

## What is life like after school?

When I was younger I used to sit in class daydreaming about a time when I wouldn't have to listen to my teacher talking about things I wasn't interested in, sat next to someone I wasn't friends with, wearing clothes I hadn't picked for myself.

I daydreamed about LIFE AFTER SCHOOL.

Don't get me wrong – I really enjoyed a lot of things about school. But there were so many things I was excited for that would only happen once I left.

In this blog, we are going to talk about the different things that you can do after you finish school, including education, employment, and travel. We are also going to discuss other things that might change in your life.

Remember, **change can be positive.**

### Education

Further Education (FE) refers to educational choices made after your 16th birthday. It covers all qualifications lower than a degree. Everyone must be in FE until they are 18 in the UK and this could be at a school with a sixth form or a college. It covers a range of topics from basic maths to A-Levels.

One of the biggest differences between school and FE is independent study. You will be expected to take control of your own learning activities. Independent study means setting your own goals and deadlines, as well as organising yourself, your work, and your time. These skills will help you to become more effective and efficient in your learning as well as... (You got it) ... independent!

A positive aspect of FE is that you usually only study between one to four subjects, depending on what type of qualification you choose – which means **you get to do what you choose**. This contrasts to school where you do not get as much control over the subjects you learn. You can choose your subjects based on your interests and your career goals. You will need to check the entry requirements to make sure that you have the grades and other aspects necessary to be accepted.

### Employment

Some of you reading this blog may already have a part-time job as well as studying at school and will already be developing the time management skills to balance work and education. If you decide to continue into FE and work at the same time, you will need to **balance** your **time** and **energy effectively** and **efficiently** – just like those skills you're developing through independent study!



An option that you might want to explore is an [Apprenticeship](#), which combines training in a job with study. As an apprentice, you'll work alongside experienced staff, gain job-specific skills and earn a wage at the same time. There are lots of different Apprenticeships available in the UK, including engineering, agriculture, and business.



After you are 18, you might decide that you don't want to be in education anymore and you want to focus on employment. There are a huge range of jobs out there, and you can be self-employed or work for an employer; you can work part-time or full-time; you can pick a career path and stick with it or try different jobs along the way.

Each of these options will come with different responsibilities. You'll need to be clear what skills and knowledge are needed to succeed at the job. There may be subject specific knowledge that you need, but also general skills such as communication, teamwork, and organisation – all skills that you may have started to build while at school.

Managing your money is an essential part of adult life. As you get older, you'll be responsible for your own budget, working out how much money you receive and how much you need to spend. Your money will go on a range of things potentially including rent, bills, and (for some of us) Subway subs. The [University of Essex](#) have a great blog specifically on tips for Managing your Money. Why not check it out [here](#)?



## Travel

The option I used to daydream about back in that classroom... travelling. One day my parents dropped me off at the airport with one bag on my back containing everything I would need for the next three years. The next chapter in my life saw me journey through Asia, Oceania, and South America.

The journey was not always easy, and all the skills described above – money management, communication, independent learning – were all essential to my survival. Another key skill that I developed was **resilience**, which is the ability to recover quickly from difficulties. It's a vital skill for succeeding in any area of life.

By being exposed to different cultures, and meeting a diverse range of people, I became more self-aware and mindful of the world as a whole, rather than my narrow view and limited experiences back home. Some of my pre-conceived ideas, including stereotypes, were challenged and re-shaped.



There are lots of different ways to travel. You can book a one-way ticket and see where the road takes you; you can secure a job in another country; you can volunteer with different local organisations. I would recommend speaking to a travel expert, such as [STA Travel](#), to discuss options and tailor the trip to your desires (and budget).

### Other things might change too

After you leave school, there are many things that will change aside from what you spend each day doing. For one thing, you won't necessarily see your friends every day.

That isn't to say you won't see them at all. It just won't be as easy as walking into class on the bell and seeing them all sitting there (or the other way round if you're an early bird). You'll need to make the effort to arrange to see friends. That calendar on your phone you've always pretty much ignored – it's time to fill it with friends!



The biggest change of all is that your path is pretty much in your own hands after you finish school. You will have a lot more freedom to make your own decisions. That might seem a little overwhelming, but remember, you don't need to plan your whole life right this second. Plus, you can change your mind and take a different route at any point. And even though you are in control, there will be plenty of people there to help you along the way.

**Not everyone's life after school will be the same – and that's ok!**

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