

## Tekst 3

### Now students take gap year at 16

BY JONATHAN THOMPSON

*FIRST THERE* was a gap year between graduation and work. Then came a break between school and university.

The gap year between school and university has become an accepted and even encouraged part of a successful, well-rounded education as young adults seek 12 months of experience, inspiration, cash and often, adventure. At the moment there are roughly 200,000 UK students taking some kind of gap year across the world.

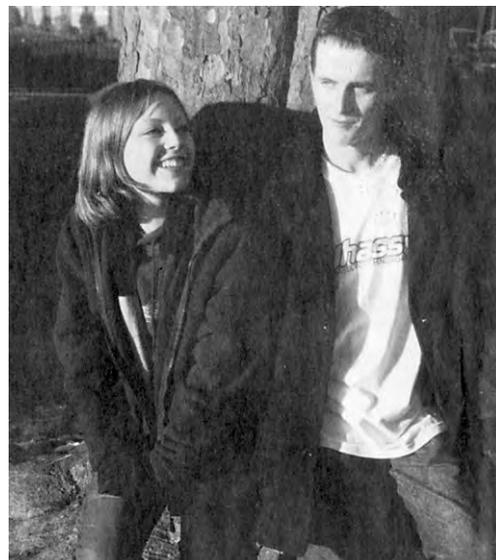
Now a new phenomenon is emerging among British students: the early gap, with more and more pupils taking a year off between GCSEs<sup>1)</sup> and A-levels<sup>2)</sup>.

Greg Icton of Thornaby, near Middlesbrough, 16, is a student taking an early gap before he begins his A-levels. He achieved very good results at GCSE, but is glad he did not continue straight on to A-levels. "It is like you are dropped into a siphon: school, college, university," he said. "You are in a treadmill. There's no decision-making. It does not give you any choice. When you are at school, you do not appreciate it for what it is. I was sick of studying and wanted a rest. A year out is a really good opportunity to see life for what it is."

Greg has just finished five months' work, raising the £1,000 he needs to travel to Ghana with Raleigh International in February. "It is a real sense of achievement, raising the money and going on the trip," he said. "It is one constant confidence boost. Everyone has said I have grown up a lot. Now I am really looking forward to my A-levels, I see them as an intellectual challenge. I was sick of school, but now you could say that I am ready to face the world."

Educational and careers experts were recently keen to emphasise the potential benefits of the pre-A-level gap year. "There does seem to be the start of a trend towards people taking an early gap year," said David Thomas, chief executive of CRAC, the Careers Research and Advisory Centre. "At this moment numbers are small, but definitely growing. A gap year at this point gives young people an opportunity to find out about their own preferences and aptitudes before choosing their A-levels."

Taking this year gives young people an invaluable early responsibility for managing their financial affairs. Getting a taste for the real world at 16 is a very good idea. It is an opportunity to understand the workplace and yourself. It gives you the ability to focus, to find the right path and to understand that the world really is your oyster. People are beginning to escape from the hamster wheel of life.



not 1 GCSE: The exam British pupils take at 16.

not 2 A-levels: The exam British pupils take at 18 that qualifies them to go to university if they want to.

- 1p **3** What is said about the gap year between school and university in lines 1-10?
- A** It is generally regarded as a valuable period in a student's life.
  - B** It is mainly taken by scholarship students.
  - C** It is only possible for students with wealthy parents.
  - D** It makes students eager to start their working career.
- 1p **4** What made Greg Icton decide to take a gap year? (lines 15-21)
- A** He could not afford any further education.
  - B** He feared his future was all mapped out for him.
  - C** He needed time to recover from an illness.
  - D** He was afraid he would fail in higher education.
- 1p **5** What effect did the first few months of the gap year have on Greg? (lines 22-27)
- A** He felt that he was too young to start working.
  - B** He grew less optimistic about his prospects.
  - C** He realised he was responsible for his own life.
  - D** His belief in his own abilities grew considerably.
- 1p **6** 'People are beginning to escape from the hamster wheel of life.' (lines 37-38)  
What is meant here by this expression?
- A** People and animals have more in common than we generally think.
  - B** People are becoming aware that they can make choices in life.
  - C** People are getting less interested in earning lots of money.
  - D** People are no longer fascinated by the past.