

Enjoy exams!

‘Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy.’

Norman Vincent Peale

Enjoy Exams? It simply is not possible - how can anyone enjoy months of desperately trying to absorb information, worrying about how much you haven't learnt only for the day to finally arrive when it is too late to worry and all you can do is go into your exam with sweaty palms, heart thumping and do your best. It doesn't have to be like this. We are all in control of our perspective and can alter it right now. Why would anyone believe in us if we don't believe in ourselves

‘The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes of mind!’

William James

The well documented concept of ‘the self-fulfilling prophecy’ can have a huge impact on our success. If you keep telling yourself you will never achieve your goals you will never achieve your goals. Focus your energy on the fact you can rather than the fact you cannot. Energy is a remarkable thing; focusing it on passing your exams will massively increase your likelihood of passing your exam.

‘The insecure and unconfident believe what others say about them negatively, more than what they say about themselves positively!’

Paul Evans

You have attended the classes, you have done the work and now you are outside the examination room; the papers await, the examiners appointed, now all you have to do is write down what you know in answer to the questions. Sound easy? The following tips could help:

‘There can be no knowledge without emotion.’

Arnold Bennet

Handling Test Anxiety

Many people are anxious and suffer from stress before and during an examination. Part of being prepared emotionally is for you to be able to recognize the symptoms of stress and anxiety. Stress is often strong enough to lead to increased heart rate, shortness of breath, trembling hands, shaking legs, nausea, sweating, etc. Test anxiety and worry lead to a series of negative results including poor concentration, confusion, negative attitudes or moods, negative self-orientation, fear, anger, and even panic. Often a person develops poor coping strategies such as becoming involved in negative self talk. A common psychological defence against these negative feelings and thoughts is giving up and becoming helpless or paralyzed during a test. The ability to perform well under pressure, however, is a skill that you can learn.

Remember exams are not there as a punishment, they test how much information you have learnt. You were given your place in the class or on the course because of your ability; so believe in yourself – you are capable of passing the exam.

Don't put yourself under too much pressure. Aim to do your best but recognise that thinking “anything less than A+ means I have failed” will cause you unnecessary stress

‘By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail.’

Ben Franklin

Adequate Preparation

A major factor in test anxiety is a lack of preparation. Most test-anxious people have poor study habits and have not prepared adequately for the test. They then attribute their poor performance to a lack of ability or capacity to perform. Take an objective look at your approaches to studying. Set realistic study goals with ample time for quality learning and repetition.

‘During these periods of relaxation after concentrated intellectual activity, the intuitive mind seems to take over and can produce the sudden clarifying insights which give so much joy and delight.’

Fritjof Capra

Relaxation

Often the test situation, the examination room, the large number of candidates, and being watched by the invigilator intimidates candidates. It is important to feel comfortable and relaxed in the testing situation. The method of progressive



Keep track of the time

relaxation involves tensing a muscle system and then relaxing it. Tensing a muscle will produce increased relaxation when the muscle is subsequently relaxed. Start at one

‘A great attitude does much more than turn on the lights in our worlds; it seems to magically connect us to all sorts of serendipitous opportunities that were somehow absent before we changed.’ -

Earl Nightingale

end of the body and work to the other end. Practice every day for 10 to 15 minutes until you gain the increased ability to relax at will, this will give you the confidence to relax when you take the exam. Another method is to breathe deeply and slowly, letting your body go limp and allowing every muscle in your body to relax while you concentrate on your breathing. Start with your hands. Imagine them to be

warm and heavy. Maintain a slow, patterned breathing rhythm. Progress to the arms, then the shoulders, and continue until you relax your whole body.

Avoid Negative Thinking

Test-anxious people tend to be preoccupied with themselves. They concentrate on their negative thoughts and feelings instead of concentrating on solving problems or answering test questions.

The way to cope with this is to monitor your thinking. When you hear yourself talking negatively, be aware of it. Stop talking negatively and start positive self-talk.

