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WRITING SKILLS

for the
ECPE



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SAMPLE PAGES

CONTENTS

UNIT	TITLE	TOPICS	Page
UNIT 1	Travel and Transportation		4
1a	Traveling Around [For & Against Essays]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • camping / package vacations • public / private transportation • travel experiences 	6
1b	Traveling Experiences [Descriptive Essays]		12
UNIT 2	The Arts, Sports and Hobbies		18
2a	Leisure Pursuits [Problem-solution Essays]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interest in the arts and sport • violence in sports • healthy / unhealthy pastimes 	20
2b	Hobbies and Sports [Opinion Essays]		26
UNIT 3	Relationships		32
3a	Family Ties [For & Against Essays]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • divorce • parent-child relationships • the traditional / nuclear family 	34
3b	Seeking Advice [Descriptive Essays]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close relationships 	40
UNIT 4	Social Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homelessness • road rage • prisons • crime • materialism • the generation gap 	46
4a	Problems in Society [Problem-solution Essays]		48
4b	Money and Crime [Opinion Essays]		54
UNIT 5	Advertising, the Media and Communications		60
5a	Advertising and the Media [For & Against Essays]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • celebrities • censorship • TV Programs • print and electronic media 	62
5b	Media Influences [Descriptive Essays]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advertising 	68

UNIT	TITLE	TOPICS	Page
UNIT 6	Science and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cloning inventions 	74
6a	Technological Developments [Problem-solution Essays]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> technological advance GM foods 	76
6b	Scientific Experiments [Opinion Essays]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inventions 	82
UNIT 7	Work and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work / school experiences college courses success / motivation life as an employer / employee studying / earning money 	88
7a	Achievements [Descriptive Essays]		90
7b	Earning Money [For & Against Essays]		96
UNIT 8	Animals and the Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> air pollution endangered species climate change factory farming zoos the fur trade rainforests household waste 	102
8a	Animal Cruelty [For & Against Essays]		104
8b	Harming the Environment [Problem-solution Essays]		110
UNIT 9	A Global Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> celebrations immigration / emigration globalization traditions / customs The European Union 	116
9a	Cultural Experiences [Descriptive Essays]		118
9b	Foreign Influences [For & Against Essays]		124
UNIT 10	Health and Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> health information obesity harmful substances healthy lifestyles alternative / conventional medicine vivisection health systems 	130
10a	Healthy Living [For & Against Essays]		132
10b	The Road to Good Health [Opinion Essays]		138

Additional Topics	145
Functional Language – Linking Words / Phrases	147
Glossary	151
Writing Tasks	175

READ ALL ABOUT IT



Camping, as we all know, has long been the favorite pursuit of nature-lovers worldwide. And who can blame them? After all, what better way to enjoy your vacation than to pitch a tent beside a beautiful lake? Sleeping under the stars to the sound of the waves lapping on the shore really is the experience of a lifetime. During the day you will have the opportunity to teach your children the art of fishing. Having no telephones, TV or computers means that you and your family can relax, far from the stresses and strains of everyday life.

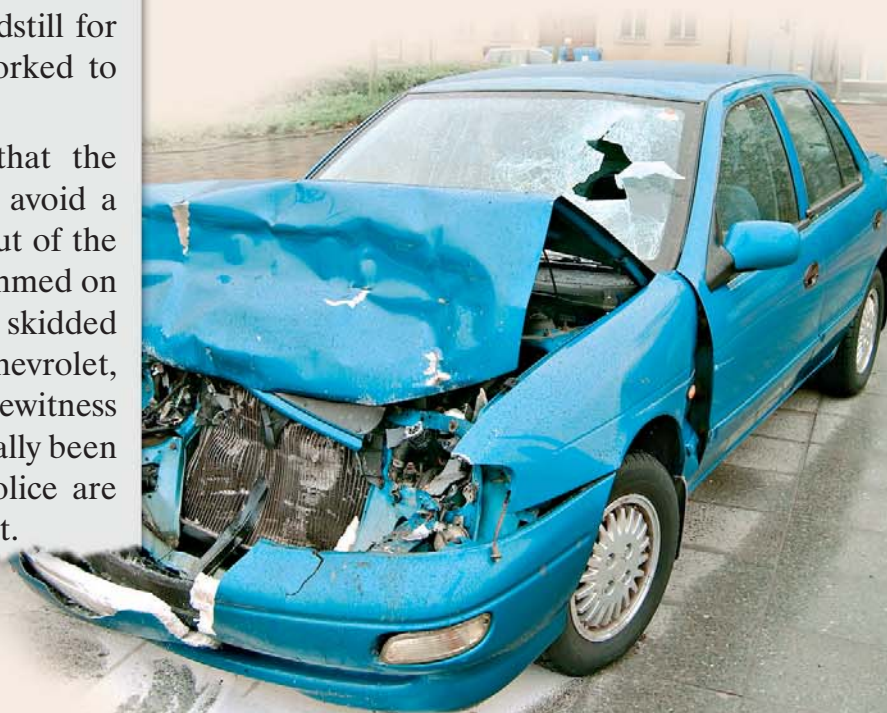
Camping vacations used to be associated with images of primitive living conditions: muddy boots, insect bites and the awful backache one gets from carrying heavy equipment and sleeping on the ground. These days, however, all the discomforts have miraculously vanished. You can now purchase a comfortable, insulated tent, an inflatable mattress, and even portable furniture. If cooking over a campfire is not for you, modern gas burners are readily available.

