



Adventurous vacation

Discussion

1. What kind of vacation do you usually take - i.e. package vacation, organized tours, backpacking trips, vacation abroad or close to home?
2. Have you ever been on an "adventurous" holiday? What was it?
3. Are extreme sports (i.e. climbing, sky diving, white water rafting) fun or foolish? Are they worth the risks?
4. Would you ever consider sky diving? How would you feel if someone close to you took up the sport?

In 1985, we carried out an expedition to Autana-tepui in Venezuela, arriving on the summit by sky diving out of an old DC3 airplane. While we were there, we rappelled for almost 800 feet down the wall of Autana to reach the inaccessible caves.

The scale of the place was unbelievable - the ledge outside the cave had seemed tiny from the plane but was actually covered by trees and enormous boulders. And the cave itself was vast, with a central chamber in the heart of the mountain reminiscent of a cathedral dome.

Like so many adventurous tourists do today, I also made the ascent up to the summit plateau by way of the famous ledge trail.

When I first climbed it in 1974, visitors were infrequent. Now, parties of people make the easy climb almost every day. The trail is now a highway of earth pounded hard by the passage of many people.

Reaching the summit, though, is still a magical experience; the towering sculptured rock faces create an eerie landscape that cannot have changed very much in millions of years. The surroundings are so lacking in familiar objects or frames of reference that it is difficult to judge distances accurately and to maintain one's sense of direction. There is also a haunting silence. When you spend a long time in a place like this, your mind begins to play tricks on you.

True or False?

1. The writer jumped out of an airplane. T
2. You can reach the caves on foot. F
3. Many visitors now reach the summit of the tepui. T
4. It is the writer's first visit to the tepui. F
5. The landscape on the summit can change your perception. T

What do you think?

1. Does this experience sound like something you would like to do? Give specific reasons why or why not.
2. Could tourism spoil a place?
3. Do you think many people should be allowed to visit special environments? Should people be kept out to protect the place, or do they have a right to experience it?
4. If you were to limit the number of people visiting a special site, how would you do it?
5. How would you decide who gets to visit?

Language in Use

Read the definitions in the box below, and fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the appropriate word or phrase.

1. The **ledge** of the building was covered in mirrors which reflected the clouds.
2. Because the sea is so **vast** some people think its resources are inexhaustible.
3. Her house is **in the heart of** the city.
4. On April Fool's Day, it is traditional to **play a trick on** people.
5. The **ascent** up that mountain was very difficult.
6. Do you think he can successfully **carry out** his plan?
7. Photographers often use a person to show **scale** when photographing landscapes.
8. Because I used the old tree as a **frame of reference**, I could not find the trail head after it was cut down.

Words in Action

carry out - if you carry out a threat, task or instruction, you do it or act according to it - to perform, accomplish, achieve

rappel - to slide down a cliff or rock face in a controlled way using a rope, with your feet against the cliff or rock

scale - the scale of something is its size or extent, especially when it is very big

ledge - a narrow, shelf-like form standing out of an object (a rock, a cliff, a mountain, a building etc)

boulder - a large rounded rock

vast - extremely large

in the heart of - the heart of a place is its centre

ascent - an ascent is an upward journey, especially when you are walking or climbing

pound - to crush something into a paste or a powder or into very small pieces

face - the face of a cliff, mountain, or building is a vertical surface or side of it

eerie - strange and frightening

frame of reference - a frame of reference is a particular set of beliefs or ideas, or an object, on which you base your judgment of things

haunting - very beautiful or sad

play a trick on - if you play a trick or a joke on someone, you deceive them or give them a surprise in a way that you think is funny but that often causes problems or annoyance

Speak out !

A. In pairs, discuss how dangerous you think the following activities are. Rate them from 1 to 10, with 10 being the most dangerous.

Which activities have you tried?

Which one would you be willing to try?

Which one you think you would never try?

..... sky diving wilderness camping
..... abseiling(BR)/ rappelling(US) whitewater rafting
..... climbing with ropes surfing
..... trekking bungee jumping
..... scuba diving snorkeling

B. You have been offered a large sum of money in order to carry out an expedition of your choice, and then to write an article about it.

Discuss with a partner, then with the class.

Where would you go?

What would you do?

Why did you choose this?

What equipment would you need?

Are there any safety precautions you would need to take?

Discussion Practice

COMMUNICATION

Picture Discussion

- 1) Describe the pictures.
- 2) What other means of communication can you think of?
- 3) Which of these methods do you use most often?
Which do your parents use most often? Your grandparents?
Why do you think they differ?
- 4) What are some of the advantages of the various means of communication?
- 5) What effect on society do these methods have?
Are they positive, negative or both? Explain your answer.

