

UNIT 3: DESTINATIONS

OUTCOMES:

- Students will be able to identify the factors that make a destination attractive or unattractive to travelers
- They will realize the wide variety of destinations available to travelers
- Students will be familiar with the ways in which destinations and companies market and sell themselves
- Students will be able to find and use sources of information that are available on destinations
- They will be able to confidently discuss the concepts of “sustainable tourism,” “eco-tourism,” and “geo-tourism”

Number of Sessions: 4-6

depending on available time and student interest

Activity Worksheets [AW] & Resources Guide [RG]
Materials for Unit 3:

- ◇ Guide to Attractions [AW]
- ◇ Use of Timetables [AW]
- ◇ Tourism Attractions Field Research [AW]
- ◇ Travel Destinations [AW]
- ◇ Image design [AW]
- ◇ Marketing Attractions [AW]
- ◇ Country image [AW]
- ◇ Planning an International Trip [AW]
- ◇ Design Brochures [AW]
- ◇ Travel Agency Game [AW]
- ◇ Advertisement worksheets [AW]
- ◇ National Geographic Destination Scorecard November 2009 [AW]
- ◇ Travel & Tourism Industry Process Charts [RG] and Appendix
- ◇ Gfk Survey of Travelers [RG]
- ◇ Types of Tourism [AW]

Note: The **Resources Guide** refers to the *Gfk Survey of Travelers* listed for Unit 2. This survey is another way to consider the elements that make a particular destination attractive to particular people.





Discussion:

In modern times due to technological developments and reductions in transport costs, people travel far and widely throughout the world. A century ago, travel was a luxury; most people never went beyond their native village or city. Now it is a rare person who has not traveled beyond his/her local town or city. Employees of even very small companies travel to other countries to do business. Young people travel more often than their parents ever dreamed of. TV and movies have showcased countries all around the globe.

An infinite variety of destinations is now available to the tourist to suit his/her budget and travel needs. As a result, destinations now compete for visitors much more extensively than they

did historically. In some cases, destination officials and business owners become very aggressive about building facilities to encourage tourism; if they are not careful, the very things that made their destination unique and enjoyable get destroyed by too many people, too much building, too much garbage, too much use of water, etc.

In this topic the issue of traveler's needs is set in the context of the issue of ensuring sustainability of destinations.

As noted in a comprehensive survey¹ the concept of sustainability has gone beyond environmental preservation to ensuring the sustainability of the community's economy and the culture itself:



The concept of sustainable tourism is not new to the travel industry. In the past, its primary concern was to sustain balance with the ecological environment and minimize the impact upon it by mass-market tourism. The term "Geotourism" is closely related, but is concerned instead with preserving a destination's

geographic character—the entire combination of natural and human attributes that make one place distinct from another. Geotourism encompasses both cultural and environmental concerns regarding travel, as well as the local impact tourism has upon communities and their individual economies and lifestyles.

¹ *The Geotourism Study: Phase I Executive Summary*, National Geographic Traveler, Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), 2002

Prior Preparation:

A montage similar to the sample advertisements (see the **Advertisements Worksheet**) can be used showing ads for in your language. The worksheet has questions that can be easily adapted to fit ads you may want to substitute for the ones shown on the worksheet if your students do not know English.

Topics such as **sustainability** can be an entire course in their own right. Depending on the time available and your students, you may want to spend several classes on this topic. **The Destination Scorecard**, for example, can lead to independent research by students into their own destination, to surveys of local travel professionals to see if they agree with the scorecard, to discussions of the many factors that contribute to or detract from sustainability.



Materials Needed:

World maps, atlases, destination posters and tourism advertising brochures are required as stimuli for this topic. Video and slide shows would also benefit the teaching and learning processes. Travel guides and magazines are very useful.