As for the campgrounds themselves, they are not like they used to be, either. Modern campgrounds are now equipped with all the right amenities: both hot and cold running water, flushing toilets and shower facilities. Basic home comforts combined with idyllic surroundings make camping the ideal choice for family vacations.

A serious traffic accident which occurred yesterday afternoon at the corner of 53rd and West resulted in two people being rushed to the hospital.

A head-on collision between a blue Ford and a black Chevrolet brought traffic to a standstill for more than an hour while firefighters worked to free the trapped victims.

The driver of the blue Ford said that the accident happened when he swerved to avoid a young cyclist who had suddenly moved out of the designated bicycle lane. As the driver slammed on his brakes, he lost control of the steering, skidded into the opposite lane and hit the black Chevrolet, injuring the driver. According to one eyewitness account, however, the blue Ford had actually been speeding at the time of the accident. Police are still investigating the cause of the accident.





Welcome To Plaza Travel



Here at Plaza Travel making your vacation enjoyable is our top priority. That's why before you've even started thinking about your vacation arrangements, we've been working hard to get them right. At Plaza Travel, everything - from your travel itinerary to your stay in the resort - is taken care of.

Although family vacations can be fun, we do appreciate the fact that parents also relish the prospect of a few hours of peace and quiet without the kids. The good news is that Plaza Travel features a special children's club which is aimed at keeping youngsters occupied through a variety of creative activities. Just enroll your child upon your arrival.

There's another reason why families show a preference for Plaza Travel: our reductions for children are simply unbeatable, with up to 50% discounts for a second child.

All you need to do is pick up one of our brochures and choose your destination at your leisure. Whether you prefer the independence of a self-contained bungalow or the rest and freedom that a hotel can provide, we at Plaza Travel have something for you.

Plaza Travel stands for quality accommodations at affordable prices. In every one of our hotels, you will find tempting cuisine, exciting nightlife and a range of sports facilities - all adding up to a very special vacation.



IN OTHER WORDS

FAR AWAY

The beach is actually **a good way / a good distance** from the main road.
We stayed in a small hotel **in the middle of nowhere**.
The museum is a little **out of the way**, but it's certainly worth a visit.
The car broke down **miles from anywhere**.

1 DISCUSSION

a Look at the photo and answer the questions.

- How would you feel in this place?
- Why do people usually prefer to use private vehicles rather than public transportation?

*In the ECPE, you may be asked to write a **balanced argument** on a particular topic. Look at the topic below and talk about it briefly.*

- b Nowadays, vast public transportation networks exist in most cities. As a result, it has been argued that car ownership in our crowded urban centers has become unnecessary. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of public and private transportation in modern cities.



2 MODEL ESSAY

Choose the correct words to complete the model essay.

Nowadays, residents of large towns and cities are fortunate in that they can utilize various means of public transportation. This, of course, makes getting about relatively easy. However, the increasing number of cars on the road shows that private vehicles are still the [1] **preferred** / **preferring** choice for many city dwellers. Before we can decide whether car ownership is no longer necessary, we must first
5 consider the advantages and disadvantages of public and private transportation.