Pictures and Concepts

General Discussion

- 1) Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876.
What do you think society's initial reaction was to this invention?
What do you think this new invention was initially used for?
- 2) What method of communication do you think will be invented next? What effect on society will the invention have?

Useful Vocabulary:

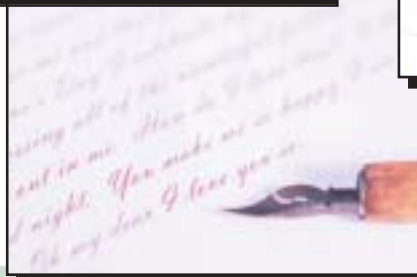
technological advancement, progress, alienation, conventional methods, personal, correspondence, handwritten, convenient, speed of delivery, mobile, nuisance, landline telephone

Key Points/Main Ideas:

Changes in communication
Usefulness/purpose of methods
Influence of society

Useful Language/Expressions:

I usually ...
I strongly believe (that) ...
Some advantages are ...
Personally, I find ...
... effect on society is...



Speaking Test 1



Stage 1: Introduction and Small Talk (3-5 minutes)

Examiner 1: We will begin the exam with introductions and conversation on general topics. You will be expected to provide extended responses and ask each other, and me, questions.

Potential questions:

- Describe your hometown.
- What is your favorite subject in school? Your least favorite?
- Describe a holiday that you have taken recently.
- Have you ever been on a school trip? Where did you go?

Stage 2: Summarizing and Recommending (5-7 minutes)

Examiner 1: Your English class is planning an excursion. Your teacher has come up with four potential destinations, and wants to know student's opinions. You will help to make the decision. I am giving each of you an information sheet with the description of two of the options for where you will go. You can take 2-3 minutes to read through the information. You are NOT permitted to see your partner's information sheet during Stage 2.

Examiner 1: Now, you must take turns summarizing your two options to each other. You should use your own words and NOT just read out the information sheet. You need to listen carefully while your partner is speaking, and you may take notes if you want. After you have heard about your partner's options you must give a recommendation about which of your partner's options you think is the best.

Examiner 1: Finally, now that you've received a recommendation from your partner, you must silently choose which of your own options is the best. At this point, the four options should be narrowed down to two options.
(Candidate information sheets appear at the end of page 7)

Candidate 1: My two options are Monterey in California, and Taos in New Mexico. Monterey is near the sea, with a small town atmosphere. It has a good aquarium, and we could visit the redwoods and participate in water sports. We would stay with a family. Taos has a hot climate because it is in the desert, and we will camp outside of the city. It will be possible to go on hikes and learn about the archaeology of the native Americans. We can also visit art galleries.

Candidate 2: I would recommend Monterey, because we get to stay with a family, and this is a good way to practice English. I also think this option is good because we will have a chance to do water sports. (other opinions are also correct). My two options are New York and Washington DC. In Washington DC we would stay with a family, and participate in lots of activities where we would learn about American politics. We could also take day trips to other cities. Unfortunately there is some crime. In New York we would stay in dorms, and take classes about contemporary American Literature. There is lots to do in the city, and the public transportation is very good, so students can be independent and do whatever interests them.

Candidate 1: I think New York is the best option, because it is a very famous city, and also because we could take classes there on American Literature, and experience all sorts of cultural activities. Also, it is worrying that there's a problem with crime in Washington DC. (other opinions are also correct).

Stage 3: Consensus Reaching (5-7 minutes)

Examiner 1: In Stage 3 you must present to your partner the option from your own information sheet which you think is best. You are NOT permitted to see your partner's information sheet at this time.

Examiner 1: Now, you must compare and contrast these two options and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each. By the end of Stage 3 you should reach an agreement on one single option.

Candidate 1: I am going to choose Monterey as the best option. This city is small, with a population of 30,161 people, and has a small town atmosphere. Because it is a seaside town, students can participate in water sports, and there is also an excellent aquarium to visit. We can also take a day trip to see the redwoods, which are famous. But most importantly students will get to stay with a family and we will have chance to practice our English.
(other opinions are also correct)

Candidate 2: I will choose New York. New York is a dynamic big city, with a population of more than 8 million people, so there will be a lot of things happening. There are all sorts of cultural activities to choose from and students can get around by themselves because the public transportation is very good. We will stay in College dormitories while we are there which will unfortunately cost a bit more than accommodation in other places. We will also have the chance to take classes on contemporary American literature. (other opinions are also correct)

Candidate 2: Which of these two options do you think is the best? I think I prefer New York. **Candidate 1:** Well, I would agree with you except for one point that I think is really important. I think that students will benefit greatly from staying with a family instead of in dorms. I think this makes Monterey a better option. Although I think New York would be a more interesting place for most students...

