

### WHAT IS A GAP YEAR?

Today, thousands of people are taking gap years all over the world, travelling to destinations such as Australia, Vietnam or Thailand for months on end. Today, a gap year can be anywhere, for any length of time, doing anything you want. A gap year comes under many guises – backpacking, a career gap, a short gap year, travelling, time out, a sabbatical – but they all mean the same thing: a constructive time out to travel in between life stages. Gap years are now seen as a way to improve your CV and to gain relevant work experience in a particular field, with employers actively employing people who have taken a gap year. Whether you see a gap year as backpacking or taking time out, it's about living life to the full and realizing that there is a world of opportunity out there just waiting to be explored.



### INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS

Internships abroad are a great way to gain some industry experience on your gap year and differentiate yourself from the crowd when you arrive back home and start looking for a job. You can secure a placement lasting a few days to a couple of months. Even though internships abroad are usually unpaid, your accommodation and travel expenses might be covered by the company, so make sure you look into the conditions of the engagement thoroughly before accepting and are happy with what's on offer. Interns are usually university students or graduates who are yet to find full-time work. Most gappers use internships to build international contacts for later on in their careers and to explore an industry they have an interest in. Internships abroad can offer unique networking opportunities most people can only dream of and can be incredibly beneficial for getting your foot in the door.



### WORK EXPERIENCE ABROAD

Work experience abroad is an exciting way to set yourself apart from the rest of the crowd when you return from your gap year and want to start moving up the career ladder. You can work as a sports instructor at holiday resorts in Spain, help to transfer sailing boats across the Atlantic or teach English in Japan. Those who return from their gap year with work experience abroad on their CV are usually looked at as being more worldly and employable. Securing work experience abroad demonstrates to a potential employer that you're not one to hide in a crowd. You've plucked up the courage to try something new and potentially quite scary (moving to a completely different country usually is at first but it's a good kind of scary). Work experience abroad exposes you to different types of languages and multi-cultural environments. Stay on in the country and you will demonstrate your capabilities coping and adapting to these new surroundings and your ability to rise to a challenge.



### VOLUNTEERING ON A GAP YEAR

Volunteering abroad on your gap year is a great way to make the most of your year out. Many gappers cite the time they spent volunteering on their gap year as the best and most rewarding part of their travels. Volunteer on your gap year and you can offer your time to help communities around the world that need your help right now. Some are desperately in need of water, of food, of education and of medical and social care. You can pretty much volunteer anywhere you like – choose your top destination and you're bound to find a volunteering project to suit. You can really make a difference in countries like Cambodia, India or Morocco, or head to anywhere in Europe to see what community project ideas they have there. There are also volunteer opportunities available in sports projects, expeditions, electives and humanitarian work too.



1

Match the following definitions with words from the text on internships, work experience and volunteering:

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1 a person who is getting practical experience in a job  | A challenge    |
| 2 a temporary job often done by students to gain work experience                               | B beneficial   |
| 3 being unlike anything or anyone else   | C employable   |
| 4 the skills, talent or abilities needed to do something                                       | D placement    |
| 5 a place where someone travels to or is sent  | E humanitarian |
| 6 to offer to help freely and willingly without earning any money                              | F industry     |
| 7 concerned with helping to improve other people's lives and welfare                           | G destination  |
| 8 the amount of money that is spent on something   | H intern       |
| 9 a difficult task that requires great physical or mental effort and tests a person's ability  | I capabilities |
| 10 being helpful or useful for someone or something  | J unique       |
| 11 a particular occasion or situation that allows someone to reach a goal or achieve something | K opportunity  |
| 12 a group of businesses that produce a certain product or provide a particular service        | L expense      |
| 13 having the necessary skills to make you attractive to employers                             | M to volunteer |

2

The following phrases are figures of speech, i.e. expressions that are used differently from their normal meaning. Find a suitable paraphrase for each of the phrases.

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. to get your foot in the door      | <i>to successfully take the first step in your career</i> |
| 2. to move up the career ladder      |   |
| 3. to pluck up the courage to do sth |   |
| 4. to hide in the crowd              |   |
| 5. to rise to a challenge            |   |

Tip  
Using figures of speech makes your English sound more idiomatic i.e. "natural".

3

Some words are often used together and are considered the "right way" to say something, even though other combinations are technically possible. For example, a native speaker of English would always use the word "tea" with "strong", never with "potent" or "powerful".

These popular compositions are called **collocations**. In the text on the left, different examples of collocations can be found, e.g. "to cover expenses". Use the collocations from the text to complete the sentences below. The underlined words help you find the correct collocations in the text.

If you want to **1** a gap year, you need to make sure that you find a way to **2** all your expenses, e.g. flights, accommodation, insurance. But one thing is for sure: A gap year pays off in so many ways and **3** such opportunities that the cost is well worth it. You **4** experience in various areas of life, **5** contacts that might prove useful somewhere down the road to a successful career, and a gap year on your CV can show potential **6** that you are – quite literally – willing to go the extra mile to learn and improve your skills. So our advice would be to choose a country, decide on the **7** of time you want to spend there, research beneficial ways to spend your time there and then go ahead and try **8** new!

## Step by step Working with a newspaper article

### COMPREHENSION

#### 1 Understanding the headline

- a) Explain the meaning of the headline "Gap years: Wasted youth?" with the help of the dictionary entry and the photo.
- b) Speculate on the author's attitude towards the topic and the reasons for it.

**wast-ed** /'weɪstɪd/ *adj* 1 **wasted** journey/time etc something unnecessary or something that is not taken advantage of: *In the end it was a wasted journey, as Clara wasn't home when we arrived.* 2 physically weak, very thin, normally due to illness: *His body lay pale and wasted on the hospital bed.* 3 *informal* intoxicated by drugs or alcohol

#### 2 Identifying the theme

- a) When working on a text, it is important to start by summing up what an article, for example, is about. Such a sentence is supposed to give all the basic information (e.g. author, title, type of text) and express the main theme or problem presented in the text. Choose the sentence from the ones below that best sums up what the article is about.

The newspaper article "Gap years: Wasted youth?" by Patrick Kingsley, published in *The Guardian* on 6 September 2010, deals with ...

1. ... the differences between real "gappers" and tourists travelling around Thailand.
2. ... the party culture of young people going abroad for a gap year.
3. ... young people's activities in their gap year in Koh Phangan, Thailand.
4. ... the question of whether young people use their gap year constructively.