One of the benefits of traveling by car is convenience. In other words, owning your own car means you can step out of your house and get into your car and drive straight to the destination of your choice. This independence is particularly useful in an emergency. Moreover, a private car is comfortable. Buses and trains can get so crowded during peak hours that it is often impossible to find a seat. [2] **Despite** /
10 **Nevertheless**, its advantages, however, the car also has several drawbacks. Its biggest disadvantage is its effect on the [3] **environment** / **surroundings**. Automobiles emit carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas, which has disastrous consequences for our health. Another drawback to the car is its expense. Apart from paying for the vehicle itself, there are considerable operating costs such as gas, tax and maintenance which all have to be taken into [4] **consideration** / **thought**.

The main [5] **profit** / **benefit** of public transportation is its [6] **efficiency** / **deficiency**. In short, buses and trains transport large numbers of passengers at a time, which eases inner-city traffic and greatly reduces levels of pollution. Furthermore, since subway systems are [7] **powered** / **moved** by electricity, they do not actually produce any exhaust fumes. In addition, many people find using public transportation far less stressful than driving. On the other hand, though, a major disadvantage of public
20 transportation is its unreliability. Irregular services mean that commuters often waste a lot of their valuable time waiting at bus stops and train stations.

In conclusion, having considered all the pros and [8] **against** / **cons** of both public and private transportation, I feel that it would definitely be more beneficial for the environment if people used public transportation instead of their cars on certain journeys. However, it seems that the overall convenience
25 of the car in other situations means it will continue to be necessary.

Read the essay again and say whether you agree with the writer's opinion. Then discuss any further advantages or disadvantages that apply to either form of transportation.

3 UNDERSTANDING THE MODEL ESSAY

Essay Organization

a Look again at the model essay and match the paragraphs with their contents.

Paragraph 1 ☐

Paragraph 2 ☐

Paragraph 3 ☐

Paragraph 4 ☐

- a presents positive and negative aspects of the other alternative
- b introduces the topic and states reasons for comparison
- c sums up the essay by briefly stating a preference / opinion
- d presents positive and negative aspects of one alternative

b Find the words and phrases in the model essay that are used to present any **advantages** and **disadvantages**.

Paragraph 2

One of the benefits

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____

Paragraph 3

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____

4 PLANNING YOUR ESSAY

Before starting your essay, it is a good idea to make a brief outline of the main points you wish to include. Remember that these points should be supported with reasons and / or examples.

a Read the following Writing Task and complete the notes for *traveling by air*, as in the example.

- When going on vacation to a faraway island, people generally have to choose between traveling on a ship or going by plane. **Discuss** the **advantages** and **disadvantages** of both means of traveling to such a destination.

Traveling by sea

Main points

- + enjoy fresh air and scenery
- + can take own car
- busy during summer
- takes too long

Reasons and / or examples

- feel that your vacation has already started
- do not have to rent a car on arrival at destination
- difficult to find a seat / cabin in summer
- Rhodes is a twelve-hour trip from the main port

Traveling by air

Main points

- + shorter journey time
- + comfortable
- overpriced tickets
- waiting time

Reasons and / or examples

- spend more time at destination
- _____
- _____
- _____

b Now using your notes, continue the sentences below, as in the example.

Traveling by sea

Traveling by ship gives you the opportunity to enjoy the fresh air and the scenery. **In this way**, _____.

- 1 One of the benefits of traveling by sea is that you can take your own car. **This means that** _____.
- 2 Ferry boats tend to be busy during the summer, **which is why** _____.
- 3 Many islands take too long to get to. **For example**, _____.

Traveling by air

- 5 Traveling by air means a shorter journey time. **Therefore**, you have _____.
- 6 The plane is, without doubt, a far more comfortable means of transportation. **For instance**, not only are you _____.
- 7 To my mind, plane tickets are overpriced. **For this reason**, _____.
- 8 Plane journeys involve a lot of waiting time **since** _____.

5 ENRICHING YOUR VOCABULARY

a (i) Choose one word from each box to form **compound nouns**.

traffic • sun • transportation • room • games • floor

network • jams • service • room • shows • terrace

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1 _____ | 4 _____ |
| 2 _____ | 5 _____ |
| 3 _____ | 6 _____ |



(ii) Now fill in the correct compound noun.

