

Living abroad: advantages and disadvantages

Reading

Writing introduction

Getting away from it all

Good points about moving away	Downsides of moving away

Getting away from it all

- 1 When I graduated from university a few years ago, I didn't really have any concrete plans for the future. A lot of my friends already had jobs lined up and went straight to work, but things weren't so clear-cut for me. After studying hard for three years, I just wanted to take my time before I rushed into making any decisions about my career.
- 2 London is great, but after growing up there, then spending my student years in the capital, I decided that I needed a change of scenery. I started to look into the possibility of taking a gap year and did a bit of research. In my mind, it would be a good way to buy me some time to think things through. And of course, on top of that, I was very excited about the opportunity to have an adventure! I also knew that having a year out wouldn't really harm my job prospects because employers generally look favourably on it.
- 3 One night I was out with some friends and I got talking to a guy called Ian. He told me that he had been living and working out in New York for the past six months on an international exchange programme. He was working for a market-research company in the centre of Manhattan and living with a group of other British people who were also carrying out work placements in the city. It sounded right up my street and just the kind of opportunity I was looking for. I took some contact details from Ian, and within a week I had applied for a position on the scheme. A month or so later, I was called for an interview and the rest, as they say, is history!
- 4 Arriving in New York after all that hard work at university was an unforgettable experience. I'll never forget standing on Fifth Avenue for the first time and looking up at the Empire State Building while yellow taxis raced up and down. I felt like I was in a scene from a movie. I had to pinch myself.
- 5 Even though it was the first time I had spent an extended period of time away from home, the first few months passed by very quickly. Looking back, it was probably down to the fact that there were lots of other British people around. I had a kind of instant social life. I think because we were all a long way from home and starting afresh, we quickly bonded and became good friends. New York has so much to offer, and soon I had started to discover new interests. My friends back in England laughed when I told them about my cocktail-making classes at night school! I love hip-hop music and street art, so it was easy for me to immerse myself in the New York culture.
- 6 Although my work placement wasn't exactly what I had expected, I gained valuable experience and knew that whatever happened, it would look good on my CV. Anyway, my year abroad was more about the chance to broaden my horizons and consider my future options than about the work.
- 7 I can't say everything about my New York adventure was plain sailing. There were times when I really missed my family and friends. If I had a bad day or was just feeling down, I didn't have the same support network of friends that I could go to back at home to cheer me up. Having said that, I was able to keep in contact with everyone fairly regularly via phone or email, so I was never too homesick.
- 8 On the whole, I would describe my year in New York as a life-changing experience and an opportunity that I'm happy to say I made the most of. I got the chance to live in one of the most vibrant and cosmopolitan cities in the world, I became a much more outgoing person and, above all, I made lots of great friends along the way. I certainly don't regret my decision to go.

- 1 clear arrangements (paragraph 1) concrete plans
- 2 had jobs organized (paragraph 1)
- 3 to not hurry (paragraph 1)
- 4 hurried (paragraph 1)
- 5 needed to see new places and have new experiences (paragraph 2)
- 6 give myself extra time to (do something) (paragraph 2)
- 7 damage future work opportunities (paragraph 2)
- 8 exactly the kind of thing I like (paragraph 3)
- 9 organized programme or course (paragraph 3)
- 10 I couldn't believe the moment was real (paragraph 4)
- 11 beginning a new life in a different place (paragraph 5)
- 12 become completely involved in (an experience) (paragraph 5)
- 13 see more of the world (paragraph 6)
- 14 easy or without problems (paragraph 7)
- 15 improve my mood (paragraph 7)
- 16 remain in touch with (paragraph 7)
- 17 full of life (paragraph 8)

Are you ready to move abroad? Take the test!

Complete the statements below with the correct word from the box, then score yourself on each one from 1 to 5.

adapt cope easily ~~mix~~ open pick sample scratch sense touch

	Yes					No				
1 I find it easy to <u>mix</u> with new people.	1	2	3	4	5					
2 I can to new situations easily.	1	2	3	4	5					
3 I'm not worried about losing with old friends.	1	2	3	4	5					
4 I make friends	1	2	3	4	5					
5 I am able to up new languages without much trouble.	1	2	3	4	5					
6 People say I'm-minded and friendly.	1	2	3	4	5					
7 When I travel somewhere new, I like to the local food.	1	2	3	4	5					
8 I feel I can with most challenges that life throws at me.	1	2	3	4	5					
9 Starting a new life from doesn't worry me at all.	1	2	3	4	5					
10 I have a keen of adventure.	1	2	3	4	5					

Check your score in the answer key on page 115. Compare with a partner.

