1.1 Why do we travel?



How many of these things do you always pack — or never leave home without?

In this unit you will read about the downside of mass tourism, learn how to talk about travel with more precision and style, listen to people who work while they travel, and write a lively travel blog post of your own.

1 **Discuss these questions in pairs.**

1 What was the last trip you took that really changed your perspective on something? What happened?

2 'People don't travel to see new places; they travel to become new people.' Do you agree?

3 Which of these types of trip appeals to you least, and why: a package holiday, a solo backpacking trip, a cruise, a business trip, a staycation?



Left to right: the jet-setter, the digital nomad, the thrill-seeker, and the armchair traveller.

2 **VOCABULARY Types of traveller. Match each description (1–6) to a type of traveller in the box. There are two you don't need.**

jet-setter flashpacker digital nomad tourist trap victim
thrill-seeker armchair traveller expat trailblazer

1 someone who has settled abroad long-term for work but keeps close ties with their home country _____

2 someone who travels widely and stays in luxury hotels, often for business or pleasure _____

3 someone who earns a living online while moving from country to country _____

4 someone who prefers reading about far-off places to actually visiting them _____

5 someone who backpacks but still wants creature comforts like fast Wi-Fi and nice cafés _____

6 someone who seeks out extreme, adrenaline-fuelled experiences wherever they go _____

3 **SPEAKING Which type(s) above best describe you? Tell your partner, giving reasons and examples.**

1 **Before you read, discuss: have you ever visited a place that felt ‘too crowded’ with tourists? What was it like?**



Tourists crowd a narrow street in Venice.

GLOSSARY

- disgorge (v) — send out large numbers of people at once
- jostle (v) — push roughly in a crowd
- shoulder season (n) — period between peak and low season
- wither (v) — weaken and gradually disappear

Loved to Death: Has Tourism Gone Too Far?

On a July morning in Venice, the first cruise ship of the day disgorges four thousand passengers onto streets built for a fraction of that number. Locals mutter as they’re jostled aside by tourists clutching selfie sticks. The city, whose resident population has more than halved since the 1970s, is becoming, in the words of one exasperated Venetian, ‘a theme park with no rides’.

This is overtourism: a term barely used a decade ago that denotes the point at which the sheer volume of visitors begins to erode the very qualities that drew them there. Barcelona, Dubrovnik, Kyoto and Machu Picchu have all found themselves at the sharp end of it, grappling with overcrowded pavements, soaring rents, and residents who have had enough.

The causes are not hard to identify: budget airlines, social media turning obscure beauty spots into must-see backdrops overnight, and cruise lines decanting thousands of day-trippers into a historic centre within an hour. What is harder to pin down is the solution. Some cities have imposed tourist taxes or capped cruise arrivals; others discourage certain visitors altogether.

Yet travel itself is not the villain. Tourism, done thoughtfully, can fund the restoration of historic buildings and sustain rural communities that would otherwise wither. The real challenge is not to stop people travelling, but to persuade them to do so more responsibly — visiting in the shoulder season, venturing beyond the best-known sights, and spending money in ways that benefit local people rather than multinational chains.

What is certain is that the age of travelling anywhere, anytime, without a second thought for the consequences, is quietly drawing to a close.

2 **Read the article once quickly. Which of these best summarises the writer's main point?**

A) Mass tourism is destroying historic cities and should be stopped.

B) Overtourism is a serious problem, but the answer is more responsible travel, not less travel.

C) Social media and cheap flights are entirely to blame for overtourism.

3 **Read again. Decide if these statements are True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG).**

1 Venice's resident population has grown since the 1970s. T / F / NG

2 Cruise ships are named as one contributing factor to overtourism. T / F / NG

3 Some destinations have tried to actively discourage certain visitors. T / F / NG

4 The writer believes tourism has no positive effects at all. T / F / NG

5 Travelling outside peak season is suggested as one possible solution. T / F / NG

4 **VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT Find words or phrases in the article that mean the following.**

1 to push someone roughly, especially in a crowd (paragraph 1) — _____

2 having had enough of something and no longer tolerating it (paragraph 2) — _____

5 **DISCUSSION In small groups, discuss: should cities be allowed to limit tourist numbers each year, and is it fair to blame tourists for overtourism rather than governments or travel companies?**

What could ordinary travellers do differently? Look at the icons opposite for ideas, then add two more of your own.