- 1 The city has such bad _____ that it can take two hours to drive a few miles.
- 2 The best way to improve the area's _____ is to build a subway system.
- 3 We spent most of our vacation soaking up the sun on the _____.
- 4 The hotel hired a singer and dancers to put on _____ for the guests.
- 5 Many people like the convenience offered by _____ at good hotels.
- 6 To keep children occupied, there is an excellent _____ on the first floor.

b Choose the correct preposition.

MAN: I've had enough of packed resorts [1] **in / to the height of** summer.

WOMAN: Yeah, I know what you mean. Still, it is nice to be [2] **within / with easy reach of** the sea.

MAN: Not if your hotel's [3] **at / to the end of** a busy street!

WOMAN: Well, how about camping then? I saw an advertisement for a camping vacation [4] **on / in the vicinity of** Taylor Beach.

MAN: Taylor Beach sounds good, but I don't like the idea of a camping vacation. I mean have you thought of **the lack** [5] **of / in** facilities?

WOMAN: But the advertisement said it was a modern campground with bathroom facilities, and a restaurant. Vacations can be booked [6] **in / on a weekly basis**.

c Fill in the correct adjective.

secluded • low • serious • irresponsible • basic • local

- Package deals are cheap but they tend to offer _____ standard vacations.
- A youngster on a Jet-Ski caused a _____ accident in which a swimmer was badly injured yesterday.
- Despite the large number of fast food restaurants on the island, visitors still find the opportunity to sample the _____ cuisine.
- While the campground had only _____ facilities, we were able to explore the local area extensively.
- The _____ behavior of some tourists reflects badly on the majority.
- One morning, we discovered a _____ beach with nobody else on it.

d Fill in the correct word.

beach • coast • seaside • shore

- They spent their summer vacation lying on the _____ all day.
- We are moving to a town on the south _____ of England.
- We jumped out of the boat and swam to the _____ of the lake.
- Miami's public _____ is extremely crowded during the summer months.
- My parents live in a beautiful _____ town.

e Match the following words to form collocations related to travel.

- guided** _____
- exotic** _____
- unlimited** _____
- peak** _____
- travel** _____

- island
- season
- tour
- mileage
- sickness



6 COMMON ERRORS

Choose the correct answer.

- 1 **Most / The most** people have never tried an alternative kind of vacation.
- 2 Why **to drive / drive** when there is reliable public transportation available?
- 3 Staying at a **camping / campground** is a great experience.
- 4 People could go to work **with / on** a bike.
- 5 There is always heavy **traffic / circulation** downtown.
- 6 I like going to the beach for a **swimming / swim**.
- 7 I much prefer traveling by air **to travel / to traveling** by ship.
- 8 I booked my vacation **on / with** the travel agent's advice.

PREPARATION FOR THE WRITING TASK

Discuss the following points.

- Why do so many tourists choose to go on package vacations?
- What limitations do package vacations have?
- What is the appeal of camping?
- What would be the effect of introducing a light rail system into a big city?
- What should the benefits of bicycle lanes be?
- Why might some people not want to use bicycle lanes?

WRITING TASKS

You will have 30 minutes to write on *one* of the two topics. Write about 300 words.

TASK 1

While package vacations are very popular with tourists seeking affordable breaks, many travelers claim that camping provides a far superior experience on vacation. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of both package and camping vacations.

INTRODUCTION: Introduce the topic, mentioning that there are advantages and disadvantages to both package and camping vacations (*without giving your opinion*).

PARAGRAPH 2: Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of package vacations, giving relevant justifications and examples.

PARAGRAPH 3: Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of camping, giving relevant justifications and examples.

CONCLUSION: Sum up by briefly mentioning both sides of the argument and then express your own opinion.

TASK 2

The local government is considering upgrading the transportation network in your town. Some are in favor of introducing bicycle lanes, while others prefer the idea of a light rail system. Discuss these alternatives and choose one which you believe would be most suitable for your town.

INTRODUCTION: Introduce the topic, mentioning that there are advantages and disadvantages to both the introduction of bicycle lanes and a light rail system (*without giving your opinion*).

PARAGRAPH 2: Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of introducing bicycle lanes in town with relevant justifications and examples.

PARAGRAPH 3: Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of introducing a light rail system in town with relevant justifications and examples.

