

Stage 2 Research Project B

Assessment Type 2: Outcome

To determine “How do I write a travel guide to Myanmar’s Inle Lake for backpackers?” Interviews were conducted to discover certain techniques and methods of travel writing. Relevant secondary research sourced from related professional associations as well as appropriate books, newspapers and websites was also considered. Field work was completed by travelling as a backpacker to Inle Lake, Myanmar in order to collect information for the contents of my guide. This Outcome will include excerpts from my guide ‘*Myanmar’s Inle Lake*’ in order to reflect my knowledge and learnings.

How do I undertake research for a travel guide?

‘The reader wants to feel like she is travelling alongside with the writer, what really caught your eye in a bustling Vietnam market? Have you ever tried to describe the sound of the ever-present wind on a mountain top or to write about the wonderful aromas wafting from the kitchen in an out-of-the-way Italian trattoria?’¹ These rhetorical questions would require a descriptive response appropriate to the particular audience, backpackers. In order to do this I personally, would visually have had to experience these sights, aromas and sounds to descriptively and persuasively write the contents of the guide successfully.²

Challenges which are involved when writing travel pieces included ‘finding the factual information in the first place and making sure it is up to date. Entire countries have disappeared over night while others have constructed sky high buildings in less than hours, weeks or days.’³ Going to the destination and keeping an eye on credible web sites, current affairs, books and primary resources gathered from locals is a valued key to writing a travel guide.⁴ It is essential to write down the important details of sights, aromas and sounds for the reader to appeal to the audience.⁵

“Colours, impossible to hide, burst from each family owned stall selling fresh fruit and vegetables, home remedies of medicine, gatherings of flowers wrapped in the Burmese newspaper with intricate smudged text, ancient brass trinkets, pottery and woven goods.”⁶

Synthesis (S2)
Insightful and thorough substantiation is evident as the key findings are discussed and substantiated with reference to primary and secondary sources. There is heavy reliance on the use of direct quotes rather than paraphrasing words. Varied sources are used including an interview, written sources and personal travel experience.

¹ *10 Terrific Travel Writing Tips*, Journey Woman, Lori Beattie, a director of Artistic Adventures a company dedicated to teaching the art of documenting travel [online article] <http://www.journeywoman.com/traveltales/topten.html>

Published: 1997, Accessed: 10 February 2013

² *How to Write Descriptively*, written by Karen Silvestri a English Professor at Palm Beach State College [online article] http://www.ehow.com/how_4523249_write-descriptively.html Published: 2008, Accessed: 18 March 2013

³ Brad Crouch, writer for Adelaide’s *Sunday Mail*, Interview conducted by author on 5 April 2013

⁴ Ibid

⁵ *How to Write Descriptively*, written by Karen Silvestri a English Professor at Palm Beach State College [online article] http://www.ehow.com/how_4523249_write-descriptively.html Published: 2008, Accessed: 18 March 2013

⁶ *Travelling in Myanmar’s Inle Lake*, written by Author, 2013

In 2012-2013 Christmas holidays I travelled throughout Myanmar with my family. While embracing every single moment of this amazing experience I kept a daily journal in order to record the sights, sounds and smells of the country to keep the memories fresh so the travel guide would be produced in an appealing way. This is where I put the recommended advice of recording descriptive details of Inle Lake into practice.

What writing techniques are used in travel writing?

All writers have different purposes for writing and use numerous techniques in order to fit each purpose.⁷ In this case, a wide range of techniques were researched to find the best writing technique for a travel guide. 'A key to travel writing is to capture the essence of a place without using flowery writing. Keep it crisp and informative, but the use of colour here and there has the ability to put the audience in place'.⁸ It was recommended to 'Maintain an objective voice – avoid over personalization. Be knowledgeable but balance interesting anecdotes with useful practical information'.⁹ When particular moments have affected you personally when travelling, this does not necessarily make interesting reading for an audience. Bowes firmly recommended avoiding personal stories such as missed airlights and buses and experienced sicknesses, unless they informed the reader how to prevent these mishaps.¹⁰

Writing an account originating from personal experience, in past tense, interwoven with facts, descriptions and observation in a brief form is recommended.¹¹ This way all vital information is included with the use of descriptive and persuasive language entwined with the factual information.

Synthesis (S3)
Ideas are expressed clearly and fluently and organised logically into paragraphs under sub headings.