Before the Exam

Make sure you sleep well and that you know the location and time of your exam. Eat a good meal before the exam, the last thing you want distracting you is hunger. Wear comfortable shoes and clothing; make sure you arrive with adequate time. Be prepared; take all the equipment you are likely to require with you and wear a watch so you are able to time your answers.

During the Exam

Listen carefully to the invigilator. Try to relax and switch off to others around you, they may become unwelcome distractions in the agonising moments before the exam starts if you let them. Suck; don't crunch a glucose sweet to help energy get to your brain. Take six deep breaths to help you relax.

Read the instructions on the exam paper. Make sure you know which questions are compulsory and make sure you answer the correct number of questions from the relevant sections.

Read the questions carefully, it is quite common for a question to make no sense the first time you read it (even more so if you are panicking). Remain focussed on your answer. You may find it useful to note down any points to remember. Planning is worthwhile but this is not the time to write a long plan. Structure your answers

‘Happy people plan actions, they don't plan results.’

Denis Waitley

paying attention to the exact wording of the question.

Use your time sensibly. Scan through the paper reading all the questions, select which ones you are going to answer and take note of how many marks are available for each one. This is important as it will be a relevant guide as to how much time you spend on each question. Spend your time accordingly and don't be tempted to waste time writing reams on an answer just because you know a lot about it. Work out how much time you will spend on each question at the start of the exam. You should know the roughly the format of the exam from studying past papers. Practice timing yourself using past papers. Start with the questions you know you can answer to build your confidence. Try not to spend too long on any one question.

Before you compose your answer read the question at least twice, it's easy to think ‘I know what this is all about’ and trample through the question but if you haven't really understood what is being asked you



A typical exam environment

may come unstuck. Make sure you are answering the question that is being asked and not the one you want it to be. Some questions hold clues that will help you answer them.

There is no need to repeat the question, do not write it out again. The examiner knows

‘Being defeated is often a temporary condition. Giving up is what makes it permanent.’

Marilyn Vos Savant

what it is so go straight ahead and answer it. If you have 10 minutes left and a 30 minute question to answer do an outline only.

Let the examiner know and state the main points, facts and arguments if it is an essay – and by jotting down formulae and how you would reach a solution, if science or maths. This way more marks will be gained with the limited time available.

Always check your work; it is easy to end up with silly errors which you would have spotted if you re-read what you had written. Tips for keeping calm during the exam Try to avoid panic. It is natural to feel some exam nerves prior to starting the exam and that can be a positive and motivating feeling. However, getting excessively nervous is counterproductive as it hinders your ability to think clearly.

Breathe deep. The quickest and most effective way of eliminating feelings of stress and panic is to close your eyes and take several long, slow deep breaths. Breathing in this way calms your whole nervous system.

If your mind goes blank, don't panic, it just means that it will be harder (not impossible) to recall information. Focus on slow, deep breathing for about one minute. If you still can't remember the information then move on to another question and return to this question later.

After the exam

Try not to worry, you can't change anything now and you certainly won't be the only one who is anxious about their answers. Concentrate instead on you next one, where you can influence the results. In can be unsettling to discuss the exam paper with friends, avoid it. Comparing your answers with those of other student can create negative feelings.

Don't dwell on past exams. Don't spend time focusing on where you think you went wrong. Often we are our own harshest critics. Congratulate yourself for the things you did right, learn from the bits where you know you could have done better, and then move on

Remember exams are not the be all and end all – they are just one part of student life. Good luck!

There is a world out there

What is a ‘gap year/month’ or ‘career break/sabbatical’? They are basically the same thing – time taken out of education

year ‘activities’ can enhance a CV and give you the opportunity to re-asses and re-focus your desires, to think about your direction.

You could see some fantastic places, make lifetime friendships and return home with wonderful stories to tell. Universities and employers are starting to understand the value of time out and often regard gap year takers favourably.

A meaningful gap year can expand your personal and professional skills making you a more desirable candidate. Living and working in a different

culture you can experience a unique immersion into another country.