Session 1: Defining Destinations

Suggested Questions for the Instructor:

- 1. WHAT ARE ALL THE PLACES** in the world that tourists would avoid? Write the list on the board. What are the places that business or corporate travelers would avoid? Are they the same?
 - ✧ Poor tourism infrastructure.
 - ✧ Too many other tourists.
 - ✧ Garbage and pollution.
 - ✧ Concerns about drinking the water or eating the food.
- 2. WHAT ARE THE FACTORS** that might discourage tourism? Factors to consider include:
 - ✧ Political instability.
 - ✧ Illness & disease.
 - ✧ Poverty.
 - ✧ Unattractive climates.
 - ✧ Risks from natural disasters: floods, volcanoes, and hurricanes.
- 3. IDENTIFY/MARK** all the listed locations on a world map. Ask the students to identify the geographic features that are likely to attract tourists and what infrastructure features are likely to attract business travelers. For example, tourists are attracted to beaches, or mountains where they can hike or ski. Business travelers look for conveniently-located

airports, places easily accessible by planes, trains or cars. One of the points to bring out in discussion is that tourists typically look for natural resources along with infrastructure. If looking to select a meeting or conference destination, business travelers typically look for infrastructure followed by natural resources. Of course, if a business traveler is visiting a particular customer or colleague, he or she has relatively little choice in the destination.

For destinations that are trying to develop their own Travel & Tourism industry, it is important to know if they want to develop just tourism or if they want to develop business travel or both,

4. IDENTIFY AND DISCUSS

locations in your own country that might not be attractive to tourists. Pass out the survey **Travel Destinations** for the class to complete. Then construct bar charts to show:

- ✦ The variety of destinations visited by your class over the last twelve months.
- ✦ The purposes of the visits.
- ✦ Most popular attractions.
- ✦ Most unpopular attractions.



If they have access to the Internet, ask the students to visit the GTTP site at <http://www.gttp.org/pages/case-study-archives> and review some of the student research reports about sustainable tourism in preparation for the next session.

The *National Geographic Traveler* magazine conducts a survey using experts in the field of travel and culture, and asks them to rate destinations. This is what the magazine said about its most recent survey, conducted in 2009:

“This survey—our sixth “places rated” list—isn’t a popularity contest. It is an assessment of **authenticity and stewardship**, evaluating the qualities that make a destination unique and measuring its “integrity of place.” Thus the remote islands of the Grenadines can rate notably higher than popular St. Maarten. Because evaluating an entire destination involves such unquantifiables as aesthetics and cultural

integrity, we decided the best measure would be informed human judgment. We therefore assembled a panel of 437 well-traveled **experts in a variety of fields**—historic preservation, site management, geography, sustainable tourism, ecology, indigenous cultures, travel writing and photography, and archaeology.

We asked the panelists to evaluate only the places with which they were familiar, using our customary **six criteria**, weighted according to importance: environmental and ecological quality; social and cultural integrity; condition of historic buildings and archaeological sites; aesthetic appeal; quality of tourism management; and outlook for the future.”²

Pass out the handout, **National Geographic Destination Scorecard November 2009** and ask students to read it before the next class.

² <http://traveler.nationalgeographic.com/2009/11/destinations-rated/about-text>



Session 2: Destinations and Sustainability

Suggested Questions for the Instructor:

Climate is a major factor in encouraging or discouraging people's choice of particular destinations. Encourage students to refer to their atlases and to data provided on worldwide climate.

1. ASK THE CLASS TO CONSIDER:

- ❖ Why certain warm climates attract tourists.
- ❖ Why certain cold climates attract tourists.
- ❖ Why certain climates are always unattractive.
- ❖ Why seasonality is a major factor in tourist choice.
- ❖ Why certain activities are dependent on climate.

