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### SOCIAL MEDIA

Click on the links below to check out our related social media content.

- **Main Facebook Page**
- **Twitter**
- **Main Facebook Group**
- **Asia Facebook Group**
- **Oceania Facebook Group**
- **Europe Facebook Group**
- **North America Facebook Group**
- **Latin America Facebook Group**
- **Middle East & Africa Facebook Group**
WHAT ARE WE ABOUT?

Welcome to Exploration! We are an online, voluntarily-run, non-profit, student travel journal. Yes, it’s a bit of a mouthful – but in essence, all we do is provide an awesome, growing collection of useful, honest, and interesting articles for travellers all over the world to read.

However, we care just as much about our writers and editors as we do our readers: one of our main aims is to give students who love writing, journalism, and travelling a leg-up on the work experience ladder. By writing for us, you’ll get feedback for every article from our seasoned editors, as well as the invaluable chance to perfect your writing skills and style in a professional (but friendly!) setting. We work with the ethos of exchange: write us an article, and in return get feedback on your work, connections, experience for your CV, and a chance to be part of something really great. What’s more, should any editorial positions ever become available, you’ll get the opportunity to apply.

Everything we do is for free – our editors are all volunteers, so unfortunately we can’t pay you for your writing. Don’t worry though: we’re happy to give references for prospective employers, and becoming a contributor for an online magazine will work wonders for your CV!

So if you’re thinking you’d like to have a go at contributing to Exploration, have a read of the rest of the Writers’ Guide – that way, you’ll begin with a good understanding of what makes a good piece of travel writing, what you should avoid/aim for, and how to pitch ideas to our editors. Good luck!
HOW WE WORK

Exploration is divided into 6 sections: Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia, Oceania, and Middle East & Africa. Each section is run by a Section Editor, and all sections are overseen by the Editor-in-Chief. All editors work tirelessly throughout the year with writers to produce great sets of articles.

Exploration runs on a monthly basis: at the beginning of the month, each Section Editor will send a group email to their writers, with a few prompts and ideas, and asking the writers to pitch their own ideas too. The writers will then discuss their ideas with the Section Editor, make a plan for their article, and begin writing. It’s up to you how many you contribute per month, although of course, the more the better. Towards the end of the month, the relevant Section Editor will set a deadline, and your piece will be submitted before the deadline.

Upon submission, the editor will go through your article, and upload it to the website, where it will be proofed and assessed by the Editor-in-Chief. Every Section Editor runs their section slightly differently, but you will always receive individual feedback for each article you write, as well as a few more general notes in a final end-of-month group email to all writers.
WHAT WE’RE LOOKING FOR...

At Exploration, we love variety in our articles – of tone, language, structure and form. We welcome political studies, reviews, city guides, diary-entry pieces... the list goes on! The same goes for different styles. Be it discursive, investigative, humorous, inventive, experimental – your writing style is unique to you, and you should be given every opportunity to cultivate it. And that’s where we come in! With your individual feedback, you’ll get the opportunity to improve your style and produce better articles each time.

The last thing we want to do is produce formulaic pieces – but as with any skill, there are inevitably things that make for good writing, and things that make any reader switch off. So, to help you along in your development as a great travel writer, here are some universal rules that you should try to stick to. Below are a few of the most pivotal points to remember when you’re writing – and a few of the heinous errors you must avoid at all costs. Before you submit your article to your relevant editor, have a read of this, and make sure you’re satisfied that you’ve kept to the guidelines.
IN YOUR ARTICLE, YOU MUST...

- **Be clear.** Clarity is essential to a good piece of writing – if a reader doesn’t understand what you’re talking about, their interest is immediately extinguished.

- **Have a definitive introduction.** Before you start writing, ask yourself what your point is, what you’re aiming for, what you want to show us, what you want to question or discuss. This gives the piece direction and a sense of purpose.

- **Hook in the reader.** A standard journalistic tool – after writing your introduction, ask yourself what would make you keep reading? You need a promise or foreshadowing of interesting things to come (which must be fulfilled later).

- **Contextualise.** Where is the place you’re travelling to? What part of the world are you in, and what are you doing there? Why? If you’re talking about politics or history, give us a little background first. For the reader to be interested in what you have to say, they must be able to place the article in context.

- **Have a structure.** This does not necessarily have to be chronological, but a good article will always be well structured in terms of points of interest, argument or investigation. If you’re doing a bullet-pointed, ‘Top Ten’ style article, that’s fine, but make sure you include a small introduction and summary at the end.

- **Have a definitive conclusion.** This must summarise or answer the issues, questions or the point of your article – the reader will feel cheated if they reach the end of an article and it trails off into nothing. Are you leaving your article with an open question? Fine, but show us how you have arrived at it, and leave us with something thought-provoking or interesting.
• **Plan.** This is so important! It’s usually pretty obvious if an article has been written with no forethought or plan – it will lack direction, clarity and will seem incoherent and a tad aimless. Think about your article before you write it – you don’t necessarily have to write down your plan, but think carefully about what you want to say before you sit down to write.