CONCLUSION: Sum up by briefly mentioning both sides of the argument and then express your own opinion.

TASK 1

KEY POINTS: *cost • types of resorts • accommodations • freedom*

Introduction

- Both options have considerable benefits ...

Paragraph 2 **ADVANTAGES +**

- all-inclusive package deals
- book in advance
- range of bars / restaurants / stores nearby
- extensive entertainment facilities on hand
- childcare facilities

DISADVANTAGES -

- overdeveloped resorts / mass tourism
- multi-storey hotels
- too touristy and overcrowded
- minimal exposure to local culture
- restricted by set mealtimes

Paragraph 3 **ADVANTAGES +**

- personal freedom to discover unspoiled places
- offers great mobility / flexibility
- explore the area / experience local culture
- allows vacations for those on a tight budget
- modern campground equipped with amenities

DISADVANTAGES -

- campgrounds provide only basic amenities
- communal showers and toilets
- carry heavy camping gear
- dependent on weather

Conclusion

- On balance, I would say that ...
- After having considered the pros and cons ...

TASK 2

KEY POINTS: *efficiency • pollution • cost • health*

Introduction

- Many factors must be taken into consideration ...
- cater to the needs of commuters ...

Paragraph 2 **ADVANTAGES +**

- promote ecological solutions to ...
- zero fuel costs
- realistic alternative to polluting vehicles
- inexpensive to install and maintain lanes
- encourage healthy exercise / physical fitness

DISADVANTAGES -

- cyclists can easily have accidents
- inhaling toxic exhaust fumes
- inconvenient for long commuter journey
- drivers using bicycle lanes to overtake / park their vehicles

Paragraph 3 **ADVANTAGES +**

- efficient mass transit system
- realistic alternative to buses and cars
- minimal noise pollution
- reduced private vehicle emissions

DISADVANTAGES -

- tax increases to fund project
- can sometimes block traffic
- costly construction
- travel at slow speeds

Conclusion

- To sum up, despite the advantages of ...

1 DISCUSSION

a Look at the photo and the vocabulary below and answer the questions.

- What can you see in the picture?
- What can these tourists expect to get out of their trip?

traditional headwear

- pose for the camera ● seated on camels
- Pyramids in the background
- a once-in-a-lifetime experience
- try exotic food ● learn about another culture
- gain a new perspective on life



In the ECPE, you may be asked to write a **descriptive essay**. Look at the topic below and talk about it briefly.

- b As well as being enjoyable, the experience of travel can sometimes be such that it leads people to make life-changing decisions on their return. Describe a trip that you or someone you know took, in which something happened (whether good or bad) with consequences for your or that person's life.

2 MODEL ESSAY

Fill in the correct phrases to complete the model essay.

follow in his footsteps ● to prove decisive ● opened my eyes
made a great impression ● accepted into law school ● take more of an interest

It is a well-known fact that there is a vast amount of knowledge to be gained from traveling to faraway places and experiencing different cultures. However, my first ever trip away from home affected me so greatly that it [1] _____ to a whole new world in such a way that it led me to rethink my career path.

- 5 It was my final year at high school and I was in a dilemma. I had just been [2] _____. Although a good student, I was not particularly looking forward to spending the rest of my life in a gloomy law office. Nevertheless, my father was a prosperous lawyer and I was expected to [3] _____. In short, what I needed was a change of scene to help clear my mind.

- 10 That was when a group of friends and I booked a cruise from Miami to Jamaica, a four-day trip between brilliant blue skies and sparkling waters, with stops at bustling, picturesque Caribbean ports. Initially, I concentrated on just enjoying myself with my friends. After a while, though, I started to [4] _____ in my surroundings. I remember gazing out to sea one day when suddenly, a school of dolphins caught my attention. Fascinated by their grace, I watched in amazement as they leaped and splashed about. I also became quite friendly with some members of the crew and listened intently as they told me stories of their travels which [5] _____ on me. Consequently, later that summer I found a job on a cruise ship, and loved the experience of sailing so much that I made the decision to join the navy. Needless to say, studying law was no longer an option.

- 20 Looking back, I see that that time was the beginning of my love of travel. On every voyage I make, I still feel the same excitement when gazing at the horizon and I like to savor the feeling of freedom it brings. In a way, I am still that young man starting on my first sea trip; a four-day cruise that was [6] _____ for my future career.