Synthesis (S1)
The use of appropriate examples from the travel guide written by the student provides evidence of the synthesis of knowledge and skills of writing.

*'Under the hundreds of tarps sheltering the busy flowing market from the unpredictable beaming sun or bucketing rain there is a sense of calmness and peace while watching the happily aged women trading goods early in the misty morning from the hours of 4-11am.'*¹²

'Description is that use of feeling, seeing, hearing, smelling and tasting. Through description, a writer helps the reader experience what they have experienced.'¹³ They explain that 'the writer will help the reader clearly understand the details of the different people, food and the unknown secrets of the destination.'

⁷ Writinghood, *Five different writing techniques* [online article] <http://writinghood.com/writing/five-different-writing-techniques/> Accessed: 16 April 2013

⁸ Brad Crouch, journalist for Adelaide's *Sunday Mail*, Interview conducted by author on 5 April 2013

⁹ O R , , *Rough Guides*, Interview conducted by author on 25 March 2013

¹⁰ *Tips For Travel Writing*, The Guardian, Gemma Bowes, [online article] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/2011/sep/23/travel-writing-tips-expert-advice> Published: 2011 Accessed: 10 February 2013

¹¹ ibid

¹² *Travelling in Myanmar's Inle Lake*, written by Author, 2013

¹³ Writinghood, *Five different writing techniques* [online article] <http://writinghood.com/writing/five-different-writing-techniques/> Accessed: 16 April 2013

Persuasive writing is used to 'change a reader's point of view on a topic, subject, or position.'¹⁴ The writer presents facts and opinions to try to get the reader to understand why something is right, wrong, or neutral.¹⁵ For a writer to accomplish their intention that the audience see "the big picture", a writer is required to master these writing techniques, utilising them within or applying them to different forms and styles of writing. These styles include one which 'covers the bare bones of the tourist traps that are the 'must see' of this particular destination.'¹⁶ It also includes the 'practical information' such as how to speak the language. These are called 'Expert Guides' which are directed at a high class audience while lifestyle guides are full of detailed information, leaving no room for mystery.¹⁷ These types of guides which offer an earthy feel adopt the use of persuasive, colourful language.¹⁸ Backpackers and adventure travellers are adventurous nomads who roam the land unknowingly while carrying limited luggage and staying in inexpensive accommodation. These types of travellers require 'useful brief and descriptive information' which rediscovers the hidden secrets of the destination.¹⁹

The writer must visually picture the location or destination she/he is describing providing readers with a vivid sensory image, creating a mood for a logically ordered travel piece creates a vibe of expectations and excitement for the reader.²⁰ A writer has the ability to 'create a mood of hunger, fear or joy by considering the audience and the type of writing he/she is attempting.'²¹

*'The fresh produce gathered from the locals is then transformed into a burst of traditional flavours. The refreshing textural tea leaf salad or avocado salad completed with the zest of a fresh orange down to the delicately prepared fish in a curry sauce never failed to impress time after time.'*²²

Synthesis (S2)

Key findings, including identifying the different types of travel writing for different target audiences, are insightful and substantiated comprehensively.

Synthesis (S3)

Although clear, coherence is sometimes compromised as ideas are repeated in different paragraphs. This point about description has been made on the previous page. Repetition of the findings serves to integrate the ideas but detracts from the logical progression.

¹⁴ Writinghood, *Five different writing techniques* [online article] <http://writinghood.com/writing/five-different-writing-techniques/> Accessed: 16 April 2013

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Parkinson-Hardman, L, *How to Write a Travel Guide* [online article] <http://womanontheedgeofreality.com/2012/08/08/how-to-write-a-travel-guide/> Published: 2012, Accessed: 4 March 2013

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ *Types of Travellers* [online article] <http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk/aboutus.htm> Published 2010, Accessed: 8 April 2013

²⁰ *How to Write Descriptively*, written by Karen Silvestri a English Professor at Palm Beach State College [online article] http://www.ehow.com/how_4523249_write-descriptively.html Published: 2008, Accessed: 18 March 2013

²¹ Ibid

²² *Travelling in Myanmar's Inle Lake*, written by Author, 2013

How will I construct my travel guide so that it adequately accommodates my target audience?