Small choices — reusable bottles, cycling, buying local, treading lightly.

GRAMMAR: Emphasis — cleft sentences and inversion



Travel writers often use dramatic sentence structures for effect.

1 Look at these sentences from the reading text on page 3 and answer the questions below.

"What is harder to pin down is the solution."

"What is certain is that the age of travelling anywhere, anytime... is quietly drawing to a close."

1 Rewrite the first sentence as a simple sentence beginning 'The solution…'. How does the emphasis change?

2 Which part of the sentence does the writer want to highlight by starting with 'What…'?

GRAMMAR BOX Emphasis: cleft sentences and inversion

We often reorganise a sentence to give special emphasis to one part of it. Two common ways of doing this at C1 level are cleft sentences and inversion.

1 What-clefts move the focus to the end of the sentence:
What surprised me most was how cheap the flights were. (compare: The flights' cheapness surprised me most.)

2 It-clefts emphasise a specific piece of information:
It was the language barrier, not the cost, that put us off visiting Japan alone.

3 Inversion after negative/limiting adverbials adds a formal, dramatic emphasis, especially in narrative or persuasive writing:
Never had we seen such spectacular scenery. / Not only did the flight get delayed, but our luggage was lost too. / Rarely do package holidays offer this kind of freedom.

Note: after the inverted adverbial, use question word order (auxiliary + subject + verb).

2 Rewrite each sentence using the cleft structure given, keeping the meaning the same.

1 I loved the food most of all on our trip to Vietnam. (What…)

2 We really didn't expect the delay to cost us the whole first day. (It was…)

3 The guide, more than anything else, made the tour worthwhile. (It was…)

3 Rewrite the sentences beginning with the word(s) given, using inversion.

1 We had never experienced such warm hospitality. (Never…)

2 The airline didn't just lose our bags — it also cancelled our connecting flight. (Not only…)

3 You rarely see a beach this untouched by tourism these days. (Rarely…)

4 SPEAKING Tell your partner about a memorable trip, using at least three emphatic structures from this page.

Example: 'What really stood out was the silence of the desert at night. Never had I felt so far from everyday life…'

VOCABULARY: Travel phrasal verbs and idioms

Advanced, natural-sounding English relies heavily on phrasal verbs and idioms connected with journeys and the travelling lifestyle.



Every well-travelled suitcase tells a story.

1 PHRASAL VERBS Study the table, then cover the middle column and try to define each phrasal verb from memory.

Phrasal verb	Meaning	Example
set off	to begin a journey	We set off before sunrise to beat the traffic.
check in / out	to register / leave a hotel	Passengers must check in two hours before departure.
get around	to travel within a place	The metro makes it easy to get around the city.
hold up	to delay	Roadworks held us up for over an hour.
stop over	to break a journey briefly	We stopped over in Dubai for six hours.
branch out	to try something new	We decided to branch out and try trekking.

2 Complete the sentences with the correct form of a phrasal verb from Exercise 1.

1 We _____ at 5 a.m. to catch the first ferry.
2 Could you _____ online so we don't have to queue at the airport?
3 After a week of museums, we decided to _____ and try some outdoor adventure activities.

3 IDIOMS Match each idiom to its meaning, then use the table below to check.

Idiom	Meaning	Example
catch the travel bug	develop a strong desire to travel	She's really caught the travel bug.
off the beaten track	away from popular tourist areas	We prefer places off the beaten track.
live out of a suitcase	travel constantly, without settling	I just wanted to stop living out of a suitcase.
a whistle-stop tour	a very quick visit to several places	We did a whistle-stop tour of Italy.

4 SPEAKING Discuss with a partner, using as many phrasal verbs and idioms from this page as you can.

• Have you ever caught the travel bug? What triggered it?
• Would you rather do a whistle-stop tour of ten cities, or spend two weeks off the beaten track in one place?