There are many appealing work, travel and volunteer ideas. Teaching abroad, learning a new language, work with children, disadvantaged communities or with animals. Involvement in volunteer projects gives a real sense of personal achievement and is the kind of experiences that will really enhance a CV and make you stand out from the crowd.

Opportunities to volunteer appear in many different countries; community development in India, conservation in South Africa, teaching in Tanzania or panda conservation in China to name a few! You can make a direct and lasting difference at many destinations.

It is important to decide what you want to do, consider what is most important to you, plants, animals, the environment or helping disadvantaged people. Whichever you feel is right for you there is a huge choice of companies offering volunteer placement. However, places are limited and companies

can afford to be picky, you may find that you have to prove that you should be accepted.

Not all jobs abroad are voluntary; there are all kinds of paid opportunities as well. Taking on paid work in your gap year will certainly help financially. If you are intending to work abroad it is important to look up the countries

requirements before you go. You will need to check on the work permit and visa regulations and make sure you have the correct paperwork before you leave. You do not need a work permit or visa if you are an EU citizen and are planning to work in an EU country. In some cases you may be able to make all your work arrangements before you arrive in the country.

Some of the most common employments undertaken on Gap Years are; au pairing,

seasonal work in Australia or New Zealand, seasonal work in Europe such as fruit picking or hospitality, summer camps in America, sports instructors in skiing, kayaking, diving football or any other sport. TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) is one of the most popular ways of earning whilst you travel, you do need to have a recognised qualification and you are more likely to get a position if you are over 21. There are various different organisations and agencies that can help and advise you on finding employment abroad. It is important to stay safe, using such agencies and going through the proper channels can help to ensure this.

You do not even have to travel abroad to take a gap year, you can stay in the UK for the year or at least part of it. You may want to raise money for travel. There are plenty of volunteering opportunities at home, see it as a chance to gain some work experience, add to your skills and enhance your CV or to learn something new that you have always wanted to.

Many people leave their job and take a career break without the guarantee of a job to go back to. It sometimes takes courage, but could be the start of a new and more rewarding life.

The internet is an invaluable resource when it comes to planning a gap year, good websites to visit include:

www.gapyear.com
www.gap-year.com
www.gapyearjobs.co.uk
www.realgapyear.co.uk
www.findagap.com

I spoke to 19 year old Lucinda Eaton from Worcestershire who is currently on a gap year. She spent six weeks in India, and then travelled to Singapore, Malaysia, Rawa Island; she is currently in Cambodia before heading to Vietnam, Laos and Thailand.

What made you decide to take a gap year?

After being in education for such a long time, it seemed the perfect opportunity to expand my knowledge and travel the world. It is one time in your life when you are completely free and have the chance to experience different cultures and learn life time lessons everyday. A gap year is also time to meet new people and learn how the world works and how different cultures interact with you. Also an extended fun holiday which you have worked to fund!

How easy/difficult was it to organise?

Once I had decided which countries to go to, it was easy to organise. I decided to go to India and south East Asia because they are third world countries and a complete contrast to England.

When you discuss plans with friends, everyone works together to decide where to go! There are so many buses and easy ways to travel, that it makes it easy to organise, plus previous gappy’s advice and of course the lonely planet book, which gives you a very good standing!

Did you plan exactly what you would be doing and where you would be going?

We didn’t plan exactly what we were doing, we allowed ourselves the freedom to do what we wanted, that’s the great thing, if you meet people on the way who suggest a place to go, you can jump on the next bus and head there, it is so relaxed. In India for

Top Ten Reasons to take a Gap Year

1. EXPERIENCE LIFE

A well organised gap year adds something different, it can educate, inspire and give perspective to your life.

2. SEE THE WORLD

3. IT’S A CHALLENGE

Spiders, heights, new people, different food, crime, disease ... the list is long. We all fear something, face it. When you reach the top of that mountain the rewards will be worth it.

4. GAIN SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS It doesn’t need to be said again that these will help when you get home.

5. IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE “Knowledge is power” – Sir Francis Bacon

6. FUN & FREEDOM

You are in a new environment, you’ve cut the ties from home, there is nothing to stop you having the time of your life.