3 UNDERSTANDING THE MODEL ESSAY

Essay Organization

a Look again at the model essay and tick in which paragraph you can find the following information:

- 1 a narration of the writer's key experience
- 2 a description of the writer's background prior to the trip
- 3 a summary of the writer's experience
- 4 an introduction to the topic which paraphrases the essay question

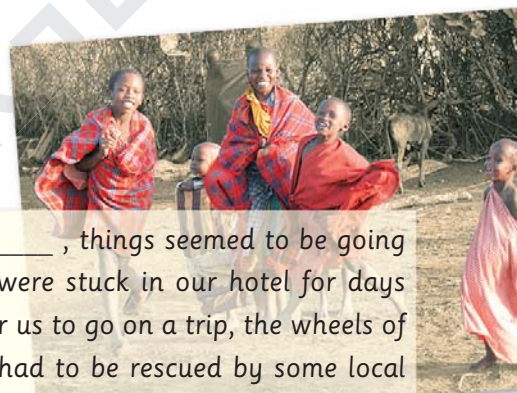
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b i) Find words / phrases in the model essay which mean the same as:

- 1 **Even though** (para. 2) _____
- 2 **Briefly** (para. 2) _____
- 3 **At first** (para. 3) _____
- 4 **Obviously** (para. 3) _____
- 5 **To some extent** (para. 4) _____

ii) Now use your answers to complete the text below.

Our recent trip to Africa did not go according to plan. [1] _____, things seemed to be going all right. That is, until the rains came. So heavy were they that we were stuck in our hotel for days unable to go out. Finally, when the weather did brighten up enough for us to go on a trip, the wheels of our rental car got stuck in some thick mud. [2] _____, we had to be rescued by some local villagers. Then, when we got back to the hotel, the plumbing broke down, so we couldn't even take a shower! [3] _____, our vacation was turning into something of a nightmare. Mind you, [4] _____ our plans for the whole vacation had been ruined, we had to admit that we did meet some very nice people. [5] _____, I would say that's the best part about traveling.



4 STYLE

Essays should be written in a **formal style**.

a Tick which features appear in formal writing.

- 1 **contractions** [*I haven't seen*]
- 2 **indirect questions** [*Would you like to know if ...*]
- 3 **appropriate linking words** [*To begin with, In addition to, etc.*]
- 4 **colloquial language** [*We were hanging out by the hotel pool ...*]

b Rewrite the underlined words / phrases in a more **formal style**.

To our surprise, communicating with the locals turned out to be a piece of cake.

To our surprise, communicating with the locals turned out to be very easy.

- 1 When we got to the bazaar, we didn't have a clue as to whether they would turn up or not.
When we _____ the bazaar, we _____ whether they would _____ or not.
- 2 As well as visiting the sites, we also sampled the local cuisine.
_____ visiting the sites, we also sampled the local cuisine.
- 3 Those in the younger age group should see this as a cool idea.
Those in the younger age group should _____ idea.

5 SENTENCE DEVELOPMENT

a Your writing will be more effective if you avoid using sentences which are too short or abrupt when narrating events. Rewrite the sentences below as one sentence.

We decided not to travel by boat. We rented a small car instead.

Rather than travel by boat, we rented a small car.

1 I wandered around the local marketplace. I met many interesting people there.

While _____ met many interesting people.

2 We did not lie on the beach. We spent the day sightseeing.

Instead _____ spent the day sightseeing.

3 I reached my destination. I realized how tired I was.

On _____ realized how tired I was.

b Form adverbs from the adjectives in bold to add emphasis to the sentences.

It was **foolish** of me to travel alone at night.

Foolishly, I traveled alone at night.

1 The food was presented in an **attractive** way.

The food was _____.

2 Feeling **apprehensive**, we sat in silence as the bus climbed the steep mountain road.

We _____ in silence as the bus climbed the steep mountain road.

3 **Acting on impulse**, I decided to make a side trip to Madras.

