



**Upper secondary
Week 14**

The Write Tribe

PAPER 2 TECHNIQUES

SECTION C



Text 3

The article below is by a writer who highlights some real issues that so called 'bold' backpacking travellers can bring to the lands they explore. Read it carefully and answer Questions 14 – 19.

1 Many backpackers are well intentioned when setting out for beckoning distant lands that perhaps they have only read about in guidebooks or heard about from friends who have made the journey themselves. As these travellers arrive on foreign soil, they boost the local economy by staying at local hotels, guesthouses or hostels and eating at local establishments. And although this sort of emphasis on the local is a key to responsible tourism, if you multiply the individual backpacker by the thousands upon thousands that descend upon many areas, what they leave behind will eventually take its toll. 5

2 British journalist and travel writer Martin Stevenson has considered this issue in depth and is in the process of finishing his book *More Than Footprints? How Backpacking Lost Its Way*, which expresses his philosophy of how backpacking culture affects the areas these 10 independent travellers visit. For instance, Stevenson describes backpackers inner tubing down the river in Vang Vieng in Laos, drunk and half-naked in a complete party scene. 15

3 Alongside the river were bars that had sprung up, many complete with ropes, ziplines and – in one case – even a water slide. Accidents – the local hospital recorded 27 tourist deaths in 2011, although the actual number may have been higher since some travellers were airlifted out of the area – eventually led the government to move in and start tearing down the bars. 15

4 Stevenson was one of the hundreds of backpackers who tubed down the lake before the government shut down the bars that drew foreigners to the area. He writes from the perspective of both the backpackers and the local community of Vang Vieng. On the one hand, there are the river-bar-hopping foreigners treating the area like spring break, Asia-style. Empty beer cans can be seen floating down rivers when before there were none. On the other side are the establishments popping up to support the partying even though the local culture does not condone such public displays of drunkenness and scanty attire. 20

"The town's entire economy – which had been single-handedly created by backpackers – ended up revolving around the party scene on the river, so when the government shut it down, the town's economy was shut down with it," Stevenson writes. 25

5 It's that gentle balance between backpackers and the local community they visit – and sometimes treat as an amusement park – that *More Than Footprints?* tries to address with sincerity, wit and personal experiences that are sometimes light-hearted and often provide serious doses of reality. 30

"When I started the research I had no idea just how big an impact we backpackers have on places," Stevenson said. "The concept of *More Than Footprints?* is less about telling travelers what they should leave, and more about being aware that we do leave things behind. Backpackers have traditionally believed that we travel more lightly across the places we visit, but with our ever-growing numbers, the smaller individual footprint we have has to be multiplied by the number of us carrying the same guidebook." 35

6 Stevenson urges backpackers to ask themselves how many others have stayed in the same hostel, eaten in the same restaurant and drunk beer at the same bar before them and how many will do the same after they leave. Some travelers may smugly 40 think that because they are going it on their own, independently, they are "better" than the tourists who swarm all-inclusive resorts. But the two types of traveler are more interconnected than either one may think.

"The backpacking 'industry,' especially in Australia and New Zealand, is beginning to resemble that all-inclusive model. The massive backpacker hostel chain Base is 45 owned by the French hotel group Accor," said Stevenson. "The CEO of Nomad World, which is one of the biggest backpacking companies in Australia, has said: 'We make these young people believe they are intrepid adventurers blazing a virgin trail – in fact we provide everything on a plate.'"

Stephanie Grace Loleng for EthicalTraveler.org

14. With reference to paragraph 1 (line 5), explain what the author means by 'responsible tourism'. [1]

15. Stevenson's book is titled 'More than Footprints? How Backpacking Lost its Way'. What does he mean by questioning the phrase 'More than Footprints'? [2]

16. From paragraph 2 (line 9), in what way does Stevenson believe that backpacking has 'lost its way'? [1]

17. With reference to paragraph 4, what dilemma is faced by a typical local government pertaining to the backpacking industry? [2]

18. Two people who have read the article made the following comments.

It is ridiculous for the local authorities to tear down all the pubs and bars along the river where the fun is. After all, what harm could a little fun do? Besides, we don't damage anything - in fact, our presence is helpful to the locals!



The authorities definitely did the right thing! The river is full of beer bottles, tourists have little sense of decency and the students in my class are rushing to the river for reasons now other than fishing and swimming!



(i) State two benefits that a backpacking tourist can bring to the host country. [2]

(ii) State 2 ways in which a backpacker can harm the host country. Provide evidence from the text. [2]

Harming the environment –

Harming society –

19. Using your own words as far as possible, summarise the reasons for and against backpacking, including the dilemma often faced by host countries, as elaborated in the text above.

Use information from the entire text.

Your summary must be in continuous writing (not note form). It must not be longer than 80 words (not counting the words given to help you begin).

We should encourage responsible tourism such as backpacking as ...

No. of words [15]