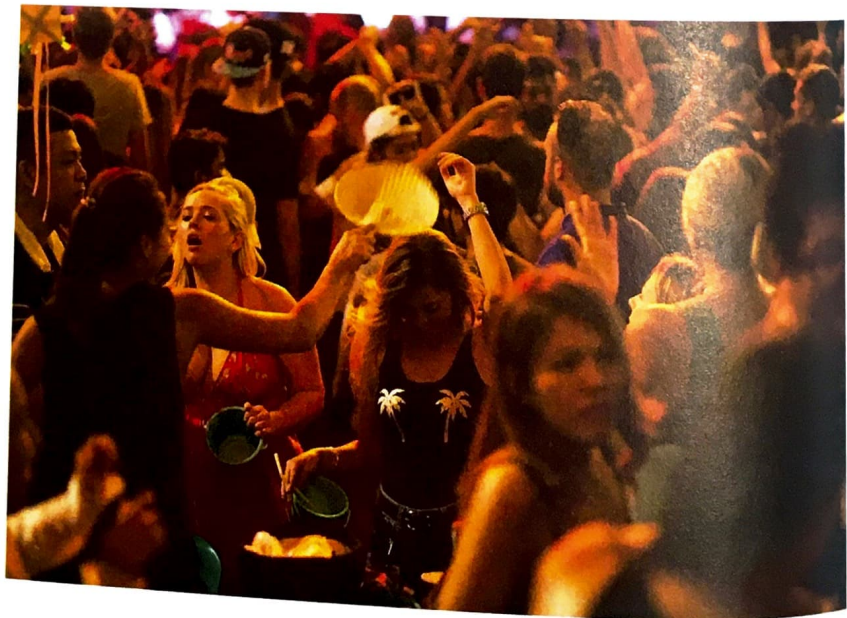
- b) Discuss your choices in class.

PATRICK KINGSLEY

The Guardian, 6 September 2010

### Gap years: Wasted youth?

*Ever wondered what students really get up to on their gap years? A report from the Full Moon Party in Thailand*



Up and down the beach, young western men are unzipping their shorts and peeing into the Gulf of Thailand. Behind them, under the light of the full moon, thousands more shirtless, shoeless Europeans are massed outside 14 beachside bars, their knees bending awkwardly to a soundtrack of the Black Eyed Peas, Justin Bieber and generic drum'n'bass. And squeezed between the

bars and the crowds are 35 wooden stalls, each selling plastic buckets filled with a litre's worth of vodka and Red Bull. The stalls are daubed<sup>1</sup> with deeply dubious slogans, ranging from the lurid to the moronic. "No Bucket No Boom Boom", "Fuck My Buckets", "Everybody Fuck My Strong Buckets" – that kind of thing.

Annotations

<sup>1</sup> **daubed** /dɔːbd/ = covered with paint

Welcome to the Full Moon Party, the largest beach rave in the world. Twenty-five years ago, this was a little-known hippy hang-out on the remote Thai island of Koh Phangan. Today, frequented every month by between 10,000 and 30,000 European youngsters, the all-night party is the ultimate destination [...] for footloose gap-year tourists. This party scene, right here on this beach, is arguably the epitome<sup>2</sup>, the pinnacle<sup>3</sup>, of the modern gap-year experience.

Three weeks ago, the chief executive<sup>4</sup> of the universities and colleges admissions service (UCAS)<sup>5</sup> declared to a Sunday newspaper that "the golden age of the gap year is over". Mary Curnock Cook argued that while in the past "a gap year has been when young people take a nice break and go out and see the world", the period should now "be used in a focused way to support an application to the course or university you are targeting". In a year when the number of university applications – a record 660,000 – has dwarfed<sup>6</sup> the number of university places available – 450,000 – Curnock Cook may have a point.

But this is a point that has yet to trickle down<sup>7</sup>, in practical terms, to the nation's school-leavers. In fact, the vast majority of gappers do not use their year-out in anything approaching a fashion that might – in the eyes of universities – be viewed as "constructive". Every year around 160,000 British school-leavers take a gap year before entering university. More than 80% of them, says Richard Oliver, chairman of trustees at Year Out, "just go off and travel independently without any real purpose. Sun, sand and sangria, as I call it." Indeed, the trend might even be away from the year of constructive good deeds that Curnock Cook might be thinking of – a trend towards increasingly mindless hedonism. [...]

Attempting to understand why they go, however, why this is the modern gap-year experience, is exactly what brings me to the Full Moon Party, surrounded by scores of topless teenagers urinating into the ocean to the words of the Black Eyed Peas' "I gotta feeling/That tonight's gonna be a good night/That tonight's gonna be a good, good night." What exactly is the lure of this beach to teenagers who are, after all, meant to be

Britain's brightest? I'm here to find out. [...] "You know what the worst thing about travelling is?" asks Londoner Jez, 19 years old, dressed in a vest, and approaching the end of his year out. He enlightens me: "TOURISTS." It's a slightly strange answer: we're sitting on the side of a dirt track near the centre of Had Rin, the main tourist town on Koh Phangan, and venue for tomorrow's Full Moon Party. Tourists are whizzing past every 30 seconds on mopeds belching out acrid fumes. [...] But Jez – a warm, welcoming guy – doesn't think of himself as a tourist: he's a backpacker. "Most of the people here are backpackers," he insists. "Backpackers are infinitely different to tourists. [...] All the people you've met while you're travelling will be here. It's just awesome." [...] Hailey's gap-year experiences were slightly different to Jez's. She didn't go travelling at all, she says, but spent the entire period working in a hospital in order to enhance<sup>8</sup> her application to medical school; a perfect exemplar of the kind of gap year favoured by Curnock Cook. In many ways, though, she wishes she'd chosen a more relaxed path. "I don't know if I should say this," she starts, pauses, then continues: "I was in a verbally abusive relationship for three years, which meant I had no self-confidence. And I turned into a bit of a slut<sup>9</sup> on my gap year because I was really messed up in the head. And then I went to uni, and I thought, 'I don't want to be either of those people I've been, I want to be someone else.' So then I sort of<sup>10</sup> had three personalities. But coming out here on my own, having to go over and talk to people, having to be nice, not an asshole ... It's been great. It teaches you how to socialise properly. It makes you so much more confident. [...] If I'd done the whole travelling on my own thing in my gap year, I would have been slightly less messed up<sup>11</sup> at uni." [...]

Up and down the beach, young western men are still unzipping their shorts and peeing into the Gulf of Thailand. Though I never took a gap year, never took the chance to either let my hair down like this, or do something more constructive, nothing that I've heard or seen here makes me want to join them.

