

THE PROS AND CONS OF ECOTOURISM



You are going to read an article about the pros and cons of ecotourism. For questions 1-10 choose from the sections (A-D). The sections may be chosen more than once.

In which section does the writer

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| explain how some non-green businesses exploit the market for ecological holidays? | 1. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| mention the nature of the relationship between travel firms and local people? | 2. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| suggest that ecotourism is largely insignificant in solving the world's environmental problems? | 3. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| exemplify an effect of ecotourism on local wildlife? | 4. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| describe a negative result of putting the preservation of nature above economic well-being? | 5. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| explain why conventional tourism benefits a region less than it should? | 6. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| states the proportion of tourism as a whole that ecotourism represents? | 7. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| mention how the meaning of important cultural objects can change? | 8. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| explain the underlying principle on which the ecotourism industry is based? | 9. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| describe how the financial incentives of ecotourism encourage local people to protect nature? | 10. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

A.

Ecotourism lacks a universally-accepted definition, but is generally regarded as responsible and sustainable travel to natural areas that both conserves the environment and improves the well-being of those living there. At the heart of it is the assumption that in a predominantly capitalist world where nature plays second fiddle to creating wealth, any conservation needs to pay for itself. Money generated from ecotourism is invested back into the conservation of the environment it impacts upon. Supporters argue that, by involving residents in accommodating tourists and acting as guides, for example, ecotourism aids development, both regionally and nationally. In many cases, communities work as equal partners with ecotourism organisations rather than just as employees. However, some detractors point out that the environment is effectively prioritised above the needs of residents. Ecotourism's apparent obsession with this, far from giving a boost to the development of wealth in a community, can actually damage the ability of the majority of inhabitants to lift themselves out of poverty.

B.

The travel industry contributes over seven trillion dollars to the world economy each year. Having a holiday is big business! Despite what its critics may say, giving a hand to nature in this way has the potential to offer communities some serious economic opportunities as it now accounts for about a fifth of this total, and is continuing to expand. It generates money from natural environments by encouraging tourists to pay for items like accommodation, souvenirs and entrance fees during their stay. Seeing the environment as a valuable resource that communities can use to generate income encourages them to make choices that will help them to take care of it. Yet, inevitably, a fine balance has to be kept to prevent the influx of eco-tourists from degrading the very environment they came to see. Unleashing hundreds of visitors on a delicate ecosystem can, even with the best of intentions, lead to unforeseen environmental impact, such as inadvertently encouraging the animals that live there to become dependent on being fed by tourists.

C.

It's estimated that, of all the money that travellers spend on traditional holidays, only around half of it stays in the area or country that they visit. The remainder leaks out of the host region and through the books of international hotel chains and tour operators. One intention of ecotourism is to limit as much of this bleeding away of capital from the local economy as possible through maximising the involvement of local businesses and people. The recent wave of successful environmentally-friendly commerce has also led some regular chains and operators to label themselves as ecotourism-friendly by making very minor changes to their existing practices through a process known as greenwashing. They can market themselves in the same way as a genuinely sustainable project by simply changing their cleaning products or recycling more of their waste. Anyone seeking their dream eco-holiday should check the credentials of seemingly environmentally-friendly organisations very carefully indeed. That said, sustainability is becoming much more mainstream and increasing numbers of businesses are genuinely adopting good environmental and social practices.

D.

One powerful motivation that drives eco-tourism is the chance for holidaymakers to take a look at and experience civilisations that are very different to their own, which in turn can have a positive and affirming knock-on effect on that society. Allowing local people to show their way of life to the world not only tends to make them more positive about tourism, but also empowers them as a community. However, there can of course be less welcome results, such as traditional symbols and artefacts being transformed merely into merchandise to sell to visitors. There can also be disharmony created between previously friendly local factions if one is seen or thought to benefit more than others. Another question ecotourism raises is whether it has a role to play in conservation on anything other than a small scale. By its very nature, it can only take place in a highly limited range of ecosystems as issues of access, susceptibility to damage and the elusive nature of wildlife make some areas inappropriate for exploitation by ecotourism.

Source: Exam Booster for Advanced