What were the biggest differences in your answers?

Answers

- 10–23 It's time to pack your bags and head off for your new life overseas. Whether it's New York or New Delhi, you would have no problems whatsoever adapting to another way of life.
- 24–37 Don't book your ticket just yet. While you do have an adventurous streak, a two-week holiday might be better for you than leaving long term.
- 38–50 The only thing you would need to pack in your suitcase is a box of tissues because you would miss everybody and everything. Home is definitely where your heart is!

Model essay: ***Advantages and disadvantages essay***

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

These days, more and more people are going to other countries for significant periods of time, either to find a job or to study. There are clearly many benefits to doing this, but people who live abroad can also face some difficulties.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living and working in a foreign country.

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Nowadays, taking a year out to live or study abroad is becoming increasingly popular. For many people, especially young adults, the chance to spend an extended period of time overseas is an attractive one. However, there are both pros and cons to deciding to do this. In this essay, I will discuss some of the reasons why moving abroad is so popular and some of the challenges to be overcome.

Let's begin by looking at the advantages of moving away. One of the main positives of heading overseas is that it broadens your horizons. What I mean by this is that you have the chance to meet people from different cultural backgrounds and learn to cope with foreign customs and food. This can make you more rounded as a person.

Secondly, moving abroad can lead to a better quality of life. Take British people for example. Thousands of people from the UK move to Spain and Australia every year. These countries have warmer climates and encourage a better work-life balance. In addition, by

living overseas, you can gain qualifications and language skills, which may improve promotion prospects on your return.

Turning to the other side of the argument, culture shock is a major problem. Many people who take a year out find it hard to cope with the language barrier, the food and general cultural differences. This often leads to homesickness and in some cases a sense of isolation.

Another issue is that it can be difficult to start a new life from scratch. In other words, when you move abroad, you have to make new friends and find your place in the community. This process takes time and can be especially challenging if there is also a language barrier to deal with.

All things considered, starting life in a foreign country is never easy. You need to weigh up the pros of the better lifestyle, weather and so on, and the cons of culture shock and language barrier. Personally, I believe the benefits in terms of personal growth eventually outweigh any negatives.

Organizing your essay

- Structure and linking
 - conclusion
 - introduction
 - main body (disadvantages)
 - main body (advantages)
 - the writer's opinion

What is the writer's opinion about moving abroad? Do you agree?

Organizing your essay

These chunks are used in the essay to organize ideas and help the reader to follow them. Find and correct the mistake in each one.

- | | | | | |
|---|--|---|----------------------------------|---|
| a | Turning to the other hand of the argument, ... | 1 | These days, ... | b |
| b | Nowaday, ... | 2 | Another problem is that ... | |
| c | Other issue is that ... | 3 | Having looked at both sides, ... | |
| d | All thinking considered, ... | 4 | In addition, ... | |
| e | Secondally, ... | 5 | I will start by looking at ... | |
| f | Let's begin by look at ... | 6 | On the other hand, ... | |

Number the chunks in Exercise 3 in the order they appear in the essay. Which part of the essay did you find them in (introduction, main body or conclusion)? How does each one help the reader?

Writing introductions

sentence	formula for introduction (advantages and disadvantages essay)
1 Nowadays, taking a year out to live or study abroad is becoming increasingly popular.	
2 For many people, especially young adults, the chance to spend an extended period of time overseas is an attractive one.	
3 However, there are both pros and cons to deciding to do this.	
4 In this essay, I will discuss some of the reasons why moving abroad is so popular and some of the challenges to be overcome.	

- a Add an extra sentence to support the first.
- b Focus on the question in your own words.
- c Tell the reader your plan.
- d Write a general sentence about the topic (living/working abroad).

- 2** Now read this question and a model introduction to it. The four steps in the introduction are in the wrong order. Rewrite it correctly.

These days, people work in more than one job, and often change career several times during their life. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?

In this essay, I will look at both sides and try to draw some conclusions.
Many have at least one change of career at some point in their lives.
Nowadays, it is becoming more and more common for people to take two jobs.
But what are the benefits of this situation, and what are the drawbacks?