<sup>1</sup> pinnacle

<sup>2</sup> **epitome** /i'pitəmi/= the best possible example of a particular type of person or thing

<sup>3</sup> **pinnacle** /'pɪnəkl/= here: the most exciting part of sb's life

<sup>4</sup> **chief executive** = the most senior manager

<sup>5</sup> **UCAS** /juːkæs/= an organization responsible for managing applications to almost all UK universities and colleges

<sup>6</sup> to **dwarf** /dwaɪf/= to make sth. seem small or unimportant

<sup>7</sup> to **trickle down** = to spread slowly like drops of water

<sup>8</sup> to **enhance** /ɪn'hɑːns/= to improve

<sup>9</sup> **slut** (infml) = a woman that is considered to have a lot of different sexual partners

<sup>10</sup> **sort of** (infml) = somewhat, rather

<sup>11</sup> **messed up** (infml) = sb who is messed up has emotional or mental problems because unpleasant things have happened to them

## ANALYSIS

**3 Identifying the type of article**

Use the descriptions below to characterize the type of article you have read on pp. 90-91. Discuss your choice in class.

Info

**Types of articles**

Articles can be distinguished by the way they are written and the purpose they serve. Sometimes you may find articles that contain features of more than one type.

**News article:** The main focus of a news article is on factual information and therefore it provides mainly answers to the who, what, where, when, why and how of an incident.

**Feature article:** It is an article that explores a news story in more depth. Its main purpose is not to tell you what has happened, but to look at the wider context of a news story. The author's opinion may shine through, but it should always be based on the analysis of the situation, not a personal attitude or bias.

**Editorial/opinion piece/comment(ary):** In this type of article, the author clearly expresses his or her view on a certain issue. The style of writing may be argumentative, entertaining, biased or evaluative.

**4 Distinguishing between fact, opinion and bias**

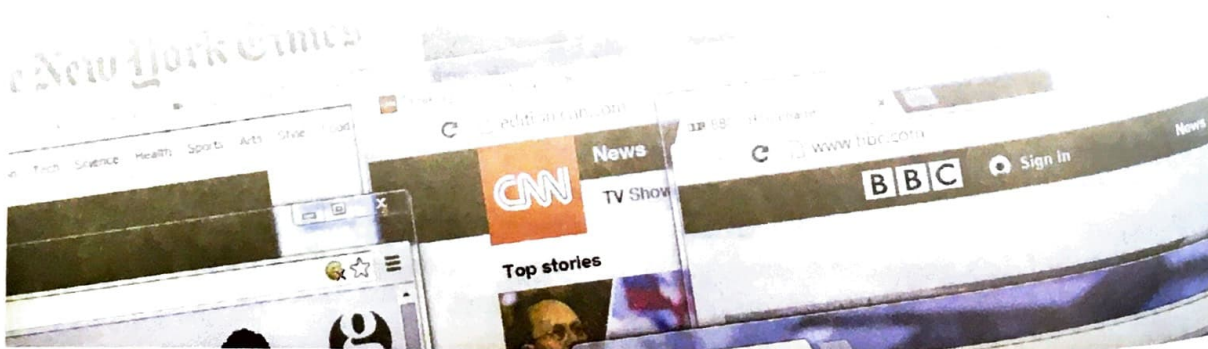
- a) You are now going to look more closely at the author's point of view. Read the article again and identify passages that express either facts or opinions. Write down examples with line numbers. Explain why you consider them facts or opinions.

Info

**Facts and opinions**

**Facts:** An article usually contains a number of facts. A fact is something that is known to be true and can be proved to be so, for example with the help of figures, statistics and details of what happened.

**Opinions:** However, the author may also include his or her opinion, i.e. what he/she believes about the topic at hand. It should usually be clearly highlighted in an article so that the reader recognizes a statement as the author's view. As a reader though, one may not always notice it so easily since the author's opinion may not be introduced by phrases such as "I think" or "in my opinion".



- b) **Language awareness** Based on your findings in a), analyse whether the article is biased. Describe the effect on the reader. The following checklist may help you understand what bias means and then help you come to a conclusion.

Checklist

**Bias**

If the author's opinion is not explicitly stated and an article presents a one-sided version of the events or a topic, the article is said to be biased and must therefore be read very critically. Otherwise, there is the risk that one's opinion is influenced by the article without the reader noticing it.

The following points are typical of biased texts:

- positive and negative facts not balanced out, but the article leans to one side
- facts, quotations, personal statements and examples just or mainly supporting one side, possibly leaving out facts supporting the opposite view
- opinions presented as facts

Points to watch out for in the article here:

- ✓ Does the article present the pros and cons of gap years in a rather balanced way?
- ✓ Which statements, figures and examples are given in the article? Which side do they mainly support?
- ✓ Are the facts really facts or just opinions in disguise, e.g. by not giving the source of your information and just claiming something (e.g. *Most gappers ...*)

- c) Reassess what kind of newspaper article this is. Use your findings from b) for support.



### 5 Language awareness Analysing language

The language with which an author can present information and opinions can be used objectively or in a biased way.

Info

## Language analysis

The reader's understanding of a topic can be influenced in many ways.

| Kind of device  | Possible effect  |
|---|--|
| <b>1. Choice of words</b>   |  |
| using comparatives and superlatives   | to exaggerate points or draw attention to extremes   |
| using strong or emotive words (e.g. <i>heartbroken, bloodbath, to worship</i> )   | to appeal to the readers' emotions, to make them think positively/critically of something  |
| <b>2. Rhetorical strategies</b>   |  |
| quoting experts and authorities, e.g. scientists, politicians   | to back up one's statements and make them and the author seem more reliable and credible   |
| including personal statements of people affected by the issue at hand   | to add a personal touch, to make it easier for the reader to identify with a story   |
| making claims instead of evidence-based arguments, e.g. by introducing statements with <i>No one can deny that ...</i> , <i>without a doubt ...</i> , <i>it is no surprise that ...</i> | to present opinions as facts or as points that are beyond criticism  |
| using humour and irony, e.g. by making fun of a situation, commenting humorously on something   | to ridicule unacceptable/strange/... behaviour, to make an article more light-hearted and entertaining   |
| <b>3. Stylistic devices</b>   |  |
| alliteration (words starting with the same letter or sound)   | to make a certain point more memorable, to create a sense of sharpness   |
| repetitions (of words or phrases)   | to emphasize a message, to draw attention to a key word  |
| personification (giving things human-like qualities, e.g. <i>My gap year opened the door to a new life for me</i> )   | to create a strong impression on the reader of what something is capable of  |
| hyperbole (exaggeration)  | to create a vivid image to illustrate the dimension of a problem   |
| metaphor (an image, a comparison without words like <i>like</i> and <i>as</i> , e.g. <i>My gap year was a long, beautiful dream</i> )   | to capture what is crucial about a character and a situation with a powerful image, to bring out the specific nature of a character or situation |
| enumeration (a list)  | to draw attention to the scale of a development and to give an overview of a variety of arguments  |

a) Copy the grid and fill in examples of the strategies the author uses.

