

Language

Travel vocabulary, describing a place

General information

You can watch the video on your computer or download it onto a portable device. You can choose to watch it with or without subtitles. Use the *pause* and *cursor* controls to watch parts of the video again. There are exercises on this activity sheet to complete before you watch, while you are watching and after you watch.

Important: This is an authentic extract from a BBC TV programme. Don't try to understand every word you hear. Watch and listen for specific information by completing these tasks.

Programme details

This video is from a series called *Culture Shock*. In the series, experts and creative people talk about different forms of art and literature.

Before you watch

1 Complete the descriptions using the words in the box.

expedition experiences journals journey
travelled went

- 1 Herodotus was an ancient Greek historian who lived in the 5th century BC. He _____ widely around the Mediterranean and Black Sea, writing about his _____.
- 2 Marco Polo (1254–1324) was an Italian merchant who _____ on an epic 24-year _____ to Asia with his father and uncle, writing about their adventures.
- 3 Captain Robert Scott (1868–1912) was a Royal Navy officer and explorer. His _____ about his final doomed _____ to the Antarctic are famous.

2 What do the three people all have in common?

3 In what ways do you think travel writing has changed in the last 30 years?

While you watch

4 Watch the video and write the names of the places the authors have written about.

1 William Dalrymple

2 Sara Wheeler

5 Watch the video again and complete the sentences with the words in the box.

diverse enormous important intrigued potent
ultimate

- 1 It is quite literally the most _____ white sheet.
- 2 You've got to show how _____, how extraordinary, how surprising the world is.
- 3 The travel writer's job has never been more _____.
- 4 For me (this place) was always the _____ destination for myself as a travel writer.
- 5 It's a very _____ symbol.
- 6 In ten years I am only more baffled and more _____ by (this place).

6 Match the quotes in exercise 5 with the writers. Write the numbers.

1 William Dalrymple

2 Sara Wheeler

7 Watch the video again to check your answers to exercises 5 and 6.

8 What do you think the phrases in *italics* mean? Re-write them in your own words.

1 There are few places in the world that *haven't been well trodden*.

2 Some places that you go to, you feel *you've got the hang of it* in a month or a couple of months.

3 One doesn't have to bother about trying to *get to grips with* the culture because there isn't any.

4 What I wanted to do in *Terra Incognita* was *weave together lots of strands*.

After you watch

9 Answer the questions.

- 1 Which of the two places in the video would you most like to visit and why?

- 2 How would you compare the two places?

- 3 How would you describe the country where you live, compared to the two places in the video?

Glossary

baffle (*verb*) – if a problem, someone's behaviour etc baffles you, you cannot understand it

enthralling (*adjective*) – so interesting or exciting that you give it all your attention

fuse (*verb*) – to combine to form something new

grip (*noun*) – a firm strong hold

gripping (*adjective*) – very exciting and interesting

potent (*adjective*) – powerful, or effective

strand (*noun*) – one of the different aspects of something

tabula rasa (*noun*) – the condition of a person's mind before it has been changed or influenced in any way

tread (*verb*) – to walk or step on something

weave (*verb*) – to include something in a story, plan etc