

An African Journey: Travel Blogs Project

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As we study the contemporary history of Africa this year, you will have the opportunity to plan a trip throughout the continent from Morocco or Senegal to two other locations of your choice. You will be making three installments in your journey so choose selectively where you would like to go and enjoy your travels. Try to see as much of the continent as possible. Think about the travel literature you have read and how you want to convey the detail of what you are experiencing and the logistics of your journey, as well as provide your audience back home a window into your trip, and into the “real Africa.” This to be a fun way to immerse yourself in the study of Africa and perhaps inspire you to spend a gap year putting your plan into action ☺!

Imagine what it is like to be in Africa. Make this as realistic as possible and show me that you have done some research of where you are writing about. You are arriving in Senegal or Morocco. Based on the comments of the GSL panel and your own research, what interests you? Select some aspect of the journey and write a 750-1000 word journal entry. Include at least FIVE images within your blog. Be descriptive. Keep track of your sources at the bottom of your entry.

1. **The Set-Up (brief part).** When are you arriving and where? Did you have a direct flight or any stops along the way? Are you traveling alone or with a friend (feel free to join forces and diverge if your travel plans take you in separate paths as the year progresses)?
2. **Description (main part).** What strikes you upon your arrival? What did you see? Africa is a diverse continent with a varied history and culture so what do you notice? In fact, stand in one place and do a 360 degree circle and see what is different. What are the sights and smells? Did you buy any tourist items? You can write about where you are staying – any interesting travelers in the hostel? What’s the landscape like? Any adventures – something funny happen? Include references to all or some of the following (depth is more important than breadth): religion, foods, climate, recent news items, statistics, history, cultural sites (art museums, sculptures, buildings), notable people including politicians, activists and/or athletes. Consider including an encounter at a local school, a market where you bargain for something, or a conversation with locals. Invite yourself to lunch at someone’s house— maybe you’ll get to spend the night (or the month).
3. **The Onward Journey (brief).** How long do you expect to spend in this location? Where are you going next and why did you select this direction.

How to get information:

- Go to the internet to find out about travelling in Africa. Remember the website <http://thorntree.lonelyplanet.com>.
- Check out blogs like <http://www.capeoverland.com/>.
- Talk to your some of your peers around school who have spent time in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Nigeria, Cote D'ivoire, Kenya, etc.
- Go to Google Earth to find out what the place looks like.

There are some great (and not so great) examples of travel blogs on the GSL site. They are best when they are descriptive (“We heard the sounds of the dink frogs under the starry sky as we meandered up the path on our way to our home-stays where my Costa Rican mother greeted me with steaming hot chocolate and a warm hug.” And at their worst when you hear, “We had _____ for breakfast and then went to _____ and then did _____ and then ate _____ for lunch....”

Reminders:

1. Include at least 5 images (include url and caption).
2. Citations (alphabetical order, hanging indent, non-tourist sites also, local sites (African authors) where possible).
3. When choosing images have a balance between modern and traditional, animals and people, high adventure and just regular stuff.
4. Focus on PEOPLE more than animals.
5. Consider your own safety: be wary of drinking water that has not been sterilized, boiled, purified. No ice. Don't swim in rivers—chance of catching water borne illnesses especially schistosomiasis.
6. Language: Huts and tribes are no longer PC terms.
7. Watch your tone to avoid the “Superior Civilized American” attitude.

Topics to be sure you include at some point

- ❖ Marketplace interviews (bargain for something in a market)
- ❖ Visit a high school
- ❖ Talk to local people—invite yourself to their homes, to their places of work, and relay your conversations, excitement about meeting people, and seeing the “authentic Africa.”
- ❖ Play soccer, listen to hip hop, or do something else for fun with African youth.
- ❖ Meet up with your peers and share information on where you each have been.
- ❖ Have dinner with a family at their home.
- ❖ Refer to something that has come up in the news.
- ❖ Go to a local concert, listen to local music, or visit an art museum.
- ❖ Try making local cuisine.
- ❖ Do some Big History (look at constellations, talk about local archaeology or geology or paleontology or rock art). If you want to see some really cool early hominid sites, go to Tanzania (Olduvai Gorge) or Hadar (Ethiopia) . Look up Lucy or Laetoli footprints. Or if you are into rock art, check out Zimbabwe (Matobo) or South Africa or the Tassili Plateau in Morocco.