→ SUPPORT D1, p. 132

Webcode

You can download  
the grid here:  
WES-73630-10

| device / strategy                                   | example (evidence)  | function / effect (analysis)  |
|---|---|---|
| <b>1. choice of words</b>                           |   |   |
| superlatives/<br>irony (→ 2)/<br>alliteration (→ 3) | "Britain's brightest"<br>(l. 71)  | to contrast the fact that most of the gappers<br>are future university students aiming at careers<br>in influential positions with their behaviour in<br>Thailand, which the author considers primitive |
| negative<br>connotations                            | "footloose gap-year<br>tourists" (l. 25)  | to create the impression of young people who do<br>not have any limits and any clear ideas that give<br>their activities a purpose  |
| ...   |   |   |
| <b>2. rhetorical strategies</b>                     |   |   |
| quoting an expert                                   | "in a focused<br>way to support an<br>application to the<br>(...) university you<br>are targeting"<br>(ll. 37-39) | to use an expert's view to underline the point that<br>a gap year should serve a purpose rather than be<br>a time in which you simply enjoy yourself  |
| ...   |   |   |
| <b>3. stylistic devices</b>                         |   |   |
| personification                                     | "mopeds belching<br>out acrid fumes"<br>(ll. 81-82)   | to point out that even the noise and pollution<br>created by mopeds add to an atmosphere the<br>author regards as not very desirable  |
| ...   |   |   |

b) Analyse how the use of language expresses bias or objectivity on the author's part.

- Use what you have collected in the grid in 5a).
- Rather than going through the text chronologically, use specific aspects of language,  
e.g. choice of words, to structure your analysis.
- Write paragraphs which follow the steps of **point** – **evidence** – **analysis**.

→ S12: Checklist:  
Analysis – Non-  
fictional texts,  
p. 192

#### EXAMPLE:

Throughout the article, the author repeatedly emphasizes that he does not consider places like Koh Phangan to be very appealing.

When he describes life in Koh Phangan, he refers to the traffic, for example, using the personification "mopeds belching out acrid fumes" (ll. 81-82).

Similarly to the gappers urinating into the ocean, mopeds are presented as beings that misbehave since they create noise and pollution in an unappealing ("belching out") and possibly unhealthy ("acrid") way.

## WRITING: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

6

→ S7: How to improve your text, p. 180

Now you are going to write a newspaper article yourself. Your article will deal with *My Gap Year*, an organization that offers gap year experiences in Cambodia. Inform yourself about their activities with this blog entry by programme director Rhyle Simcock. Before writing your own article, list the various jobs and activities that are part of the "Cambodia Building Blocks Adventure" programme.

## my gap year | TRAVEL DESTINATIONS VOLUNTEER ADVENTURES TEACH SKI

Our latest group of Volunteers for the month of July is done and dusted! A huge shout out to Yenara, Abbey, Ellyse, Ryan, Liam, Kate, Poppy & Larissa for joining us on our latest Adventure.



We set out to build three houses, two water wells<sup>1</sup> and a toilet in just two weeks! But not before a visit to the long lost ancient civilization that is the Angkor Archeological Park.

The group did a fantastic job building the first house. Some of the girls got their hands dirty sawing bamboo, whilst the others inadvertently found themselves running a pop-up kindergarten. By the end of the first day word had gotten out and there were over 30 children descending on the project site like it was Christmas.

Day two had the boys digging a hole for the toilet, also being donated to the family with the house. Toilets are important as they help divert human waste away from sources of water & agriculture.

At night the group ate out in some of the best local restaurants in town, trawled<sup>2</sup> through the endless array of night markets and experienced the epic PHARE Cambodian Circus (No Animals).

Every day the group diligently got up and slugged<sup>3</sup> it out in the scorching heat for a great cause. The first house was up and ready by day four and the Volunteers took the weekend off to have a celebratory night out in town, visit the floating village and have a well-earned rest by the pool.

Week two had the group testing their teaching capabilities at one of Siem Reaps<sup>4</sup>



most important Children Centres. As usual this proved more fun than work as the group spent the next five days teaching English games, singing songs, doing arts & crafts, and playing football.

During this time the local My Gap Year staff were busy back at the project site building the final two houses & water well. We got there in the end with two very happy families the reward<sup>5</sup> for all those involved. With construction complete & time at the Children's Centre coming to a close it was time for the group to spend the last few days getting some serious R & R<sup>6</sup>. Including a visit to the always magical Kulen Mountain & sacred waterfall, and one last night out in town to finish with a bang<sup>7</sup>.

Thanks Dabbers<sup>8</sup>,  
Rhyle Simcock  
Program<sup>9</sup> Director

## Annotations

<sup>1</sup> **well** = a hole in the ground where water comes out

<sup>2</sup> to **trawl** /trɔ:l/ = here: to wander through

<sup>3</sup> to **slug it out** (infml) = to work hard

<sup>4</sup> **Siem Reap** = name of a city and province in the north of Cambodia

<sup>5</sup> **reward** = sth that you get because you have worked hard

<sup>6</sup> **R & R** = rest and relaxation

<sup>7</sup> **with a bang** (infml) = successfully

<sup>8</sup> **dabber** = here: sb who can fix things

<sup>9</sup> **program** (AmE) = programme (BrE)

## 7 CHOOSE

Work on either of the tasks below.

**A** The company *My Gap Year* was founded by Debra Daniels of Brisbane, Australia. A local newspaper wants to write about the company and what they do, using the example of a particular activity. The writer has chosen the blog entry as a starting point. Convert the blog entry into an informative article giving the reader some insight into the "Cambodia Building Blocks Adventure" programme.

Use what you have learnt about newspaper articles from the analysis of "Gap years: Wasted youth?" as well as checklist A.

## Checklist A

## Informative newspaper article

- ✓ Use a clear structure:
  - headline + subheading
  - introduction (answering important wh-questions, interesting lead into your article)
  - main part with clear paragraphs: most important information first, then details in order of importance ("inverted pyramid")
  - concluding paragraph (optional)
- ✓ To make your article interesting and approachable, include
  - description
  - examples
  - quotes (experts)
  - figures
- ✓ Register: mostly neutral or formal; keep your target audience and the purpose of your article in mind

**B** While many gappers organize everything themselves, others choose to pay a company like *My Gap Year*, which sells gap year experiences to young people.

- a) Collect arguments for these two approaches in a T-chart.
- b) Use what you have learnt about including facts and opinions to write an argumentative article for a school newspaper titled "Why pay for volunteering?!" Checklist B can help you, too.

why it is good to  
organize your gap  
year yourself

why it is good to use  
the expertise of a  
company

...