7. GET TO KNOW YOURSELF

We get very little time for genuine self reflection. Taking yourself to new cultures, paces of life and seeing what others value will help you take a new look at yourself.

8. MAKE A DIFFERENCE

9. THE WORLD IS SHRINKING

Round the world tickets are getting ever cheaper, more flexible and more varied.

10. YOU’RE A NATURAL – You’ll be an ambassador for your country, a pioneer, represent your country with pride.

example we always planned to go to the taj mahal, and also the grand palace in Thailand. There is a travel route in all countries, this seems to be followed and any thing else you want to see in between can be fitted in.

For example in Vietnam we are going to see the war museums, as its something different to do, but is highly rated. There are also well known beaches that we will visit in Thailand such as koh phi phi and koh phan yang.

How have you funded your travel?

I worked for 6 months to fund my travels, working in a contemporary curtain pole business and I also waitressed and babysat in my spare time. My parents also kindly helped me fund parts of my gap year, which has helped hugely and has allowed me to extend the variety of things I can do!

Are you involved in any charity or voluntary work?

In India we worked in a school for a week helping disadvantaged children, this was a fun thing to do as we felt we were

Margie Featherby & Lucinda Eaton in Goa



or the work place for a purpose. Sabbaticals are usually funded by an employer whereas the others are not. Taking this type of break presents the opportunity to learn in the global classroom. Finding your place in the world and exploring your passions are vital before defining your life path. As you expand your frame of reference and broaden your life experience, your understanding of yourself will deepen. For the purpose of this article we will use the term gap year, of course a break may be shorter than this or in fact much longer!

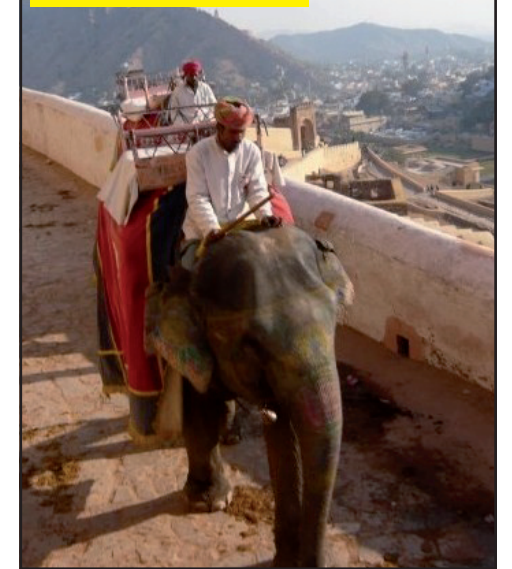
It is relatively common in this country for young people to embark on a gap year, to explore the world before committing to a life path. A lack of genuine human interaction in our education culture separates us from shared global issues such as poverty, terrorism, disease and environmental degradation. Opportunities to learn and practice self empowerment, self reliance and compassion, which can be gained through gap year experiences, provide a foundation to enhance all future life decisions.

Rainbow Beach



Anybody from any walk of life can take a gap year, it doesn’t have to break the bank balance; there are many opportunities to fund your adventure by working during your trip. There are also increasing opportunities available for family gap years, particularly those with older children. A gap year can offer a totally unique life changing experience, it may be the best thing you ever do. A gap year offers some well deserved time out from education or from a career. Gap

Elephant rides in India



helping the local community.

What do you intend to do on your return?

On my return I will work over the summer to earn money to pay off any that I owe and also to save money for university. I will also be catching up with friends and family and enjoying the English summer!!

How do you feel taking a gap year will have benefited you personally?

Taking a gap year is an incredible thing; I have learnt and am learning so much. It is the longest time I have been away from home, and therefore has made me much more independent and able to cope in many different situations. Taking a gap year with friends is also a team game, you have to work together and make group decisions. Friends is what has made my gap year so far, you live and sleep every hour of most days with them, and it gives you the chance to make life long friendships and have an amazing time.

Taking a gap year, I think is helping me prepare for life in the real world, I feel more confident sorting out situations and am more open minded about different cultures.