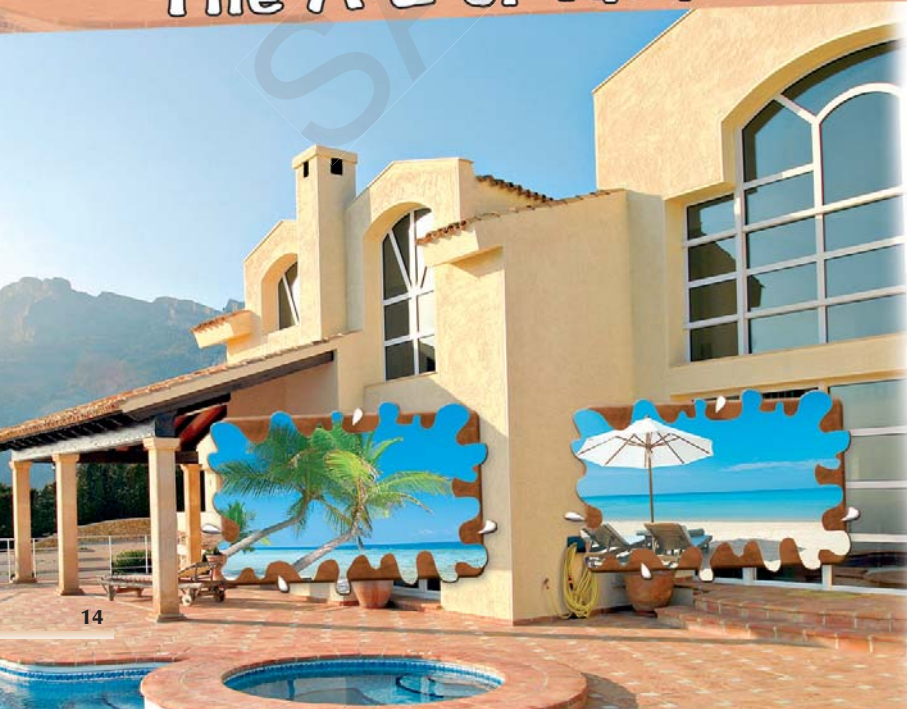
_____ I decided to make a side trip to Madras.

6 ENRICHING YOUR VOCABULARY

a Fill in the correct word.

beaches • accommodations • arrangements
resorts • brochure • itinerary

The A-Z of vacations ...



VISTA TRAVEL is proud to present its latest full-color [1] _____ in which you will find the widest ever selection of [2] _____ all over the world. Our destinations range from exotic [3] _____ to captivating cities. So, whether you prefer to relax on sun-baked [4] _____ or shop in pedestrian streets and pretty squares, we can cater for your needs. The beauty of booking with VISTA TRAVEL is that we have the flexibility for you to create any [5] _____ you wish, and we will make all the practical [6] _____.

b Put the following words / phrases under the picture they best describe.

overrun with tourists • of historical importance • idyllic • stressful • unattractive
restful • polluted • secluded • rowdy atmosphere • unspoiled • lack of privacy





c Fill in the correct **prepositional phrase**.

on horseback • in search of • under the circumstances
• under the impression • on impulse

Before we traveled to that country, we'd been [1] _____ that getting about would be easy. Unfortunately, we couldn't have been more wrong. Our accommodations were in the middle of nowhere. Anyway, off we went [2] _____ a local tourist office. According to the clerk there, we would have to wait at least six hours for a local bus to arrive and, even then, we would not be guaranteed a seat. So, [3] _____, we decided to rent a car and drive across the desert ourselves. [4] _____, it seemed like a good idea. However, this soon proved to be a bad decision as we ended up getting completely lost. Fortunately, we were able to ask directions from three men [5] _____ who spoke a little English.



d Complete the sentences with the correct form of the word given.

1 available

- a** Due to the _____ of cheap flights, we decided to pay our relatives a surprise visit.
b We asked to speak to the manager but he was _____.

2 expect

- a** The resort failed to live up to our _____ so we decided to leave three days early.
b Much to our disappointment, the flight was _____ delayed.

3 appeal

- a** Initially, the idea of spending a month backpacking around Europe held little _____ for me, but I am really glad I changed my mind.
b The prospect of sleeping in a tent was _____.

7 COMMON ERRORS

a Correct the mistake in each sentence.

- 1 The airline sent our luggages to the wrong destination.
- 2 The archeological sight was indescribable.
- 3 The camping ground was situated at the feet of the mountain.
- 4 We were looking for something a little more out of the usual.

b Underline the correct answer.