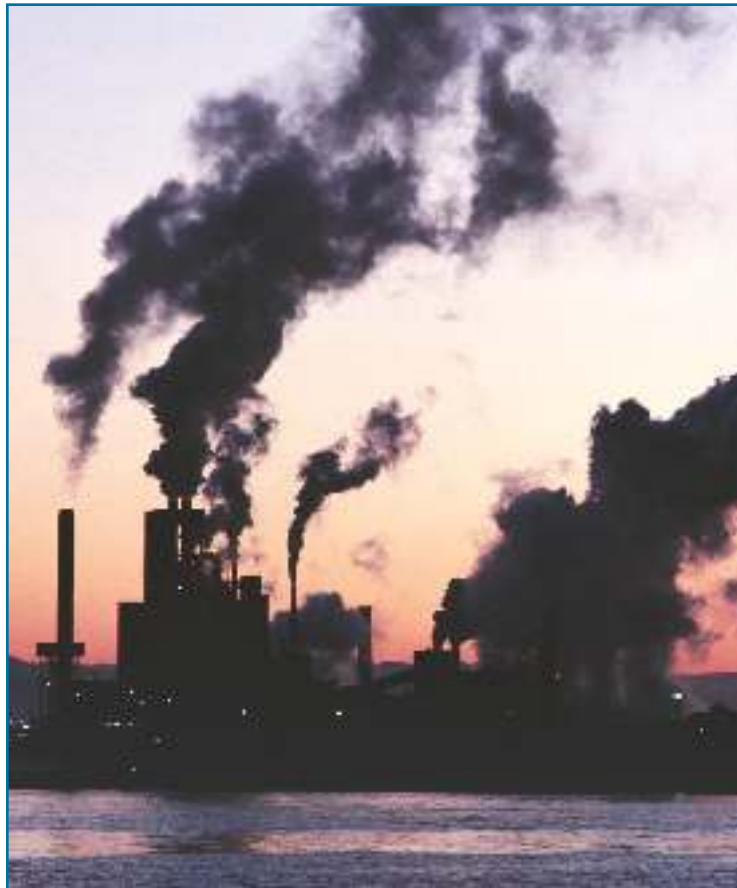
2. ONE CONCERN OF COMPANIES

and government officials is determining how to keep popular destinations attractive and how to sustain the unique characteristics that made the destination attractive to start with when more and more visitors arrive. These concerns exist in both warm and cold climates, though tropical areas have been especially

affected. If a destination gets more visitors than can be comfortably accommodated with the existing facilities, then sometimes environmental damage is caused when new facilities are added.

Ask the class to consider what kinds of damage might occur. Examples include:

- ❖ Hotels may get built near fragile beach dunes.
- ❖ Increased visitors put a strain on the supply of fresh water



- ❖ Sewage facilities may get over burdened
- ❖ There may be more garbage than can be picked up and deposited using the current local methods and garbage disposal areas
- ❖ Increased run off from hotels may pollute the ground water and/or lakes, rivers or oceans with the result that animal and plants die
- ❖ Trees get cut in order to clear land for building

3. ASK THE CLASS to think if there are nearby areas that are in danger of becoming too popular. Are there unique areas in your locale that could need to be protected from over use?

4. THE AVAILABILITY OF POTABLE (SAFE TO DRINK) WATER has become a political issue in some regions. One issue facing both travelers and the industry is how to ensure that travelers have safe water, and that the local residents do as well. If water is scarce, filling a hotel swimming pool could deprive local residents of a needed supply of water. In many rural areas, clean water is not locally available. The Travel & Tourism industry supports charitable initiatives like **Just a Drop**

that help ensure access to safe clean water.³ This organization also sponsors a program called **Splash 4Kids** that provides a blueprint for how students can raise money to support clean water projects in many of the world's poorest areas.

5. THE GEOTOURISM STUDY

found that many US travelers would be willing to pay more if it would help preserve a unique destination. Would the students?

6. DISCUSS the **National Geographic Destination Scorecard November 2009**, and then distribute the **Destination Scorecard**.



Ask the class to see if any of their favorite destinations are mentioned in the scorecard. How would they rate their own region as a destination?

³Visit www.justadrop.org for details on Splash 4Kids and for a variety of free teaching resources related to water and sustainability





Session 3: Choosing Destinations

In your earlier discussion of customer needs, you have seen that there are different types of tourists with different interests and needs. Ask students to review the handout **Types of Tourism**. They should now be able to identify the destination types that satisfy each category mentioned in the handout. It might also be a worthwhile exercise here to make a distinction again between world and national/local destinations which fall into these categories.

