

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS : TRAVEL WRITING COMPETITION 2017

Congratulations on your decision to enter this year's competition!

You could be WIN big cash prizes!

1. Can you give me some background information about the competition?

The GTTP sponsors an annual Student Photography Contest. It is open to all learners currently enrolled in GTTP schools in GTTP-member countries: Brazil, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Hungary, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Russia, Philippines, India, Tanzania, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

2. What is the objective of the competition?

Written communication. One of the objectives of GTTP's competitions is to encourage learners to communicate clearly because it is an essential skill for anyone who wishes to be successful in today's travel and tourism industry - or any industry. The purpose of the competition is to provide learners with an opportunity to practice writing a travel article (essay) through which they can communicate with other people.

3. What exactly must I write about?

*Your task in this competition is to write about a very special or unique trail in your area or community. **The essay should communicate "what is unique or special about this trail in my area or community."***

4. Can any South African learner in any grade enter the competition?

No, the competition is open to South African schools that offer Tourism as a subject and only grade 10 - 12 Tourism learners may enter.

5. How many articles may I enter?

You may only enter ONE essay of between 500 – 800 words. Please type (font Arial 12) the essay neatly on an A4 page and don't forget a suitable heading and to leave lines open between paragraphs. Remember to include a bibliography. All essays that are submitted become the property of GTTP, and if used in print or electronic media, the learner author will be credited.

6. May I include photographs in my article?

*You may use up to three medium sized photographs in your essay. **Remember if the photographs do not belong to you, you must send a letter from the photographer with your entry that gives you permission to use his/her photograph in your essay.***

7. How do I enter?

*Complete an entry form available on the GTTP-SA website : www.gttpsa.org
The completed entry form and the article must be emailed to gttpsa11@gmail.com*

8. How is the judging done?

Each GTTP country will judge its own photos using its own scoring method. A panel of international judges will judge images submitted by member GTTP countries for the international prizes.

9. What prizes can be won?

Two winners in each country will receive cash prizes: The winner will receive R2 000,00 and the runner-up will receive R1 000,00 in cash. The winning entry will be published on our website. The teacher receives a subscription to a travel magazine for one year.

Good luck!! Remember you must submit your entry before 2 May 2017.

No late entries will be accepted.

TIPS: Some more reading about writing good travel articles

An important rule of creative travel writing is to show, not tell, wherever possible. Readers want to feel as if they're eavesdropping on a conversation, or being shown something secret and magical. People don't like being told what to think. If you write it well, they will "feel" what effect the encounter had on you. **Mike Carter, author and contributor to a travel magazine**

My golden rule when writing a piece is to include as much visual description as possible. It's easy to presume a lot, but your readers don't know what you've seen. So explain it as vividly as possible. Don't ever describe something as "characterful" or "beautiful" – this doesn't mean anything to anybody but you. Describe things as if you were explaining them to a blind person. To say a building is "old" isn't good enough; explain the colours, the peeling stucco, the elaborate, angular finishes on windowsills, the cleaning lady in a faded blue smock who was leaning out of a second-storey window with a cigarette dangling from her mouth. There is a thin line between elaborate, colourful, evocative writing and pretentious writing. Never be dull and presumptuous.

Benji Lanyado, writer and blogger

What sets good travel writing apart is detail, detail, detail. You must sweep the reader up and carry them off on the journey with you. Paint an evocation of where you are so we can experience it along with you. Be specific and drop "stunning", "breathtaking" and "fantastic" from your vocabulary.... describe to the reader.

Sally Shalam, hotel critic

1. Write in the first person, past tense (or present if the action really justifies it), and make your story a personal account, interwoven with facts, description and observation.
2. Many writers start their piece with a strong – but brief – anecdote that introduces the general feeling, tone and point of the trip and story. Something that grabs the reader's attention and makes them want to read on. Don't start with the journey to the airport – start with something interesting, not what happened first.
3. Early on you need to get across the point of the story and trip – where you were, what were you doing there and why. If there is a hook – a new trend, discovery or angle – make that clear within the first few paragraphs.
4. Try to come up with a narrative thread that will run throughout the piece, linking the beginning and end; a point you are making. The piece should flow, but don't tell the entire trip chronologically, cherry pick the best bits, anecdotes and descriptions, that will tell the story for you.
5. Quotes from people you met can bring the piece to life, give the locals a voice and make a point it would take longer to explain yourself. Quote people accurately and identify them, who are they, where did you meet them?
6. Avoid cliches. Try to come up with original descriptions that mean something. Our pet hates include: "bustling markets"... "azure/cobalt sea"... "nestling among" ... "hearty fare" ... "a smorgasbord of...".
7. Don't use phrases and words you wouldn't use in speech (such as "eateries" or "abodes"), and don't try to be too clever or formal; the best writing sounds natural and has personality. It should sound like you. Don't try to be "gonzo" or really hilarious, unless you're sure it's working.
8. Check your facts! It's good to work in some interesting nuggets of information, perhaps things you've learned from talking to people, or in books or other research, but use reliable sources and double-check they are correct.
9. Write economically – don't waste words on sentences that could be condensed. Eg say "there was a..." not "it became apparent to me that in fact there existed a..."

10. Moments that affected you personally don't necessarily make interesting reading. Avoid tales of personal mishaps – missed buses, diarrhoea, rain – unless pertinent to the story. Focus on telling the reader something about the place, about an experience that they might have too if they were to repeat the trip.

Describe the colours, sounds and smells of what you see as vividly as you can.

Remember: Due date: 2 May 2017

Happy writing!

The GTTP-SA team