Which student mentions …

1 a daily activity that was not enjoyable alone?

2 a good way of keeping travel plans flexible?

3 appreciating not having to waste time organising practical details?

4 becoming more tolerant of other people?

5 feeling better after keeping in touch with others?

6 having doubts at the beginning of a trip?

7 liking not having to agree an itinerary with others?

8 meeting people with a similar outlook on life?

9 missing having someone to help with decision-making?

10 the advisability of going for the best accommodation you can afford?

Solo travel in Australia

A Phil Morston

I remember sitting in the plane thinking to myself: 'What have I let myself in for?' The first few days were scary: I was all on my own on the other side of the world with nothing planned. But I soon met up with people to travel with. Of course, some you get on with, others you don't. Some, for example, had every day planned out day in minute detail, when in practice things can change and it's great to have the freedom to go with the flow. And that's easy enough to do. You can take the Oz Experience bus down the west coast, jumping off whenever you want, then catching the next bus when you're ready to move on again. Being away for a year, you do occasionally get lonely. To cheer myself up, I'd sit down and write a fortnightly email home about everything I'd been up to.

B Leila Stuart

Without doubt, you meet all sorts of people when travelling alone. I even made a friend on the plane out there. Some people are keener to make friends than others, of course, but if someone's chosen to do the same type of trip as you, you've probably got lots of ideas in common. The advantages of a pre-planned tour are that you can get an agency to take care of all the arrangements, which can be time-consuming to do yourself – but it does mean that you're tied to a predetermined itinerary, which wouldn't suit everyone. There's also the safety aspect in terms of the places you visit often being very remote. If

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you go off trekking in the wilds of a foreign country alone, it could be difficult to get help if things went wrong.

C Danny Holt

Travelling solo creates opportunities to meet people. There's no substitute for sharing the experiences of the day with a companion, and being alone forces you to seek someone out. I'd never have met so many people if I'd been travelling with friends. There's also the wonderful freedom to do what you like, when you like, without having to convince anybody that it's a good idea. However, there are downsides; meal times are something I've never really got to grips with in all the years I've travelled alone. But my advice would be to give solo travel a go – it can be very liberating. Maybe try a short trip to begin with, just in case it's not for you. Another thing is stay in the nicest places your budget permits. Miserable hostels can really spoil a trip. And if you really are happy being anti-social, a pair of headphones can ensure the person in the next seat doesn't bore you to death on the plane!

D Kerry Winterton

Fun as it is, travelling solo also has its low points, including occasional loneliness and the pressure that you're under to make your own mind up about everything. I chose to travel alone because I wanted to do something different, but I did miss people from home, and sometimes fell out with other travellers I'd teamed up with along the way. But I learnt to accept that some people have different attitudes to mine; that you have to put up with irritating people in hostels and accept not having as much privacy as you're used to at home. The best thing for me about travelling alone was that it was a brilliant experience that enhanced my independence and helped me feel more self-assured. I knew I was on my own, which made me make more effort to speak to people and by doing so I made lots of great friends.

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