1. REVIEW THE SURVEY

results found by the GfK Group and discuss the following questions:

- ✦ Were your own class responses similar or different to the larger group surveyed?
- ✦ What do you think accounts for the differences?
- ✦ How different are a young person's expectations of a holiday destination from an older person's expectations?
- ✦ What type of holiday destination, if any, would suit all tastes?
- ✦ How do your country's travelers compare to

travelers from the countries surveyed by the GfK Group? If your country was one that was surveyed, how do your travelers compare to the rest of the travelers who were surveyed?

- 2. AT THIS STAGE** students should now be encouraged to discuss their own holiday experiences with a particular focus on why the destination was chosen. Ask the students to write down the characteristics of their "ideal" location. Classify their answers according to categories of characteristics, such as



GTP Photo Contest Winner:
Wang Haiping - Southern China Water Village

"warm climate," "availability of sports," "theme park," "beaches," etc. How many of the categories are man-made and how many are natural?



Ask the students to find brochures and advertisements, including ones they may print off the Internet, for as many destinations as they can. Ask them to bring these to the next session.

Ask them to watch for any television or radio ads that are aimed at business

travelers and tourists and to note down the messages of the ad.

Ask the class to research what local and national government policy is with respect to tourism. Is there a policy? Is there a government budget for supporting tourism in your area and/or nationally?



Session 4: Marketing Destinations

Marketing and advertising are essential features of the Travel & Tourism industry. It is vital that students are made aware of some of the strategies used to sell destinations and holidays to the customer.

Presentations from local travel agents may clarify how they are satisfying the travel needs of the local community.

Presentations from personnel from local tourism offices and from local hotels and tourism attractions may inform students of how their own locality is being marketed and advertised in the domestic and international markets.

Break the class into small groups and ask them to analyze the advertisements depicted on the **Advertisement Worksheet** as well as any examples of print media that they brought to class, including advertisements, brochures, promotional giveaways (like pens or t-shirts). For each ask the students to assess how each aims to:

- ❖ Create interest.
- ❖ Foster desire.
- ❖ Inspire action.
- ❖ Target a specific age group, social class, nationality, special interest group, etc.

There are a number of activities that focus on marketing destinations (**Marketing Attractions, Image Design, Country Image, Design Brochures, Travel Agency Game**). Depending on your schedule, pick two

or three that would let your students appreciate the research and creativity that is needed for successful marketing of a destination. They need to understand as well that finding the right destination for a traveler requires understanding what destinations have to offer plus knowing what the traveler will want. The Gfk survey results highlight the differences in travel preferences.



American Express has information on many destinations that its customers want to visit. Many companies, in fact, help destinations market themselves. If Internet access is available, students can visit the American Express website at the address shown below, can click on a country and then a specific destination to find extensive information: http://www.amextravelplanning.com/destinations?us_nu=dd&inav=travel_searchdestinations



Follow Up

An ideal follow up for this topic would be a student visit to a tourism destination. For the majority of students this will not happen. However the development of the Internet and CDs now makes it possible for schools to download material and images from tourism destinations throughout the world. In addition, there are student case studies on <http://www.gttp.org> that can be reviewed in order to give students exposure to tourist information from other countries.

As in previous lessons, field trips to local attractions and student project work (based on the field trips or on tourism surveys) and reviews of tourism marketing and advertising campaigns should be encouraged.

If your class is interested, there are GTP schools that "twin" with GTP schools in other countries. For more information on this program, email the Director of GTP South Africa at the address listed for GTP South Africa on www.gttp.org.

Winners' photos from the GTP's annual photo contest, which highlights "Something Special" in students' countries, can be viewed on the GTP web site. Your students may want to enter this competition. They also might set up an exhibit of their photos of their town or city that could be displayed in a local town hall or tourist office.