LISTENING: The digital nomad life

1 **Before you listen, discuss: would you ever want to work while travelling long-term? What might be the biggest challenge?**



A digital nomad working remotely from a café.

2 **LISTENING You will hear part of a podcast interview with a digital nomad named Priya, who has worked remotely from twelve countries. Listen and answer the questions.**

1 How long has Priya been working as a digital nomad?
2 According to Priya, what is the single biggest practical challenge of the lifestyle?
3 What does she say surprised her most about long-term travel?
4 What advice does she give to someone thinking of trying it?

3 **Listen again. Complete the sentences with the exact words you hear.**

1 'People imagine it's one long holiday, but in reality it's _____.'
2 'The time zones can be absolutely _____ if you're working with a team back home.'
3 'I'd honestly _____ if I hadn't forced myself to slow down.'

GRAMMAR BOX Speculating and drawing conclusions about the past

When we guess or draw conclusions about past situations, we often use modal + have + past participle:

She must have found it exhausting at first. (strong certainty)

He can't have booked the flights yet — they're still showing as available. (strong negative certainty)

They might/could have missed the connection because of the delay. (possibility)

4 **Complete the sentences with a suitable modal + have + past participle, using the verb in brackets.**

1 Judging by the state of her suitcase, she _____ (have) a very rough journey.
2 He _____ (check) the visa requirements — otherwise they'd never have let him board.
3 They _____ (leave) already; their car isn't in the driveway.

5 **SPEAKING Work in pairs. Speculate about what happened, using modals of deduction.**

- A couple arrive at check-in with no printed boarding passes and no phone battery.
- A backpacker is refused entry to a country at passport control.

WRITING: A travel blog post

Travel blog posts combine vivid, personal storytelling with useful, practical information for the reader. A good one draws the reader in with an engaging opening, then balances description with recommendations.



Write like you're sending a postcard — personal, vivid, and to the point.

1 **Read the opening paragraph of a travel blog post below. What techniques does the writer use to hook the reader?**

Three Days in Lisbon: A City That Refuses to Rush

The first thing you notice about Lisbon is the light — that soft, golden haze that seems to settle over the rooftops every evening, as if the whole city were lit for a film nobody had thought to make yet. I arrived with a rigid itinerary and a list of 'must-sees' as long as my arm. I left three days later having ticked off precisely none of it, and I couldn't have been happier.

2 **Look at the underlined phrases below (from typical travel blog posts) and match them to their functions (a–d).**

• 'Little did I know that…' / 'I couldn't have been happier' / 'Tucked away down a side street…' / 'If you only do one thing here, make it…'

a) giving a strong personal recommendation

b) creating suspense or foreshadowing

c) expressing satisfaction with an outcome

d) describing a hidden or lesser-known place

USEFUL LANGUAGE for travel blog posts

Opening hooks: Little did I know… / Nothing could have prepared me for… / There's something about [place] that…

Describing places: tucked away, off the beaten track, a stone's throw from, steeped in history

Recommending: If you only do one thing…, It would be a shame to miss…, I can't recommend X highly enough

Reflecting: Looking back, … / I couldn't have been happier / more wrong / What stayed with me most was…

3 **WRITING TASK Write a travel blog post (220–260 words) about a real or imaginary trip. Include:**

- an engaging opening that hooks the reader (use a cleft sentence or inversion from page 4)
- vivid description of at least one place
- at least two idioms or phrasal verbs from page 5
- one clear, personal recommendation for future travellers

4 **Exchange your post with a partner and give each other feedback using the checklist above.**

Consider: Is the opening engaging? Is the description vivid? Would you want to visit this place after reading it?

UNIT 1 WORDLIST *jet-setter · flashpacker · digital nomad · thrill-seeker · armchair traveller · trailblazer · disgorge · jostle · shoulder season · wither · set off/out · check in/out · get around · hold up · stop over · branch out · catch the travel bug · off the beaten track · live out of a suitcase · whistle-stop tour · broaden your horizons · jump on the bandwagon*