What has been the best thing about it?

The best thing about my gap year is being able to have the freedom to explore and

enjoy countries with close friends. It is so rewarding when you have done a 24 hour bus journey and then arrive where you want to be, this is what I love about traveling, you have the ability to make it how you want it to be. I have seen incredible sites, cities and beaches, and have met hugely interesting people- all of which are making my gap year an experience I will never forget!

And the worst?

A gap year is full of experiences, and of course you will have times when you're tired and down, but this is what makes you a stronger person, and having friends to support you makes these lows very brief! I really can't say the worst thing about my gap year, as I love it and am making the most of every minute in every place... I love traveling!

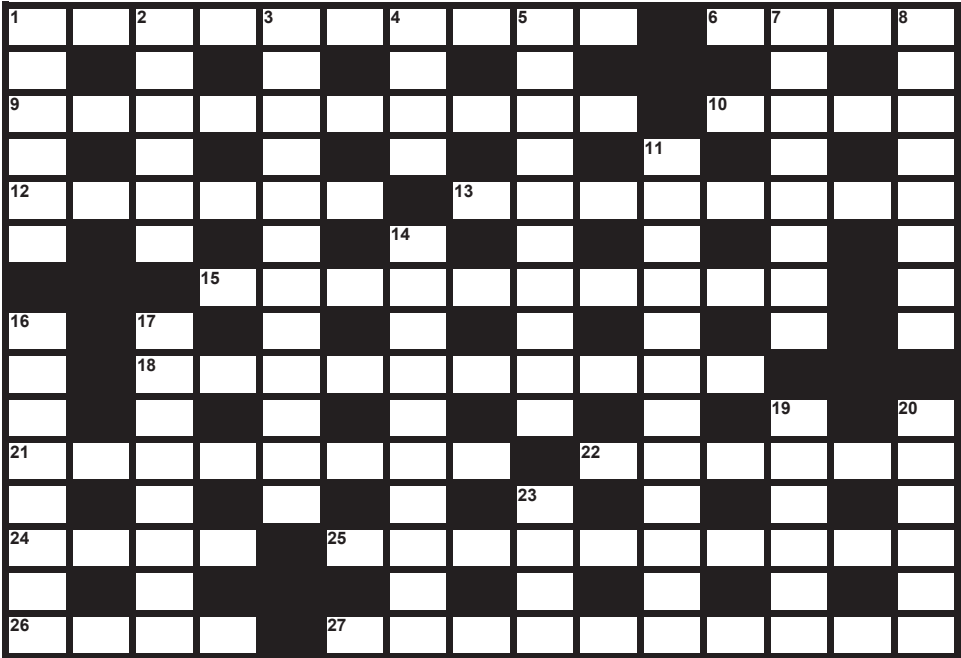
What advice would you give to anyone who is planning a gap year?

The advice I would give to anyone who is taking a gap year is to go and do exactly what you want to do. You only get one gap year and therefore make the most of it. Research different countries and see which ones attract you to them, then talk to friends and see if you can sort out a plan of where to go.

Be safe, calm and aware during all situations and you will have the time of your life.

I am having the most amazing time traveling the world and am learning new things everyday, the experience I am having I would love everyone to have. Meeting new people, traveling new places and looking after yourself and others in foreign countries is a few of the many excitements about traveling.

Bright Times – Brainteaser Crossword No: 3



Compiled by: Supataff

Across

1. You should be on this if your specialist subject is crosswords (10)
6. You are one to send me this on my birthday (4)
9. Its no good for your health, so take the sodium chloride away! (10)
10. There is no I here! (4)
12. Anyone who had this would realise I love you (1-5)
13. Is it drink or aliens that affect your flying ability? (8)
15. Hurry up and mover lounge to where the citrus grows! (5-5)
18. In what clean drink would you find a bass or trout? (5-5)
21. This 'wooly' indoor activity can stop now that summer is on its way (8)
22. Frustrate Spurs ugly growth (6)
24. Jimmy will hit this on the head (4)
25. A holy expedition! (10)
26. Has the summer one started in the shops? (4)

