How travel has changed

In the first half of the 19th century, some of the world's most famous explorers were trekking through jungles, climbing dangerous mountain peaks and crossing endless miles of desert. The purpose of this was often to discover new places and trade routes rather than pleasure, and for most people it was the kind of adventure they could only read about, rather than take part in. However, by travelling through unknown and often dangerous new lands, a few of these explorers hoped to test themselves in a way that would increase their physical strength, their courage and their ability to rely on themselves and no-one else. It can be hard for people today to imagine how challenging some of these trips would have been. If you wanted to head north, the stars or a compass would have been your main tools. Many regions, such as deserts and mountains, would have been unmapped. Certainly, travelling in those times involved a lot more risk than any kind of journey today, and there was little chance of easily available help should things go wrong.

By the second half of the 19th century, travel had become easier thanks to the development of the steamship and the growth of railway networks. The tourism industry began to grow from simple beginnings, but travel to other countries for pleasure was, of course, still something that only wealthy people could afford. They travelled mostly in order to gain an appreciation of music, art and literature, and therefore the places they visited tended to be mainly ones with some historical importance, like Rome or Venice. As this type of tour could be hard work, and often go on for weeks or even months, travellers had to dress for both formal occasions (dining and receiving guests) and informal occasions (visiting ancient ruins, etc.). This meant that each traveller needed to take lots of luggage with them (and staff to help transport it).

Huge changes in the travel industry occurred during the 20th century. During the 1960s, air travel became relatively common, and for the first time ordinary people could afford to go abroad for their holidays. Furthermore, travel agencies emerged to conveniently organise flights, hotel rooms, day trips, and so on. While people might have had a good time, this kind of organisation also meant that most people would go to the same resorts, eat at the same restaurants and visit the same shops. In fact, you would spend most of the holiday with the group who had booked the same holiday as you.

Nowadays, tourism continues to change, most of those changes having been brought about by technology. Statistics show that 148.3 million travel bookings are made online each year, 39% of which are accommodation bookings, and 37% are plane tickets. It is now estimated that people spend at least three hours online researching their trips, even

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if they go to a travel agent to make a final purchase. In addition, it is increasingly common for people to create online reviews of hotels, restaurants and so on, after having experienced something while travelling. Although this is very useful for travellers, the effect is that the tourism industry is becoming much more consumer-oriented than ever before, and much more alert to the needs of travellers, in the hope of receiving good reviews. A good travel experience is something you can actively seek out and pay for.
By taking a mobile device on holiday, you can clearly save time, money and effort. The contents of a restaurant menu can be quickly checked. The opening times of a museum can be found immediately. It may be, however, that these are making the travel experience less of an adventure. It is possible that we have lost the notion of going to a new place in order to explore it. It is, perhaps, regrettable if we go to a place and already know what we will find there.

Indeed, a recent survey shows that over 1.8 billion photos are shared online each day. A great many of these are images from holidays, and can share worthwhile information with other travellers. Such photographs can tell you more about a place than any professional advertisement could, and it's likely that they are more honest. Just one amateur photo can give an accurate impression of whether or not a particular festival, ski resort or hotel is the best one to choose.

It seems also that the average traveller is less likely to pack large amounts of clothes, and more likely to take equipment for recording their journey and sharing it with others. According to another survey, the most common things to take are laptops, smartphones, tablets, digital cameras and e-readers (not to mention the adaptors, cables and chargers that accompany them). One recent innovation that is certain to attract consumer attention is a suitcase with its own GPS. Even if the owner loses it, it is easily tracked, wherever it goes.

Back in the 19th century, many of the explorers sat down at the end of a long day to write an entry in their diaries, some of which are now regarded as historical treasures. In the 20th century, it was common for tourists to buy postcards, spend an afternoon writing brief messages, and post them home. Nowadays, we have social media. Regardless of the convenience, and the easily accessed information, if the point of travelling is freedom, it's hard to say that this is what technology allows us to gain. There is a constant pressure nowadays to update others about our lives and the experiences we are having. Many people feel forced into checking everything before they go there, and relying on other people's recommendations about what to do. Surely a holiday is the one time when people shouldn't feel the need to do this.

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Questions 1-5:

Complete the summary using the list of words, A–I, below.

Write the correct letter, A–I, in the gaps.

A plenty of food
B suitable clothes
C basic technology
D several documents
E unique experiences
F cultural education
G personal qualities
H pleasant experiences
I long journeys

Travel experiences from the 19th century to the present day

In the early 19th century, many explorers went travelling in foreign countries. One of the reasons that some of them did this was to develop their (1) _____ during a trip. Because the explorers had (2) _____, their travel experiences were much more challenging than those that people have today. As the 19th century progressed, one aim of early tourism was for wealthy people to enjoy the (3) _____ that they could get from visiting special places. Because journeys might continue for a long time and involve a variety of activities, it was necessary for travellers to take (4) _____ with them. In the mid-20th century, it became more common to travel by plane. It was also usual for travel agents to organise every aspect of a holiday. Although this made things easier for travellers, it also reduced their chances of having (5) _____.

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Questions 6-10:

Do the following statements agree with the writer's views or claims in the reading passage? Write:

YES	if the statement agrees with the views or claims of the writer
NO	if the statement contradicts the view or claims of the writer
NOT GIVEN	if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks

1. It is best to avoid using online reviews as a way of choosing a hotel to stay in.
2. The use of a mobile device on holiday may have negative effects on people's experience on the holiday.
3. An individual traveller's photo is far more useful to other travellers than an official one.
4. It is a good idea for travellers to limit the number of devices that they take with them on their trip.
5. A clear benefit of technology is that it gives people a lot more freedom when they are travelling.

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