

# Guided tours: Communicative Activities

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Have a look at a series of questions and answers about guided tours on a Trip Advisor thread.

Escorted tours and tour companies

Mar 14, 2015, 1:35 PM

My wife and I have traveled to Europe several times. We have always traveled independently. We are interested in going to Spain in August. Since we don't speak fluent Spanish and are getting on (in our Sixties) we have thought about an escorted tour. I checked the forum about several tour companies which seemed to be 🇯🇵 a mixed bag i.e. some positive and some negative about each. We are quiet professorial types, more interested in museums, architecture, and historical sites than sun bathing or drinking. One nine day tour that I saw seemed kind of like a "if this is Tuesday, it must be Belgium" trip. Any suggestions about vendors and leisurely itineraries would be appreciated.

And yes, I know that August is holiday month in Europe.

Welcome to Trip Advisor!

If you and your wife are pretty active, you might also look at Rick Steves tours. I have done Rick Steves (5 tours) and Road Scholar (2 tours) tours to Europe and enjoyed both. I am 65 and felt that the tour groups for the Rick Steves tours were more active while the Road Scholar groups I was on the members were more sedentary. Rick also has a \*🇯🇵 no grumps\* policy that you have to sign, believe it or not, and I think that makes a difference!

Other people have posted they had different experiences with Road Scholar, with the groups being very active.

Both tours include all 🇯🇵 tips for the guides and drivers which is good. Both have about the same level of hotels...clean, comfortable and well-located but not 5\*. With Rick's tours you do have to manage your own luggage to the bus and you are encouraged to pack light so that this is easy for you. Both emphasize the educational and cultural aspects of the area. Both have pretty clear terms and conditions and you understand what you are likely going to see. For both, there may be itinerary changes at the last minute due to local conditions. Both have well-educated guides. Road Scholar usually includes more meals. Rick Steves' usually has a bit more free time to explore on your own.

🇯🇵 Bottom line for me - I would go with either tour company again, giving 🇯🇵 a slight edge to Rick's tours. I would definitely do a Road Scholar tour if it had an itinerary Rick did not cover. I have also done a couple of US-based Road Scholar tours and had a great time. Have a wonderful time!

So John, I was looking at Insight Vacations to see what they offer for Spain because this tour operator typically books the nicer hotels and sometimes the better rooms in the same hotels and better location plus they have business class type seating on their coaches. However they are not in one place more than two days as far as I could tell which is not what you said that you want. But, I did notice this as part of the description of what they do one afternoon in Barcelona:

"This afternoon, come face to face with the genius of one of the twentieth century's most significant artists at the Picasso Museum. From the thousands of pieces on show, your expert art historian imparts a deeper understanding of Picasso's formative years and his relationship with Barcelona. Tonight, drive down to the Port Olímpic, for a delicious dinner in one of the waterfront restaurants. A night drive through the city rounds off the evening, 🇪🇸 taking in some of the illuminated buildings, monuments and twinkling views from the lofty heights of Montjuic."

You see, John, you are lead through the museum by an art historian. I recall a Med cruise when we decided not to take the guided tour of this same museum. We could see how much the tour group got out of the experience due to their guide. We attached ourselves to the group at one painting but missed out on the rest. If you go to this museum be sure to look at that painting. It is one of his early works which he entered into a contest (and didn't win) of three people including a doctor diagnosing a patient on a couch. His Father and I think his mother too are in the roles of models. But what we found to be so interesting is how the perspective changes depending on where you stand. 🇪🇸 Cool.

I hope you find what you want. At least you can read through the reviews and see what 🇪🇸 folks say once they return. Good luck.



## What do you think?

When visiting places, do you prefer to have a guide or use a guide book? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

# 1. Reading activity I

## Taj Mahal Nights.

Taj Mahal Nights is not the name of a new Indian restaurant, but an essential addition to the itinerary on your trip to the sub-continent. The world-famous Taj Mahal reopened its majestic doors to the public for night-time viewing for the first time in twenty years yesterday (Saturday). The occasion didn't quite live up to expectations as although initially it was bathed in moonlight, it later became enveloped in fog. This did not dampen the spirits of one of the 300 lucky visitors, photographer Raghu Rai, who told the AFP press agency "When moonlight falls on the white marble it's like a glowing diamond, a jewel in space. You have to sit far away and gradually walk towards it. Full moon is mind-boggling." Ring your travel agent now!



Don't all rush at once however, because it will only be open on the five nights a month that surround the full moon. Security fears have limited the number of visitors to a maximum of 400 people. A ban on night viewing was imposed in 1984 when it was feared the monument might be attacked at night by Sikh militants who were battling the government for their own homeland in India's northern state of Punjab. Fears for the Taj's safety continued amid the tensions between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and their nuclear weapons race, when it was camouflaged to avoid attack by air.