- 1 go **on** / **to** a sightseeing tour
- 2 a **tourist** / **touristy** place
- 3 travel **in** / **with** comfort
- 4 a bus tour **in** / **of** the city
- 5 board **the** / **on a** plane
- 6 a visitor **in** / **to** a place
- 7 consider **going** / **to go** to ...
- 8 **make** / **take** a guided tour of the area

PREPARING FOR THE WRITING TASK

Discuss the following points.

- What kinds of things do we normally expect from our vacations?
- In what way could travel be said to broaden our horizons?
- Can you remember a vacation that turned out to be disappointing? Why was it a disappointment? What had you been expecting?

WRITING TASKS

You will have 30 minutes to write on *one* of the two topics. Write about 300 words.

TASK 1

It is often said that *travel broadens the mind*. Describe something that happened to you or someone you know, which illustrates this.

INTRODUCTION: Introduce the experience, mentioning why it is an example of travel broadening the mind.

PARAGRAPH 2: Set the scene by mentioning the facts leading up to the experience
(*the plans for the trip, the destination, who was traveling with you, etc.*).

PARAGRAPH 3: Describe the key details of the experience
(*what exactly happened and when, how the experience ended, how you reacted, etc.*).

CONCLUSION: Sum up by briefly mentioning why the experience is relevant to the question.

TASK 2

Most people have, at one time or another, made a trip, a vacation or even stayed with relatives, which despite their careful planning turned out to be a disappointment. Describe a trip that disappointed you, explaining why it failed to meet your expectations.

INTRODUCTION: Introduce the experience and briefly mention that it turned out to be a disappointment.

PARAGRAPH 2: Mention the circumstances leading up to the experience
(*the journey, who was traveling with you, what you had anticipated doing, etc.*).

PARAGRAPH 3: Describe the experience itself. Contrast it with your expectations.

CONCLUSION: Sum up by briefly explaining how the experience answers the question.

TASK 1

Introduction

- Nowadays, traveling abroad has become ...
- Clearly, the desire to travel to faraway ...
 - an ordinary vacation turned into ...
 - a memorable experience
- No one can deny that travel ...
- Everyone agrees that travel ...
 - Who would have imagined that ... ?
 - offer insight into another culture

Paragraph 2

- make reservations to stay in
- under a great deal of pressure
- set out on a journey to
- have a sense of enthusiasm
- catch the early morning flight
- ride across the desert on horseback / hire a Jeep / bicycle
- hitch-hike across Europe
- traveling companions

Paragraph 3

- feel at ease / uncomfortable
- extremely hospitable to visitors
- nomads / fishermen / poor children
- invited us to participate in festival / custom
- no difficulty in making myself understood
- break down language barriers
- tolerant of / open to
- went out of their way to make us feel at home
- gave us a guided tour of
- felt inspired / embarrassed by
- a world we had never dreamed of
- the first time we / they had set eyes on
- a wonderful sight
- a breathtaking view of

Conclusion

- All in all / To sum up / In general, I have to say that ...
- In retrospect / Looking back, I have grown more aware of / conscious of / willing to ...
- In that respect / Therefore, experiences you have while traveling can teach you ...

TASK 2

Introduction

- bitterly disappointed
- a complete waste of money
- the sheer disappointment of
- a disastrous experience
- have deep regrets about
- turned into a nightmare

Paragraph 2

- escape to a country retreat / visit some distant relatives
- looking forward to meeting / taking part in the festival ...
- bumpy plane journey ...
- the journey itself was fairly pleasant / exhausting / monotonous ...
- ... stuck in the middle of nowhere

Paragraph 3

- be in for an unpleasant surprise
- hotel was in a state of disrepair
- made us feel most unwelcome
- little / no comparison between the ... and the ...
- the ... was filthy
- forever arguing
- failed to live up to our expectations
- unfriendly locals
- bad atmosphere / awful food
- it rained heavily the whole time
- felt extremely miserable
- the sites were closed due to

Conclusion

- In the end / Finally, I / We returned after ...
- in a state of exhaustion
- glad to get on the plane / be back home
- vowed never to go there again.

Writing Skills for the ECPE is a new book for students preparing for the Michigan proficiency examination. It aims to equip students with the techniques and skills they need to write coherently and correctly, thus enabling them to produce interesting, well-structured essays.

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