• **Read your article aloud.** There’s no better way to check your writing for fluidity than to read it aloud – if it doesn’t flow properly, or if it’s difficult to say, it won’t read well either.

• **Check your article for spelling, grammar and syntax errors.** Basic, but it must be done. Editors should not have to rake through an article to correct the serial misuse of ‘it’s’ and ‘its’. At Exploration, we use English spelling and grammar rules – if you’re not sure, check the Internet or the good old OED.

• **Provide relevant details for a prospective traveller.** Don’t forget, Exploration is used by many as a handy travel guide! If you’ve reviewed a restaurant or hostel, give us the website. If you’ve found a great little secluded beach, tell us where it is and how to get there! Explain the best transport routes, prices, tips on saving money or avoiding queues – it’s all brilliantly useful.

• **Focus on what’s interesting.** Seems obvious, but many writers get carried away with avid descriptions of delayed flights and long waits. If the experience was boring for you, it certainly won’t be exciting to read about. Focus on the positive, unless the negative is an integral part to your article.

• **Look for a fresh take on something.** If you’re writing about a well-trodden subject, find a new angle. Show us something we didn’t already know, force us to look at things from a new perspective. If you’re writing a political or an opinion piece, don’t be afraid to take a stance – sitting half-heartedly on the fence is lacklustre.
• **Stay relevant.** No, we don’t have a “target audience”, but most of our readers/writers are students, so remember the kind of people you’re writing for and keep it relevant to them.

This seems like a lot to take in – but as a student, it’s nothing you shouldn’t already know! The main takeaways are: using common sense, planning, and proofreading your work!

**YOU COULD ALSO…**

• **Include photographs to go with your article.** If you have many photos that could work with your article, we can insert a gallery into your article when it’s up on the site, which always looks great. Please note, however: no holiday snaps with you or your mates, or blurry shots. Photos do not have to be a great work of art, but should ideally have a subject and point of interest.

• **Follow up your article with a series!** If you’ve lived somewhere for a long time and have in-depth knowledge about many aspects of a place, or if you’ve been on a round-the-world trip and want to document it, or equally, if you’re interested in a particular aspect of travel... write a series! Broach the subject to your editor and get their thoughts first, then get planning.

So, that’s the “Do’s” of travel writing over with. But what should you, as a writer, avoid doing in your work? Read on for a few of the main issues we have with writing at Exploration, and how to steer clear.
• **Use clichés – this is a big one.** Avoid them unless the cliché is the point, and is being intentionally mocked. To prove yourself as a writer with potential, you must at the very least be able to think of new and interesting ways of describing things. No “breathtaking views” or “interesting culture.” In fact, avoid the word “culture” full stop – it is vague and meaningless. If by “interesting culture” you mean a place has a different atmosphere, or a diverse population, or intriguing customs or traditions – then say so! Find new words for “vibrant” and “bustling”, never say that somewhere has “something for everyone” and under no circumstances declare that somewhere is a “city/country of contrasts” or talk about “must-see/do” attractions. Everyone does it occasionally, it’s inevitable a few clichés will slip into your writing now and again – but try your best to steer clear. Read here for a brilliant two-part article on this topic by one of our very own editors!

• **Repeat yourself.** Check through your work to make sure you don’t overuse phrases or words. There is nothing like six separate uses of the same phrase to make a reader switch off.

• **Be too informal.** There is a line between witty repartee with the reader, and becoming too personal. We don’t want irrelevant holiday chat – but if it has a specific function in your article, that’s fine.

• **Overwrite.** Imagery and description is fine, but only if it suits the style and tone of your piece. We don’t want flowery adjectives adorning every other word – it distracts from the point of the article.

• **Use tautology.** For example, “the 40 degree heat was unbearable.” This is obvious. Check if the sentence is really necessary, and if it really adds anything to your article.
• **Ramble.** “Check yourself before you wreck yourself,” is somewhat applicable here... going off on tangents and bulking out your article with meaningless detail will ruin it. Read through your article again – if a sentence has no purpose in the piece, cut it.

• **Be disrespectful.** It’s generally fine to comment on idiosyncrasies, or compare different countries, local customs and traditions. But racism, sexism, classism, prejudice and ignorance – unintentional or otherwise – will not find a platform at Exploration.

Last word on style: as I said earlier, we use English spelling/grammar rules at Exploration. If you get stuck and need to check something out, use this handy online guide to make sure!

**AND FINALLY...**

Now your article should be a pretty fantastic piece of travel writing! Do a last check for spelling and grammar, and then submit it to your relevant Section Editor. Remember, we’re here to help you develop and improve your writing skills – any feedback you get is entirely for your benefit. Discuss ways of improving with your editor, take on board their comments, and get on the lookout for new ideas!

Good luck and happy exploring!

**Ali Leyland-Collins**  
**Editor-in-Chief, Exploration**