27. The poker player would enjoy four of a kind this much! (1-5-4)

Down

1. You are probably wildly compulsive to wear this crazy headgear (6)
2. My father's daughter! (6)
3. Implants will increase the photo sizes (12)
4. This cat has no tale to tell (4)
5. The Robins worst enemy (10)
7. Is this the same neon mistake for spread holders? (8)
8. Was Paul converted on this road? (8)
11. A.B.C! The start is missing! (5-5)
14. Can you still go chasing Samantha legally? (3-7)
16. These will keep your volumes neat and tidy (8)
17. Is it a real secret? (8)
19. You have panache for hors d'oeuvres (6)
20. The well behaved dog can feel really down here (2-4)
23. You would be very afraid of this terrible giant (4)
Answers on page 37

Lucinda Eaton with school children in India



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Word Wonders?

Work; work is connected with the Greek word ergon, which is the source of energy and also surgery. Wrought, meaning 'made a particular way', is the old past form of work, which people used where we now use worked. Wright, a common surname that means 'maker' and is found in words such as shipwright and wheelwright, is also closely related to work.

The first workaholic was mentioned in 1968. Since then we have had chocoholics and shopaholics, but the first word to be formed in this way from alcoholic was foodaholic, in 1965.

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Build yourself a future

Being an architect is exciting; they design and build spaces of the future as well as restoring and conserving old buildings. Their view is not only to the aesthetical, but also to the functional, economical and practical. Work can involve planning the layout of groups of buildings and the spaces around them. When producing a design, architects must take into account all of their clients requirements and a range of other issues including, budget, safety, social factors, building regulations and planning laws.

Once a design has been agreed, architects will produce a further set of detailed drawings for the building contractor. They will contain precise dimensions and specified materials and be used to liaise with contractors. Architects will take responsibility for a building project from the earliest stage all the way through to completion.

Architecture and Civil Engineering, University of Bath, Birmingham

School of Architecture, Birmingham City University, School of Planning and Architecture, University of the West of England, Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University (the ARB hold a full list of institutions). The minimum requirements for an architecture degree are usually 5 GCSE’s (A-C) grades including maths, English and a science subject, plus three A levels.

• **Part 2 – Diploma or second degree**
A diploma or second degree in architecture approved by the ARB, or other approved course (this stage can take two years full time study or four years part time). A further year of work experience under the supervision of a registered architect.

• **Part 3 – Professional Practice Examinations**

When you have completed each stage of training you can join RIBA (as a Chartered



Usual working hours for an architect are 9-5, Monday to Friday; however deadlines and workloads will govern this and may lead to some unsociable hours. Work is mostly office based although some time will be spent in meetings, visiting clients, planning departments, builders and sites. Below are a few of the attributes that help to make a good architect:

- An interest in buildings and their uses
- Practical and scientific skills
- A methodical, logical and analytical approach
- Design and computer/CAD skills
- Strong mathematical ability to work out costing
- Strong communication and negotiation skills
- The ability to manage and lead a team
- The ability to work under pressure and accept criticism of work
- An awareness of the social and environmental impact of work

To practise as an architect in the UK you must be accepted onto the UK Register of Architects, run by the Architects Registration Board (ARB). You need to complete about seven years of education and training to be eligible for the register. The most direct way to qualify as an architect is by taking ARB-approved qualifications, which involve three stages of training plus practical work experience.

• **Part 1 – Degree in architecture**
This involves completing an approved degree in architecture. These are available at a variety of locations; the closest to Worcestershire are - Department of

Architect), join the UK Register of Architects and practice independently as an architect.

An architect studying part 2, RIBA exams would have guideline annual income of £25,000, a qualified architect with experience between £30,000 and £35,000 and a senior architect can earn upwards of £50,000.