...

## Checklist B

## Argumentative newspaper article

- ✓ Use a clear structure:
  - headline + subheading
  - introduction (with concise statement of your opinion)
  - main part with clear paragraphs: arguments and counter-arguments arranged in a way that supports your opinion
  - concluding paragraph (emphasizing your opinion/summing up your line of argument)
- ✓ To make your article convincing, include
  - factual evidence
  - quotes (experts)
  - statistical evidence
- ✓ Register: neutral, formal or even informal; keep your target audience and the purpose of your article in mind
- ✓ Give a clear point of view
- ✓ Don't
  - add new ideas in the conclusion
  - settle on a "mixed" view of the topic (*I think both sides can be justified...*)

## 8 Peer editing

Find someone who has written the other kind of article. Use your partner's checklist (A or B) to comment on their article's quality. Pay special attention to elements that show what kind of article (informative or argumentative) your partner has written: How well have they been implemented?

To help your partner improve his/her article, note down

- the top two: What paragraphs, arguments, stylistic devices, ... are especially convincing? Why?
- the bottom two: Where does his/her article need improving? How can he/she achieve that?

→ S20: How to give feedback/peer-edit, p. 206

You have learned how to work with a newspaper article.

In the *Practice* section, you are expected to employ the techniques you have learned in the *Step by step* part. If you need help with one of the tasks, you will find support in the *Diff* section on pp. 133-136.

| Task   | Step by step | Practice | Support                  |
|--|--------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Summing up newspaper articles                | 2            | 2        | D2 (p. 133), D3 (p. 133) |
| Checking if an article is biased             | 4            | 3        | D4 (p. 133)              |
| Analysing the language of newspaper articles | 5            | 3        | D4 (p. 133)              |
| Writing a newspaper article                  | 6, 7         | 4        | D5 (p. 136)              |

## Practice Working with a newspaper article

### PRE-READING: LISTENING

#### 1 CD/04

→ **S16:** How to listen/watch effectively, p. 199

You are going to listen to a report broadcast by US public radio *npr* on Malia Obama, the former US President's daughter, and gap years in the US. Read the questions first before you start listening. Take notes while listening to provide short answers.



- 1 What are Malia Obama's plans for her time after school?
- 2 How do young Americans feel about taking a gap year in recent years?
- 3 What has been the effect of Malia's announcement of taking a gap year?
- 4 What should gappers learn from taking a gap year according to Marie Schwartz?
- 5 Rick Weissbourd has some ideas to make it easier for every student to take a gap year. What should be combined in a gap programme?
- 6 What did Kerry Buouy's mother worry about with regard to taking a gap year?
- 7 How many gappers do not go back to school?
- 8 What is most gappers' performance at college or university like?
- 9 What is the general attitude of the radio programme, also compared to the article "Gap years: Wasted youth?"

### COMPREHENSION

#### 2

- a) Read the article on p. 99. In one sentence, summarize what is about.

→ **SUPPORT** D2, p. 133

- b) **CHALLENGE** Write a full summary of the article. → **SUPPORT** D3, p. 133

→ **S1:** Checklist: Summary, p. 170

### ANALYSIS

#### 3 Language awareness

Analyse to what extent the author's use of language reveals her attitude. Consider choice of words, rhetorical strategies and stylistic devices. → **SUPPORT** D4, p. 133

→ **S12:** Checklist: Analysis – Non-fictional texts, p. 192

### WRITING: ARGUMENTATIVE ARTICLE

#### 4

Uzma Chaudhry expresses her anger over critics of gap years as a waste of time. Use the information from the text to write an argumentative article for an online teenage magazine in which you argue why young people should or should not take a gap year. → **SUPPORT** D5, p. 136

→ **S7:** How to improve your text, p. 180

## Why Malia Obama is right to take a gap year

The Telegraph, 12 May 2016

Age is just a number. And I measure age not by the passage of time – the number of minutes, hours or days since I was brought into the world – but by the richness of my experiences. I measure age by those moments when I'm truly alive.

It can be hard to create those moments when so much time is inevitably spent in a classroom, dealing with the stress and pressure of yet another set of exams. So I wasn't surprised when the White House announced last week that Malia Obama will take a gap year before she starts at Harvard in 2017.

Having taken a gap year myself, I applaud her decision.

What I don't applaud though, is the tired sighs I can already hear from critics whose outdated views assume Malia will spend that year waking up at midday and trudging around in pyjamas until someone suggests otherwise.

It's this archaic mindset which perpetuates<sup>1</sup> the idea of young people taking gap years to pass off any real sort of responsibility – either at university or in employment – and embark on a glorified holiday.

My own experience was a far cry from this, and I'm sure this will be the case for Malia too. In fact, for many young people, a gap year is a unique opportunity to grab hold of a host of new opportunities with both hands.

However we choose to spend that year – whether it's travelling, learning to code or doing a host of work experience placements – it's not up to anyone else to argue that we're wasting our time. Taking a gap year was one of the best decisions I've ever made. [...]

Most importantly, it meant I could confront an anxiety<sup>2</sup> which had long filled me with dread: that I was going to university for the sake of it. That I was pursuing a degree I didn't want – potentially wasting time and money – because I didn't really know what else was out there.

Instead, I came across an opportunity with youth charity vInspired, who were recruiting for a voluntary nine month leadership programme.

Having made it through the selection process, I joined 120 young people from across the country to attend crash courses in everything from

politics and finance, to social media and PR.

With our newly gained knowledge under our belts, we set to work campaigning for issues as diverse as the importance of sustainable living; raising awareness of unhealthy relationships; and tackling the stigma behind asylum seekers.

vInspired ignited<sup>3</sup> my passion to try to make a difference. And much to my surprise, I was pretty good at it.

My first change.org petition calling for closer monitoring<sup>4</sup> of MPs' expenses gained 100,000 signatures in a few days. I drove several further campaigns across the course of the year, and was even given the chance to speak at the Labour Party conference on behalf of the charity.

More than anything, it was a steep learning curve in discovering who I am as a person – what I enjoy doing and where my strengths are. [...]

As a jam-packed year came to an end, and with all that insight and experience behind me, I was finally confident in making the decision I hadn't been able to tackle at school. University just wasn't for me. I wanted to do, not to study. To get my hands dirty, not sit in a library.

That's when another opportunity came about to get involved with a voluntary pilot scheme run by O2 Think Big, teaching digital skills to a community of young people in Lancaster.

As the pilot reached its close, I decided to apply for O2's apprenticeship scheme. Without my gap year, I doubt my application would've stood out from the hundreds of others. [...]

