

Matthew Walker, English teacher talks to International Teacher Monthly about his experience of living abroad when he was younger.

1. Has travel changed the way you perceive the world?

I grew up in a small, isolated village in the middle of nowhere with very few links to the outside world. If I hadn't gone overseas, I would find my job more difficult. Travelling allows you to witness many beautiful sights, such as Mount Everest towering in the distance and sunsets at Ayer's Rock in Australia. This has helped me to appreciate the beauty and diversity of our planet.

2. What did you miss most when you were living in other countries?

Of course, living abroad, very often in far-flung places, allowed me to meet other people from different walks of life and I made many new friends. However, living in such out-of-the-way places sometimes meant it was difficult to form close relationships and maintain friendships since I had to change schools frequently. If I had stayed in one place, then I might have closer friends now.

3. How has travelling shaped your life?

Although it was great to meet so many people from a variety of cultures and backgrounds, living off the beaten track in a foreign country without any close friends can be very challenging. It is at times like these, in such secluded places, when you appreciate the importance of family. The old saying 'home is where the heart is' is very true when moving to a completely new country for the first time. I think that I might not appreciate my wife and children as much if I hadn't had their support. Travelling has definitely made me aware of what's important in life.

3 Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)?

Write the correct answer.

1 Matthew was brought up in a city. _____

2 Matthew finds his job difficult. _____

3 Matthew got to know people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. _____

4 Matthew doesn't have many close friends. _____

5 Matthew's family weren't supportive when they were living abroad. _____

6 Living in remote places can often be difficult. _____