The 17th-century architectural masterpiece was built by the heartbroken Mughul emperor Shah Jahan as a monument of his love for his second wife Mumtaz Mahal. It is now recognized as one of the seven modern wonders of the world as well as one of the most romantic and photographed sightseeing spots. It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1983, meaning the Indian government is directly responsible for any changes to the site. It received a facelift two years ago in preparation for its 350th anniversary, celebrated in September.

Source: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0411/28.tajMahalNights.html>

## Self-evaluation

Decide if the following are true or false.

**Taj Mahal Nights is the name of a new Indian restaurant.**

- True.
- False.

**The Taj Mahal is on the Indian sub-continent**

The Taj Mahal is on the Indian sub-continent.

- True.
- False.

**The Taj Mahal reopened its doors for night-time viewing yesterday.**

- True.
- False.

**The Taj Mahal will be open every night from now on.**

- True.
- False.

**Taj Mahal night viewing was banned in 1954.**

- True.
- False.

**The Taj Mahal was attacked by the Pakistani air force.**

- True.
- False.

**The Taj Mahal was built 350 years ago.**

- True.
- False.

**The Taj Mahal was built for a British king.**

- True.
- False.

**The Taj Mahal is a monument of love.**

- True.
- False.

**The Taj Mahal is waiting to be a UNESCO World Heritage Site.**

- True.
- False.

# Self-evaluation

Match the following words with the most likely definitions, keeping the article in mind.

## Essential.

- Colourful oils Indian people put on their foreheads.
- Very very very necessary.

## Sub-continent.

- A name commonly used instead of 'India'.
- A large underwater area of land on which people once lived.

## Bathed.

- To seem to be washed or covered in something.
- The feeling from eating too many Indian cakes.

## Enveloped.

- To send lots of mail at the same time.
- To be covered by something that is usually nice.

## Mind-boggling.

- Too amazing for our mind to fully understand.
- Clearing small bombs buried underground.

## Limited.

- To move your arms and legs quickly.
- A maximum has been out on a number of something.

## Imposed.

- To force or apply as compulsory.
- To stand straight for a photograph.

## Militant.

- One person in a thousand.
- Someone who fights for their beliefs.

## Amid.

- In the middle of.
- The nurse who delivers babies in India.

**Masterpiece.**

- An amazing, outstanding work of art, music, architecture...
- A wig worn by Indian men.

**Designated.**

- Chosen for a special purpose.
- So badly designed it has to be started again.

**Facelift.**

- To make someone look up when they are sad.
- A restyling, cleaning or modernization.

## 1.1 Reading Activity II

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### Reading Activity II

Read the text about dark tourism and choose the best answer.

## 'Dark tourism' study centre launched by university

"Dark tourism" - where visitors travel to sites of death, brutality and terror - is to be the subject of a dedicated centre for academic research at the University of Central Lancashire.

The Institute for Dark Tourism Research is said to be the world's first such academic centre. Researchers say they want to examine why people "feel compelled to visit sites like Auschwitz or Ground Zero". Director Philip Stone says such places make people face their "own mortality". The institute, which is being launched on Tuesday, will look at the relationship between places with terrible associations - and tourists who use their leisure time to visit them.

Dr Stone says that this includes places such as the site of the 9/11 attacks in New York, Nazi concentration camps and the sites of disasters such as the Chernobyl nuclear accident in Ukraine. He says that going to such places becomes a form of "secular pilgrimage", with people feeling they need to visit them.

Dr Stone says his research suggests that visitors want to find some kind of meaning in these places of suffering. Visitors try to empathise with victims and imagine the motivations of the perpetrators, he says, and then visitors have a sense of relief that they can step back into the safety of their own lives. "People feel anxious before - and then better when they leave, glad that it's not them," says the centre's executive director.

His research has looked at people who visit such sites as part of a wider holiday, rather than people who have specifically travelled to see them. He describes a couple who reported that they only went to the Ground Zero site at the end of a visit to New York, because going any earlier would have upset them for the rest of the holiday. But they still clearly felt compelled to visit, he says.

Any scene of disaster or violence is going to have an uneasy relationship with tourism - in terms of how sensitively such events are presented, and how visitors are expected to behave. But he says the "packaging" of such sites can be what people experience, rather than recognition of the awful real-life events which are being commemorated. There is a "blurred line between memorialisation and tourism", he says.

1.- Dark tourism consists in:



- a) visiting places where there are no lights.
- b) visiting places at night.
- c) visiting places historically associated with death and tragedy.

The main objective of the researchers from the Institute of Dark Tourism Research is to

- a) Examine the main reasons people have to visit these sites.
- b) Think about ways of making this kind of tourism more successful and attractive to people.
- c) Convince people not to go to these places.

3. Some of the most visited sites in the world are:

- a) Abandoned places such as houses, hospitals or prisons.
- b) Places where terrorist attacks have taken place, sites of natural disasters or man-made disasters and places of human atrocities.
- c) Sites where there have been paranormal apparitions or cemeteries.