Ultimately, gap years are unique because they allow for important introspection. After the relentless pressure of school or university, they give us the time and headspace to gain real clarity on our next move. What are we good at? What do we want to improve on?

For countless young people, gap years are a focussed, positive use of time. It's high time we gave Malia – and all other gap year takers – a well-deserved break.

### Annotations

<sup>1</sup> to **perpetuate** /pə(r)'petʃueɪt/= to make sth continue to exist

<sup>2</sup> **anxiety** /æŋ'zaiəti/= worry

<sup>3</sup> to **ignite** /ɪg'naɪt/= to set on fire


<sup>4</sup> to **monitor** = to watch and check

## Applying for a job

People who decide to work on their gap year will have to apply for an internship or job.

### 1 Pair work

- Read the job description and talk about whether you would want to apply for the "International Work and Culture Program".
- Read the job description again and assess to what extent your partner has got the required skills.

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Job Title</b>                | International Work and Culture Program  |
| <b>Job Description</b>          |  <p>Our International Work and Culture Program is a twelve-month program at Sunshine Village Resort, in Orange County, California. Participation in this program will give you the opportunity to share your country's culture, customs, and traditions with our guests from all around the world. Among other things, the program involves assisting guests with language difficulties, ticket and dining reservations and special needs as well as giving them general information about our theme parks.</p>  |
| <b>Basic Qualifications</b>     | <p>To be eligible to apply for the International Work and Culture Program, you MUST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak English fluently</li> <li>• Be at least 18 years of age</li> <li>• Be available to work Sunday through Saturday, including days and nights</li> <li>• Have experience in customer service and guest relations</li> <li>• Demonstrate strong computer proficiency</li> <li>• Have cash handling skills (foreign currencies, credit card transactions)</li> <li>• Demonstrate strong problem-solving and decision-making skills</li> <li>• Show an ability to manage conflict resolution</li> <li>• Be able to handle confidential information</li> </ul> |
| <b>Preferred Qualifications</b> | Fluent in French, German, Japanese, Portuguese or Spanish   |
| <b>Industry</b>                 | Leisure and Travel: Theme Park Destinations   |
| <b>Pay Rate</b>                 | Successful applicants will earn an hourly rate of \$10.75.  |
| <b>Additional Information</b>   | <p>Applicants should submit a covering letter of no more than 300 words and a CV to the following address:</p> <p>Mr. Jonathan Rodriguez<br/>           Personnel Manager<br/>           Sunshine Kingdom Theme Parks<br/>           18700 Ward Street<br/>           Fountain Valley<br/>           CA 92708<br/>           US</p>   |

2

- a) Read the following covering letter from a British school-leaver applying for admission to the programme. Decide which of the required skills he has/has not got.
- b) **Pair work:** Discuss Daniel's chances of being accepted for the programme.

→ **S18:** How to succeed in oral exams, p. 202

Jonathan Rodriguez  
Personnel Manager  
Sunshine Kingdom Theme Parks  
18700 Ward Street  
Fountain Valley  
CA 92708  
US

50, Windmill Drive,  
Newham,  
Staffordshire  
ST12 5TZ  
Tel: 02531 88706  
Email: DanHaw@binternet.com  
12 April 2018

**Your contact information**

**Employer contact information**

Dear Mr Rodriguez

**Salutation**

I am writing to apply for your International Work and Culture Program, as advertised on your website last week. Please find enclosed my CV.

**Introduction:**  
Information on the job you are applying for and why you are applying for it.

I am in my last year of school and wish to gain some experience working abroad before starting a university course in tourism and foreign languages next year. It would be a fantastic opportunity to work in one of the world's most famous theme parks and look after guests from all over the world.

Having grown up and been educated in England, I speak English fluently. My mother, however, comes from Germany, and since I speak German with her and visit my relatives in Hamburg regularly, I can also claim to be fluent in German.

**Main part:**  
Describe what you have to offer the employer, why you are qualified for the job and how your skills and experience are a match for the position you are applying for.

I am a conscientious person, who works hard and learns quickly. I am quick to pick up new skills and eager to learn from others. Moreover, I thoroughly enjoy working in a team. I believe I could therefore fit easily into your program and successfully accomplish any of the jobs you choose to give me. Since I have no personal commitments, the working hours will not be a problem.

Having regularly worked in a big department store at the weekend and during the school holidays, I have gained useful experience in handling cash and credit card transactions and generally working with customers. If necessary, I can provide a reference from my employer.

Finally, I would like to add that I have a high level of computer competence and am proficient in MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint, since this is a general requirement for my A-level courses in Maths, IT and Social Studies.

**Closing lines:**  
Thank the employer for considering your application.

Thank you for taking time to consider my application.  
I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,  
Daniel Hawthorne

→ **S7:** How to improve your text, p. 180

## Tenses

3

a) Use the verbs in the box to rephrase the expressions below.

1. to attend foreign language classes
2. to graduate from university with a degree
3. to coach beginners
4. to assist the shop manager
5. to complete a course on SAP business software
6. to gather experience
7. to volunteer as a camp counsellor

to teach | to study |  
to learn | to pass |  
to work | to gain |  
to be | to leave

### EXAMPLE:

1. *to attend a foreign language class – to study a foreign language*

→ **G7:** Using present and past tenses correctly, p. 152

→ **G8:** Talking about the future, p. 153

b) Turn notes for an application below into complete sentences. Use your new phrases from a) and make sure you use the correct tenses.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| next June:             | graduation - bachelor's degree in Economics at Osnabrück University |
| current part-time job: | sales assistant at MobileMania phone shop                           |
| since September 2017:  | Advanced Italian course at adult education centre                   |
| August 2017:           | internship at Vogel & Partner Consulting                            |
| May 2017:              | certificate on SAP business software                                |
| every summer:          | camp counsellor for the Christian youth organization CVJM           |
| since 2014:            | taekwondo instructor at Osnabrücker SC sports club                  |

Next June I .... at Osnabrück University.

...

c) Now write four sentences similar to the ones in b) about yourself.

4

- a) Read the following advertisement and summarize in one sentence what kind of internship is being advertised.
- b) Read the advert again and compare it to the one in 1.
- c) Write a covering letter for the internship advertised below. Use the covering letter from 2 as a model. You can use some of the sentences from 3c).
- d) **CHALLENGE** In addition to a covering letter, your application should also include a CV. Write a CV that goes with the covering letter in c).

→ **S3:** Checklist: Formal letter, p. 174

### Internship Programmes with Bank of America Merrill Lynch – Summer 2019

Applications for our summer 2019 paid pre-university internship opportunities are open now.

