A 'Must-See' Attraction? — Travel, Tourism & Disappointment Worksheet

Name:_____ **Date:**_____

Teacher note: this worksheet practices vocabulary related to travel and tourism and develops critical reading and speaking skills. It is designed for adult C1 students and is suitable for both individual and pair work. The lesson uses authentic-style texts to explore the gap between the hype of famous tourist attractions and the reality of visiting them. It should take approximately 90 minutes to complete.

Student instructions: Read the texts, complete the vocabulary and comprehension exercises, and then discuss the questions with a partner.

1 Warm-up Task: First Impressions

Look at the names of these famous places. For each one, write down **one word** you associate with it. Then, tell a partner if you would be excited or skeptical to visit it.

- The Empire State Building _____
- The Little Mermaid (statue) _____
- Machu Picchu _____
- Waikiki Beach _____
- Mount Rushmore _____

2 Main Practice

Exercise A: Recognition – Match the Disappointment

'Is that it?'

Have you ever visited a famous tourist attraction and been distinctly [1] underwhelmed? Here are some accounts by visitors to some of the world's most well-known tourist sights.

A 'The location is breathtaking, and the fact they got the stones up there without wheels is [2] jaw-dropping. However, it is essentially a pile of rubble, just a load of big stones. The idea is far more amazing than the remnants. The hill behind was beautiful though.' ***Derek, 43***

B 'You always have this image of [3] sheer perfection, yet I will always remember the massive sense of disappointment. The place was barren, soulless, and empty. The sand wasn't white, the hotels were tacky, and there was nothing there that captured my imagination. If somebody hadn't told me it was the famous one, I'd probably never have known I'd been there. It was [4] so average, not the Hawaiian dream you picture.' ***Craig, 31***

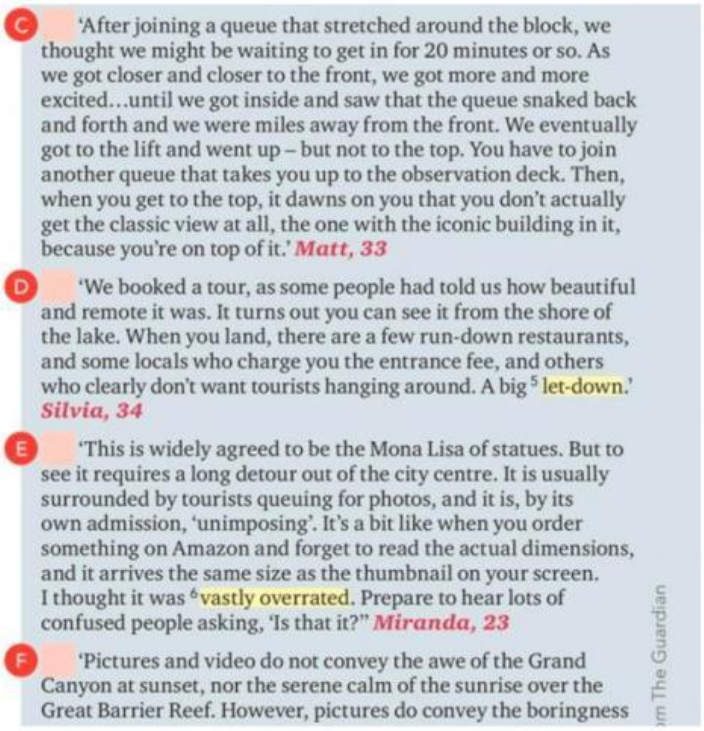
Read the six visitor comments (A–F). Match each comment to the correct attraction (1–6) based on the clues in the text.

1. **The Empire State Building** → Comment ____
2. **The Little Mermaid** → Comment ____
3. **Machu Picchu** → Comment ____
4. **Waikiki Beach** → Comment ____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

5. **Mount Rushmore** → Comment ____

6. **Isla del Sol** → Comment ____



C 'After joining a queue that stretched around the block, we thought we might be waiting to get in for 20 minutes or so. As we got closer and closer to the front, we got more and more excited…until we got inside and saw that the queue snaked back and forth and we were miles away from the front. We eventually got to the lift and went up – but not to the top. You have to join another queue that takes you up to the observation deck. Then, when you get to the top, it dawns on you that you don't actually get the classic view at all, the one with the iconic building in it, because you're on top of it.' ***Matt, 33***

D 'We booked a tour, as some people had told us how beautiful and remote it was. It turns out you can see it from the shore of the lake. When you land, there are a few run-down restaurants, and some locals who charge you the entrance fee, and others who clearly don't want tourists hanging around. A big [5] let-down.' ***Silvia, 34***

E 'This is widely agreed to be the Mona Lisa of statues. But to see it requires a long detour out of the city centre. It is usually surrounded by tourists queuing for photos, and it is, by its own admission, 'unimposing'. It's a bit like when you order something on Amazon and forget to read the actual dimensions, and it arrives the same size as the thumbnail on your screen. I thought it was [6] vastly overrated. Prepare to hear lots of confused people asking, 'Is that it?'" ***Miranda, 23***

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F 'Pictures and video do not convey the awe of the Grand Canyon at sunset, nor the serene calm of the sunrise over the Great Barrier Reef. However, pictures do convey the boringness of these carved faces. You look at it from one angle, then another, then you say, 'OK, cool. Gift shop, then car?' Or you can hike to the top and see the great expanse of…flatness covered by trees. I've never been so disappointed.' ***Rob, 29***

Adapted from The Guardian

Exercise B: Controlled Practice — Vocabulary in Context

Match the highlighted expressions (1–6) from the article to their meanings (A–F).

1. jaw-dropping (Comment A)	A. very ordinary indeed
2. sheer perfection (Comment B)	B. a disappointment
3. so average (Comment B)	C. far less good than everyone says
4. let-down (Comment D)	D. unimpressed
5. vastly overrated (Comment E)	E. as good as it could possibly be
6.underwhelmed (Intro)	F. almost unbelievable

1	2	3	4	5	6

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Exercise C: Controlled Practice — Adjectives for Places

The article uses several adjectives to describe tourist attractions. Look at the words below and decide if they are **positive** or **negative**. Then, match each one to a place or thing it might describe.

- **breathtaking**
- **iconic**
- **run-down**
- **soulless**
- **tacky**

Adjective	Positive / Negative	What might you describe with it? (e.g., a view, a hotel, a restaurant, a building)

Exercise D: Production — Your Own "Underwhelming" Experience

Think of a time you visited a place that was **overrated** or **disappointing**. Write a short paragraph (4–5 sentences) describing your experience. Use at least **three** of the adjectives from Exercise C or the expressions from Exercise B.

Prompts to help you:

- Where did you go?
- What did you expect?
- What was it actually like?
- How did you feel?

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3. Speaking Add-On: The "Hype vs. Reality" Debate

Work in pairs. Choose one of the following statements and discuss whether you agree or disagree. Use examples from your own experience or from the texts.

1. "Social media and movies have ruined the experience of visiting famous tourist attractions."
2. "It is better to visit a place that is not famous and have a great experience, than to visit a famous place and be disappointed."
3. "The most beautiful places in the world are usually the ones that are not in guidebooks."

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