap year is going to influence his/her choice of a career?



## WORD BOOSTER

Match the words with the definitions.

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1 look forward to            | a the best or most exciting parts of something                               |
| 2 stand on your own two feet | b feel excited about something that is going to happen                       |
| 3 environmental              | c relating to the natural world and the effect that human activity has on it |
| 4 dive                       | d do things for yourself without asking people to help you                   |
| 5 fares                      | e swim underwater  |
| 6 highlights                 | f money you pay for using types of public transport                          |

### A Jason Scott

I needed money to help me to pay for university. I decided to take a job in my home town. It's quite a small town and the only work I could find was at the local supermarket. I didn't enjoy it at all but in some ways that was a good thing. It made me realize that I never wanted to do a job like that again. It motivated me to study hard to be able to get an interesting, creative job. One day while I was working at the supermarket I was feeling really bored and depressed. That was when I had the idea to use some of the money I was making to pay for a week-long holiday in New York when I finished my job at the supermarket. It gave me something to look forward to in the bad moments.



### B Gwen Laurie

I didn't plan my gap year at all. First I worked in a fast-food restaurant to make some money. I didn't really know where I was going to go, but I knew I wanted to travel. When I had enough money I decided to go skiing in France. I found a job working in a bar there and spent six months just skiing, learning French and making friends. After all that snow I wanted to see the sun so I went to Spain. I learnt basic Spanish and travelled all the way down the east coast, sometimes working but sometimes just spending my time on the beach. I learnt how to become independent and stand on my own two feet. When my gap year finished I was relaxed, full of energy and ready to study again.



### C Sophie Jones

For my gap year I wanted to experience something totally new. I contacted a voluntary organization that works in India, helping poor children who live on the streets. It was really hard work at first because the problems that these children had were so sad. The conditions we lived in were not good. But the children we were helping lived in really terrible conditions, so how could we complain? Now, when I'm studying at university and I have a problem, I just think about those children and remember how lucky I am. In my gap year I saw that the work I was doing really made a difference. I decided then that when I finish uni I want to do a job where I can help others.



## 8 SPEAKING What about you?

- Which student's experience do you like the most? Why?
- What would be your perfect plan for a gap year?

## P PROJECT

9a In groups, use the Internet to plan a perfect gap year.

9b Prepare a poster to advertise your gap year. Vote on the best.



### D Yvonne Edwards

My gap year had two very different parts. For the first six months I worked in a local restaurant to make some money. Then I looked for work in an exotic country. On the web I found an organization that does environmental research in Madagascar. I contacted them and they took me on. The whole experience was just amazing. We were living in a dirty little house that was full of strange insects, but I loved it. I learnt how to dive. I taught English to the children in the village where we were living. I saw species of plants and animals that you just can't see anywhere else in the world. I worked with people from totally different countries and traditions. That trip was the start of a new life for me.



### E Sam Evans

I knew exactly what I was going to do in my gap year. I've loved travelling since I was little, so I decided years ago that when I finished school I was going to travel round the world. I bought a 'round-the-world' ticket, which cost £1,800 and included all the different flights and train and bus fares. The route was from London to Los Angeles, from LA to Fiji and then the Cook Islands, from there to New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and then back to London. There were so many highlights! Riding an elephant in Thailand, swimming with dolphins in Australia, doing adventure sports in New Zealand! I went to places that everybody wants to visit one day, but they start university and then work and they never find the time.



## i INSIDE INFORMATION

- Prince William and Prince Harry both took gap years when they finished school.
- Prince William taught children in a town in Southern Chile.
- Prince Harry worked on a farm in Australia, helped orphaned children in Lesotho and had a holiday in Argentina.
- There are lots of websites that help students to plan gap years or round-the-world trips. Have a look at some!