4. When visiting these places, the visitors want to:

- a) Empathise with victims and reaffirm their sense of safety.
- b) Take pictures so they can post them in their Instagram accounts in order to get more followers and likes.
- c) Empathise with the perpetrators of crimes.

5. The subjects of the research:

- a) Have specifically travelled to visit them.
- b) Visit these sites as a part of a wider holiday.
- c) Are students on a school trip with their teachers.

Fuente: BBC news <http://www.bbc.com/news/education-17814100>

## 2. Listening activity I

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Listen to an expert talking about the pros and cons of tourism industry. Are these statements true or false? Once you have done the exercise below you can listen again and read at the same time using the transcript provided.

[Script](#)



### Self-evaluation

**The economic consequences of tourism always bring positive effects.**

- True.
- False.

**Many jobs have been created in Bali because of the growing tourism industry.**

- True.
- False.

**In general, the best jobs go to foreigners.**

- True.
- False.

**More and more is being used for goods from outside the island.**

- True.
- False.

**Creating installations and facilities for tourists in Bali has caused environmental problems.**

- True.
- False.

**One result of the jobs available for tourism has been internal migration to the coast.**

- True
- False

**Over half of Spanish animals are in danger of extinction.**

- True
- False

**The Mediterranean is getting cleaner, according to the WHO.**

- True
- False

**The negative effects of tourism have led to improvements in environmental protection.**

- True
- False

## **2.1 Listening Activity II**

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# Listening Activity

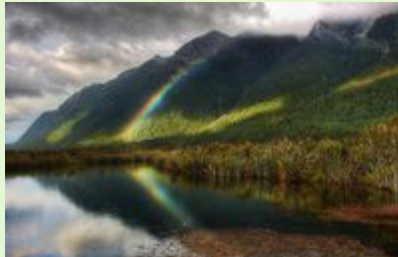
Listen to four descriptions of tours. Number the sentences, 1 to 4, according to the tour they refer to. Once you have done the exercise below you can listen again and read at the same time using the transcript provided.

[Script](#)

## 1. Niagara Falls.



## 2. Original Hobbiton Movie Set from The Lord of the Rings movie trilogy.



## 3. Wales.



## 4. Adventure Safari in Kenya.



# Self-evaluation

Number the sentences, 1 to 4, according to the tour they refer to. Write the number of the tour in the appropriate gap.

## Matching exercise

Sentence	Relación	Tour
The trip can last between three and eight days.	<input type="text"/>	
There is a café.	<input type="text"/>	
There are helicopter tours.	<input type="text"/>	
The countryside is very popular.	<input type="text"/>	2. Original Hobbiton Movie Set from The Lord of the Rings movie
You can see wild animals	<input type="text"/>	
The tour lasts two hours.	<input type="text"/>	
You can take the tour between May and December.	<input type="text"/>	
There are bus and double deck bus tours.	<input type="text"/>	
There are rapids along the river.	<input type="text"/>	4. Adventure Safari in Kenya
This tour is very good if you are interested in history.	<input type="text"/>	

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### 3. Speaking activity

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Read the following quotation and take some notes arguing in favour or against the viewpoint expressed. Then give your opinion on the forum of the unit.



"There was a time when travelling brought the traveller into contact with civilizations which were radically different from his own and impressed him in the first place by their strangeness. During the last few centuries such instances have become increasingly rare. Whether he is visiting India or America, the modern traveller is less surprised than he cares to admit."

*From Tristes Tropiques by Claude Lévi-Strauss.*



## 4. Writing activity

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Design a poster to be put up in hotels in Buffalo, NY, advertising a day trip to Niagara Falls for next Sunday. Use information from the first session of this section and any other from the internet and remember to include:

- ✔ What the guests will see.
- ✔ The time of departure and return to the hotel.
- ✔ The cost of the trip.
- ✔ How or where guests can get the tickets.



Post it on the unit forum.

# Appendix: Licences of Resources

## Licences of Resources used in Communicativ

Recurso (1)	Datos del recurso (1)	Recurso (2)	
	By: Bobcatnorth (Away). Licence: CC by-nc-sa. From: <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/bobcatnorth/3598902363/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/bobcatnorth/3598902363/</a>		By: Stuch Licence: From: <a href="http://ww">http://ww</a>
	By: Jelle Drok. Licence: CC by-nc-sa. From: <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/29850501@N06/2788774099/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/29850501@N06/2788774099/</a>		By: Nico Licence: From: <a href="http://">htt</a>
	By: CEJA. Licence: Uso educativo no comercial. From: CEJA.		By: Friar' Licence: From: <a href="http://ww">http://ww</a>
	By: Tom Walter. Licence: CC by-sa. From: <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/tomwalter/3791266700/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/tomwalter/3791266700/</a>		By: CEJA/ Licence: From: CE
	By: caruba. Licence: CC by-nc. From: <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/denial_land/4001667445/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/denial_land/4001667445/</a>		By: A For Licence: From: <a href="http://ww">http://ww</a>