Crouch firmly states that the target audience is "People who haven't been there before!"²³ Myanmar is new and is mysteriously unknown to travellers; therefore, I thought the range of audience can be narrowed down into adventurous backpackers. **Adventurous backpackers** are people who travel in smaller groups and self-organise their trips without prior knowledge. They explore their destination with limited luggage and cheap accommodation.²⁴ From personal experience backpacking through Myanmar was difficult because of the expenses of accommodation and transport.

*Travelling through Myanmar it was discovered that due to the sudden influx of tourists over the last few years, prices of accommodation have trebled and will continue to do so until the population of hotels and guesthouses have raised.*²⁵

This did not stop us from exploring all heights of the undiscovered. Because of the need to pack lightly, the **travel guide is recommended to be the size of a pocket** book instead of lugging around a novel; this would become a hassle and unnecessary.²⁶

The best way to write is "experience! Essentially you've got to write to satisfy your own interests. I'd absolutely assume that anybody writing a guidebook is extremely interested in travel and the destination they're writing about".²⁷ This undoubtedly shows through the writing itself.

To give the country a brief overview as an introduction is recommended; including its history, geography, religion, political situation (be objective) and weather.²⁸ This is so the audience has basic understanding of the destination.

*'When drifting upon the still fresh water looking out onto the horizon, it's hard to see where the water ends and the small fishing villages on the mountain side in the long grassy wetlands begin. These villages hold the vast population of the Intha people, with a mix of Shan, Tanungyo, Pa-O, Danu, Kayah, Danaw and Bamar ethnicities. The people of Inle Lake are mostly devoted to Buddhism. The Intha people speak Burmese as does the whole of Myanmar.'*²⁹

This excerpt from my guide does not only paint a picture of the location for the audience but also notifies them of certain key features of the destination.

²³ Brad Crouch, writer for Adelaide's *Sunday Mail*, Interview conducted by author on 5 April 2013

²⁴ *Types of Travellers* [online article] <http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk/types.htm> Published 2010, Accessed: 8 April 2013

²⁵ *Travelling in Myanmar's Inle Lake*, written by Author, 2013

²⁶ Brad Crouch, writer for Adelaide's *Sunday Mail*, Interview conducted by author on 5 April 2013

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ O R: , , *Rough Guides*, Interview conducted by author on 25 March 2013

²⁹ *Travelling in Myanmar's Inle Lake*, written by Author, 2013

recommends a pre-departure section dedicated to inform readers about how they need to be prepared' this is then followed by "the guide".³⁰ This would hold the core comprehensive in-depth information. Although it is said to keep to one style when writing/planning the travel guide, a top 10 recommended destinations, accommodation, restaurants, sights and activities or a styled "perfect day" would be appropriate for an upper class audience as they would be staying in their comfort zones rather than backpackers.³¹ Although this reference appeared significant there were no other sources supporting nor recommending this technique; therefore was not use in my travelling guide.

Conclusion:

My research has revealed several key findings about how to go about writing a travel guide to Myanmar's Inle Lake. As a writer, be diligent and thorough in seeking and preparing facts for the guide. In order to do so, enjoy the whole process of researching and compiling the travel guide; this will be reflected in the way the author writes. Write the content credibly to inform but also, creates an "atmosphere" for an audience who has not yet had these experiences. A travel guide for backpackers will also require a specific size, form and content to meet their particular travel needs. This suggests a pocket sized guide crammed with lots of concise yet relevant information and maps, would be most practical for this target audience.

Synthesis (S1)
Insightful synthesis of knowledge and skills is evident in this conclusion. It outlines a resolution or answer to the research question by listing the key findings about travel writing.

Additional Comments

This response is an A- grade.

³⁰ O R: , , *Rough Guides*, Interview conducted by author on 25 March 2013

³¹ Brad Crouch, writer for Adelaide's *Sunday Mail*, Interview conducted by author on 5 April 2013

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Stage 2 Research Project B Performance Standards