Candidate 2: Do you think it is so important? Students will get plenty of opportunities to interact with English speakers in New York, and their English will still improve. Also, they can go to the movies, and museums, and even the theater if they want, and all this will be in English. There will be so much to do! Also, if students want to do different things, they can, because it is easy to get around. Everyone does not have to do the same activities. I think this is important because everyone has different likes and dislikes. **Candidate 1:** That's a good point, I agree. I suppose New York is the best choice. It would be nice to be able to do water sports though, and we can't in New York. **Candidate 2:** But the point of the trip is to learn English after all...

Candidate 1: That's true! Also, the Contemporary American Literature classes sound interesting. Well, lets choose New York then.

Stage 4: Presenting and Convincing (5-7 minutes)

Examiner 1: You will now present the option that you have chosen to Examiner 2, who plays the role of someone in authority - perhaps the principal of the school who will make the final decision. You have 2-3 minutes to collaborate and plan the presentation. At this point you may look at each other's information sheets if you wish.

You should each present two different reasons why you decided on that particular option and explain why those reasons are important. The goal is to convince Examiner 2 that the option you have chosen is the best one.

Examiner 2: I understand that you have reached a decision and you would like to give me your recommendation.

Candidate 2: We've decided that New York is the best choice for our English class excursion. First of all, New York is full of different cultural activities, and students will be excited to get involved in lots of things, and will be practicing their English this way. It will be a fun way to learn. Also, because the public transportation is good, students can be quite independent. This is important because not everyone likes to do the same things, and each student can seek out what interests them.

Candidate 1: Another reason New York is a good choice is because students will have the opportunity to take classes on Contemporary American Literature. This will help improve our English skills, and, for me at least, is a subject that I am interested in. It will help us to learn about America as well. Finally, New York is a big, dynamic city, and is really quite famous, and I think it is a dream of a lot of people to visit.

Stage 5: Justifying and Defending (5-7 minutes)

Examiner 2: I am now going to question you about the decision you've made and about your reasons for that decision. You will need to justify and defend the reasons for your decision.

Examiner 2: Thank you both for your presentation. That is the end of the speaking test.

Examiner 2: So, you chose New York. Did you consider the implications of the dormitory accommodation? This will be an added expense for the students, and may also give them less opportunity to practice their English. Candidate 1, what do you think about this?

Candidate 1: Well, at first I thought this was a problem, and that it would be better for the students to live with a family. But on further consideration I decided that there is so much to do and see in New York, all in English of course, that this would more than make up for perhaps not speaking English in the dorms. Students will be out and about, participating in many more activities and interacting with more people than they might in other programs. And concerning the cost, I think it is to be expected that accommodation in a big city like New York would cost a bit more. I believe the benefits of staying in this city outweigh the extra expense.

Examiner 2: Okay, now, Candidate 2, the course on Contemporary American Literature is quite specific. What if some students are not interested in that subject? It will be a bit of a disappointment for them, won't it?

Candidate 2: I don't think so. At least, not any more than any of the other options. For example, Monterey had a focus on seaside activities, and Washington had a focus on politics. What makes New York different, and in my opinion the best choice, is that there is the whole city out there for the students to explore. We can surely all find something that fits with our own interests. And because there is good public transportation, this is possible. In Taos, in contrast, everyone would be stuck in a campsite outside of the city in the evenings, and there would be no option at all for independent activities. And in Washington DC, even if it were possible, it might not be safe for students to go out on their own.

Candidate 1 Information Sheet

Where to go for English Class Excursion

Monterey, California

The following are some characteristics about the city of Monterey, and what it can offer visitors.

- Seaside town, population 30,161
- Friendly small-town atmosphere
- World class aquarium
- Students stay with family
- Day trips to the Redwood Forests
- Watersports - windsurfing, surfing, kayaking

Taos, New Mexico

The following are some characteristics about the city of Taos, and what it can offer to visitors.

- Small safe town, population 4,700
- South-western desert scenery and hiking trails
- Many art galleries to visit
- Students will camp outside town, low accommodation costs
- Hot climate, need hats and sunscreen
- Guided tours of Native American archaeological sites

Candidate 2 Information Sheet

Where to go for English Class Excursion

Washington DC

The following are some characteristics about the city of Washington DC, and what it can offer visitors.

- Large city, population 588,200
- Chances to learn about US political system
- Day excursions to other cities
- Students will stay with a family
- Guided tour of the Whitehouse
- Some crime problems in the city

New York, New York

The following are some characteristics about the city of New York, and what it can offer visitors.

- Dynamic big-city, population more than 8 million
- Many cultural and entertainment options
- Classes offered on contemporary American literature
- Students will stay in university dorms
- Good public transportation, students independent
- Accommodation costs slightly higher than options