Most successful architects are passionate about the built environment. Entrance to most schools of architecture is competitive, courses are tough and dropout rate high. As part of the selection process, some schools of architecture will ask you to present a portfolio demonstrating your creative skills. Creativity is a huge advantage in the world of architecture. It is also worth knowing that you will require mathematical and scientific knowledge on a regular basis. You will also be required to write a series of complex essays on subjects such as architectural history. A typical project usually involves being given a brief for a design and a series of deadlines to meet. Studying architecture can lead to a variety of different career paths, you could find employment as a private architect, in the public sector, in project management, in interior design, with a construction company or even further afield.

For further information: Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) www.riba.org Architects Registration Board www.arb.org.uk

Please Note: We are unable to list all agencies in the area that offer suitable training courses.

Make arrangements!



Floristry offers an exciting and creative career path with many opportunities. Florists design and create arrangements, bouquets, wreaths and floral tributes. They may also sell cut flowers, pot plants, dried and artificial flowers, gifts and decorations. Florists need to use imagination and flair to create original designs, as well as working to customers’ suggestions and requirements. Caring for flowers to keep them in good condition and prolong their life is another important part of the job.

Florists deal with customers in person and over the telephone on a daily basis, advising them on choice and care for their purchase. Florists generally work shop hours, including Saturdays and sometimes Sundays. Early starts and late night may sometimes be necessary.

Some of the attributes that make a successful florist are:

- Creativity and an artistic touch, an ability to grasp the principles of colour, shape, design and display
- The ability to understand the properties and needs of different plants and flowers
- Communication skills – the ability to convey ideas to customers, be helpful, pleasant and tactful
- The ability to work as part of a team and get on well with other staff
- The ability to work under pressure, especially at times such as Christmas, Valentine’s Day etc.

The most common entry route into floristry is to find employment and train on the job, often working towards NVQ’s in Floristry at levels 2 and 3. To find employment you will need to demonstrate your interest, potential and may have attended courses in flower arranging.

There are however three options:

- ‘On the job’ training in a floristry business

‘On the job’ training is the best method of gaining an understanding of the way a floristry business works, and of developing the practical skills required. This type of training doesn’t automatically enable a qualification.

- College based training, either full or part time

This is the most common route a student will take to becoming a florist. Colleges vary from ‘land-based’ horticultural colleges with purpose built facilities; to general further education colleges.

- A combination of ‘on the job’ and college training

This would involve working whilst studying to gain your NVQ’s. You may attend college on a day release or part time basis.

With further training some florists may move into areas such as freelance floral decoration, floral design, exhibition work, demonstration and teaching. There are no set pay scales for florists – rates can vary enormously, depending on the size of the shop and its location.

There are numerous places throughout Worcestershire where you can take a course in Floristry. Many places offer weekend or day courses such as:

Farncombe Estate Adult Learning Centre Limited, Farncombe Estate, Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7LJ Tel. 01386 854100 Email. enquiries@farncombeestate.co.uk

Pershore group of Colleges offer up to 20 floristry courses, see www.warkscol.ac.uk Kidderminster College offer a flower arranging course, see www.kidderminster.ac.uk

Working as a florist

23 year old Poppy Hunter from Mathon near Malvern started working as a florist in September 2005. After taking a ‘Floristry for beginners’ course at Worcester College of Technology she was employed at a Florist in Hereford. Now working as a full time manager for the Post Office Poppy creates arrangements for her family and friends in her free time.

Here is what she has to say...

How has your career progressed to get you where you are now?

Floristry is all trial and error; there is no right or wrong way of doing it. Once you have the skills it is just a case of try and try again.

What the main responsibilities of a florist?

To ensure the customer is happy with the



product and that the orders are completed on time.

Do you have a typical day?

There is never a typical day in a florist, some days can be quiet but most days are hectic.

What equipment do you use if any?

The main equipment we use are scissors, knives, tape and water.

What was your route into floristry?

I have always enjoyed being creative and work better with my hands than I do with my head. I have always loved flowers and that is why I decided to take the floristry course.

What’s the best thing about flower arranging?

I love being creative and it is great to do something I love.

What are the main skills and qualifications needed?

9/10 florist don’t actually have any qualification’s, its experience. I think if you have the knack and are hard working that’s what is most important.