#### Internship opportunities in London & Chester

In 2019 we are running paid internship programmes in both London and Chester at Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

#### Who should apply?

Applicants should be exceptional individuals who meet our rigorous criteria, which include a good academic record, sound analytical skills including an aptitude for numbers together with evidence of great teamwork skills at school or in extra-curricular activities.

Our pre-university internships programmes are a rare opportunity to experience actual working life within a top graduate employer before you start your university studies. They are designed to help our clients identify talent for the future. So we want to hear from candidates who have an interest in and are open to a career within the investment or corporate bank divisions.

Students must be planning to attend university in 2019 or 2020 (if a gap year is planned). Maths A-level is a requirement. We have summarized additional characteristics that we are looking for below:

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| → Team work            | → Willingness to learn |
| → Leadership qualities | → Drive and initiative |
| → Interpersonal skills | → Business awareness   |

#### How do I apply?

Send us your CV and a covering letter explaining why you are applying for the internship and what qualifies you for it. The deadline for receipt of completed applications is 9:00 a.m. on Monday 13th January 2019.

## Watching a video

5

- Some gap year programmes fall into the category of “voluntourism”, which is a newly created word made up of two other words. Work out what it means.
- Watch a video by the commercial organization *Projects Abroad* advertising “High School Specials”. Sum up in one or two sentences what “High School Specials” are.
- Watch the video again and take notes in a grid like the one below.

activities/duties that are part of the programmes

...

how participants and others can profit from the programmes

...

- Pair work:** Compare your notes with those of a partner.
- In class, tell each other whether you would like to take part in such a programme and why.
- EXTRA** Imagine you want to apply for one of the high school specials that *Projects Abroad* offer. Write a covering letter for your application.

#### Webcode

You can find a link to the video here:  
WES-73630-11

→ **S16:** How to listen/watch effectively, p. 199

→ **S3:** Checklist: Formal letter, p. 174

## Writing a newspaper article

### 6 CHOOSE CD/05

→ **S7:** How to improve your text, p. 180

Write a newspaper article in which you include facts and opinions on one aspect of a gap year. Depending on which skill you need most practice with or like best, you choose one of the options on offer.

Your article should use the information you gain from the material you choose.

### A LISTENING

→ **S16:** How to listen/watch effectively, p. 199

Listen to part of a lecture by Daniela Papi and note down her view on graduates doing volunteer work for charities in foreign countries. Make sure that you understand their intention, the people's reaction back home and the reality of what they do.

Use your notes to write an article for an online magazine in which you take a critical stand on this type of volunteer work.



### B VIEWING

#### Webcode

You can find a link to the video here:  
WES-73630-12

→ **S16:** How to listen/watch effectively, p. 199

Watch a documentary about Diana, a sophomore student at San Diego MET High School, where internships are integrated into the normal curriculum.

Note down how Diana profits and what the challenges of such integrated internships may be.

Use your notes to write an article for an online magazine for students from all over the world in which you take a critical stand on long-term internships during the school year.



### C READING

Read what 17-year-old Florence wrote in her diary as an au pair in France.

- Start a T-chart in which you list what Florence expected from her stay in France on the one hand and the reality of her experiences on the other.
- Write a report for an online magazine in which you present Florence's as a case that illustrates the relationship between expectations and experiences regarding a year abroad as an au pair.



**Sunday, March 6** Off to Paris to start a new life! I can't wait to be away from my family for three months. Nothing could be worse than being at home and Mum has made it clear that if I hadn't taken this au pair opportunity she would have kicked me out.

Actually, the whole idea was her master plan to get me out of the house after I dropped out of A- levels. But how bad can it be?

I've got a six-year-old sister, Dolly, so I know how to look after small children and even though I never help at home I will, obviously, if someone is paying me.

The French family who have taken me on don't seem to care that I'm only 17 and a smoker. I suspect it's because Mum was so desperate to be rid of me she filled out the application form herself and made me sound like Mary Poppins. I'll be looking after two little girls – Aurelie, two and Mirabelle, five and they're paying me 90 euros (£70) a week. That seems like a small fortune – certainly more than I've been earning at my job in McDonald's back in North Devon. The mother is a lawyer and the Dad is CEO of an IT firm. I'll be on my own with the children but it's fine. I'm sure they've got a TV.

**Monday 7** Last night was overwhelming. When I arrived the entire family were there to check me out including both sets of grandparents. Everybody spoke to me in French and I couldn't understand a word, so I just kept nodding and saying "oui." I think Mum must have told them I speak French. Which I don't. I didn't even take the GCSE.

**Tuesday 8** Sophie, the girls' mother, took the morning off work to walk me through my duties. On Monday, Tuesday and Thursday I have to pick the girls up from nursery and school and look after them until she gets home from work at 7.30pm. Wednesdays and Fridays they finish at midday and I have to occupy them on my own until the evening. She hasn't given me any instructions about what to do with them after school, other than to "teach them English". And they are not allowed any TV or "bonbons". Seriously? My little sister spends half her life eating sweets in front of the TV – it's the only way my Mum gets anything done.

**Wednesday 9** Okay, so nobody told me that Aurelie isn't toilet trained. This afternoon when we got back from school she said: "Je faire pee pee." I had no idea what it meant and while I was desperately looking for my dictionary she did a wee on the floor. Gross.

**Thursday 10** Apparently my biggest priority is to be on time when I pick the girls up. Today I got lost en route. Nobody understood me when I asked for directions and my phone was out of battery. I've never felt so panicked in my life. I eventually found the school – 20 minutes late. And I broke my first rule. I gave the girls Haribos in the hope they won't get me into trouble.

**Friday 11** This week has literally been hell. Is it just French children or are they all like this? I'm finding it difficult to bond with both girls – not just because of the language barrier but because they are such little madams. It's making me miss my little sister so much. Dolly is happy and easy to please but I guess she's been brought up differently. She knows crying and throwing tantrums is not the way to get what she wants.

**Wednesday 16** Today I broke rule number two and put the TV on. Honestly, this is the most mind-numbingly dull job I have ever done and I have no idea how women cope.

**Tuesday 22** Hurrah! I can get my laptop to speak French to Aurelie and Mirabelle, which has transformed my life. I just type whatever it is I want to say into Google translate, press the audio icon and a computer voice speaks to them.

**Saturday, April 9** Another weekend and I'm so bored. My French family don't want me in the house and all I do is wander the streets of Paris on my own. Spending so much time alone has made me realise I really did lose the plot back in the U.K. I constantly surrounded myself with people – the wrong people, according to Mum – and my behaviour got out of control. Now I've got hours by myself and I'm starting to feel guilty for the way I've treated everybody. I'm so homesick. I'd give anything to go on a dog walk and have a roast with my family. I can't believe they used to have to force me to spend time with them.