	Planning	Development	Synthesis	Evaluation
		Assessment Type 1: Folio		
			Assessment Type 2: Research Outcome	
				Assessment Type 3: Evaluation
A	<p>P1 Thorough consideration and refinement of a research question.</p> <p>P2 Thorough planning of research processes that are highly appropriate to the research question.</p>	<p>D1 Thorough and highly resourceful development of the research.</p> <p>D2 In-depth analysis of information and exploration of ideas to develop the research.</p> <p>D3 Highly effective development of knowledge and skills specific to the research question.</p> <p>D4 Thorough and informed understanding and development of one or more capabilities.</p>	<p>S1 Insightful synthesis of knowledge, skills, and ideas to produce a resolution to the research question.</p> <p>S2 Insightful and thorough substantiation of key findings relevant to the research outcome.</p> <p>S3 Clear and coherent expression of ideas.</p>	<p>E1 Insightful evaluation of the research processes used, specific to the research question.</p> <p>E2 Critical evaluation of decisions made in response to challenges and/or opportunities specific to the research processes used.</p> <p>E3 Insightful evaluation of the quality of the research outcome</p>
B	<p>P1 Consideration and some refinement of a research question.</p> <p>P2 Considered planning of research processes that are appropriate to the research question.</p>	<p>D1 Considered and mostly resourceful development of the research.</p> <p>D2 Some complexity in analysis of information and exploration of ideas to develop the research.</p> <p>D3 Effective development of knowledge and skills specific to the research question.</p> <p>D4 Informed understanding and development of one or more capabilities.</p>	<p>S1 Considered synthesis of knowledge, skills, and ideas to produce a resolution to the research question.</p> <p>S2 Substantiation of most key findings relevant to the research outcome.</p> <p>S3 Mostly clear and coherent expression of ideas.</p>	<p>E1 Considered evaluation of the research processes used, specific to the research question.</p> <p>E2 Some complexity in evaluation of decisions made in response to challenges and/or opportunities specific to the research processes used.</p> <p>E3 Considered evaluation of the quality of the research outcome</p>
C	<p>P1 Some consideration of a research question, but little evidence of refinement.</p> <p>P2 Satisfactory planning of research processes that are appropriate to the research question.</p>	<p>D1 Satisfactory development of the research.</p> <p>D2 Satisfactory analysis of information and exploration of ideas to develop the research.</p> <p>D3 Satisfactory development of knowledge and skills specific to the research question.</p> <p>D4 Satisfactory understanding and development of one or more capabilities.</p>	<p>S1 Satisfactory synthesis of knowledge, skills, and ideas to produce a resolution to the research question.</p> <p>S2 Substantiation of some key findings relevant to the research outcome.</p> <p>S3 Generally clear expression of ideas.</p>	<p>E1 Recount with some evaluation of the research processes used.</p> <p>E2 Some evaluation, with mostly description of decisions made in response to challenges and/or opportunities specific to the research processes used.</p> <p>E3 Satisfactory evaluation of the quality of the research outcome</p>
D	<p>P1 Basic consideration and identification of a broad research question.</p> <p>P2 Partial planning of research processes that may be appropriate to the research question.</p>	<p>D1 Development of some aspects of the research.</p> <p>D2 Collection rather than analysis of information, with some superficial description of an idea to develop the research.</p> <p>D3 Superficial development of some knowledge and skills specific to the research question.</p> <p>D4 Basic understanding and development of one or more capabilities</p>	<p>S1 Basic use of information and ideas to produce a resolution to the research question.</p> <p>S2 Basic explanation of ideas related to the research outcome.</p> <p>S3 Basic expression of ideas.</p>	<p>E1 Superficial description of the research processes used.</p> <p>E2 Basic description of decisions made in response to challenges and/or opportunities specific to the research processes used.</p> <p>E3 Superficial evaluation of the quality of the research outcome</p>
E	<p>P1 Attempted consideration and identification of an area for research.</p> <p>P2 Attempted planning of an aspect of the research process.</p>	<p>D1 Attempted development of an aspect of the research.</p> <p>D2 Attempted collection of basic information, with some partial description of an idea.</p> <p>D3 Attempted development of one or more skills that may be related to the research question.</p> <p>D4 Attempted understanding and development of one or more capabilities.</p>	<p>S1 Attempted use of an idea to produce a resolution to the research question.</p> <p>S2 Limited explanation of an idea or an aspect of the research outcome.</p> <p>S3 Attempted expression of ideas.</p>	<p>E1 Attempted description of the research process used.</p> <p>E2 Attempted description of decisions made in response to a challenge and/or opportunity specific to the research processes used.</p> <p>E3 Attempted evaluation of the quality of the research outcome</p>