**Tuesday 19** I've started FaceTiming (video-calling) Mum every day. She seems surprised to hear from me and I think we've spoken more in the past week than in over a year.

**Wednesday 27** It's Mum's birthday. I texted her today and told her I loved her, something I haven't said in months. It's odd but I appreciate her so much more now than ever before.

**Wednesday, May 27** It's my last day and I am over the moon to be leaving. I want to sleep in my own bed, give my little sister a huge cuddle and start to make things right with my parents. I've only been here three months but it has been so isolating and difficult, it has forced me to take a long hard look at myself. I wasn't a good au pair – I know that – but I'm determined to go home a better daughter and a nicer human being.

7

Young people from all over the world also come to Germany for their gap year.

- a) **Think-pair-share:** Name points that foreigners visiting Germany might find strange or surprising. Consider any experiences you have had with visitors, e.g. as part of a school exchange, and their reactions to the German way of life.
- b) **Pair work:** Read the following article giving advice to young people planning to go to Germany. Discuss
- which piece of advice you find most surprising,
  - whether the article shows a fair depiction of Germany.
- c) The website on which this advice was published has a comment section. Write down what you think of the advice, whether you consider it relevant and what you would have described differently.
- d) **CHOOSE** Work on either of the tasks below.
- Think of more points that an international visitor should have heard about Germany and what is typical of life here. Add more advice in the style of the article.
- OR:** Choose a country that you would like to go to. Do some research online on tips for first-time visitors or people who intend to spend a longer period there. Put together a similar article like the one below.

Annotations

<sup>1</sup> to **grind one's gears** = to be annoying or irritating

Alexander Johnstone | TRAVELLER

## 7 things that really grind your gears<sup>1</sup> when you first arrive in Germany

It's always exciting when you first touch down in a new country, and more so if you're planning on staying a while. But these seven things will undoubtedly get on your nerves in the first few weeks.

### 1. Everything's closed on Sunday

This is something you may get used to, and even start to like after a while. But when you first arrive in Germany, it will no doubt catch you by surprise that nothing is open on a Sunday.

There are definitely upsides to it. It means that most people actually do get time off on a weekend so that families can have time together. In the summer parks fill up, restaurants are busy, or groups gather for big lunches at home. On the other hand, it makes buying things pretty difficult. You can normally pick up snacks and drinks at petrol stations, but all supermarkets are closed. Your only bet is to head to a big train station or airport, where you might be lucky enough to find an *Edeka* or *Rewe*.



### 2. The bore of *Anmeldung*, or registering with the authorities

If you're going to be in Germany for more than three months, you must by law register your address with the local authorities. Doesn't sound like a problem – surely all these things are done online these days. Not in Germany. True to the form of their technophobia, you still have to book in for an appointment at a *Bürgeramt* (citizen's office), and negotiate the paperwork. If you're trying to register in Berlin, the appointments are not easy to get either. You may have to wait a month or six weeks for an appointment, or try and queue up to do it which can take hours. Not exactly the model of efficiency.

## Alexander Johnstone | TRAVELLER

**3. You have to pack your bags at the speed of light in supermarkets**

For someone not used to German supermarkets, the first few experiences can be pretty bewildering<sup>2</sup>. The till assistant rapidly starts to scan through your shopping, pelting<sup>3</sup> the items at you. You have no time to pack your bags, and as soon as the shop assistant has finished scanning, you have to pay and then they begin to scan the next person's shopping through.

Germans have mastered it and have no problem with lobbing everything into their capacious bags, or gathering everything into their arms and heading over to a corner to pack. But as a first-timer, get ready to act fast, because no one will be impressed if you hang around and delay the system.

**4. Paper tickets and stamp validations<sup>4</sup> seem a bit last century**

To anyone travelling from the UK or the US, it will strike you as bizarre that you can just walk into any station and board a train without a ticket.

That's because the German service works in a pretty strange way. Yes, you do legally have to buy a ticket, but the system trusts you to buy one. Plus, if you don't speak German then how are you expected to read the small print telling you to stamp the ticket to validate it? If you don't stamp a ticket, you can still be fined the full amount.

Another thing that gets people – the majority of ticket inspectors are plain-clothed.

**5. It can be pretty tricky to find even the most basic of medicines**

We're in no way encouraging you to overdo it on the drink, but we do understand that German beer can be very tempting<sup>5</sup> (and surprisingly strong). The problem you may find is getting cheap pain killers to help you the following morning. Unlike in Britain for example, supermarkets don't stock<sup>6</sup> medicine so you'll most likely have to head to an *Apotheke*. And on Sundays everything's closed, so you really will have to trek about if you want any medicine, with your best bet being in an airport or train

station. Maybe that's why you see people in the mornings clutching onto a bottle of *Club-Mate* (a naturally caffeinated ice tea) as they make their way about town.

**6. Some of the appliances seem pretty out-of-date**

If you're from the US, you may well have a garbage disposal unit in the sink at home – one of those things that shreds food waste down the plug so it can be washed through the plumbing. But it is just one of the appliances you won't see in Germany. Ten years ago, around 47 percent of US households had a food waste disposer, compared to only six percent in the UK, and they are still almost nonexistent in Germany. Most people have never seen one here, so you better get used to scraping those plates into a bin bag again.

The other appliance that you may start to miss quickly is the tumble dryer. Again extremely popular in the USA and common in the UK, they are much rarer in Germany, and people tend to hang their clothes up to dry even if they live in an apartment.

**7. Getting used to the cash economy**

This is something that will probably continue to annoy you for some time. With contactless technology, Apple Pay, cash can sometimes seem like a thing of the past in the US and UK.

Sure, it's a little concerning how easy it is to use someone else's card with some of this modern technology, but in general it simplifies and speeds everything up so much.

Even in many restaurants, regardless of what you're paying, you will still have to pay in cash. And if you do pay with card somewhere you will often still find yourself signing on receipts, which hasn't happened in the UK for years.

There are upsides that you may eventually learn to appreciate. It's definitely easier to track your spending, and if you're keen on privacy, banks won't have information on what you're buying. But when you're all out of cash, and the nearest ATM<sup>7</sup> is miles away, it will still drive you mad.

## Annotations

<sup>2</sup> **bewildering**

/bɪ'wɪld(ə)rɪŋ/= confusing

<sup>3</sup> to **pelt** = to throw<sup>4</sup> **validation**

/ˌvælɪ'deɪʃ(ə)n/= the act of making sth legal

<sup>5</sup> **tempting** = when sth is tempting, you want to have it<sup>6</sup> to **stock sth** = to have sth in order to sell it<sup>7</sup> **ATM** = a machine that you can use to get money from your bank account