



# B2 - Dark Tourism

## Reading and Speaking



### EXERCISE 1 WRITE DOWN FIVE POSSIBLE REASONS WHY PEOPLE TRAVEL.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

DISCUSS THE REASONS WHY YOU NORMALLY TRAVEL.

### EXERCISE 2 DISCUSS THE MEANING OF THE TERM *DARK TOURISM*. READ THE FIRST PART OF THE ARTICLE [WHAT IS DARK TOURISM?](#) AND CHECK YOUR ANSWERS.

*Dark tourism refers to visiting places where some of the darkest events of human history have unfolded, including genocide, assassination, incarceration, ethnic cleansing, war or disaster — either natural or accidental. Some popular examples of dark tourism are Chernobyl, the 9/11 memorial and the concentration camp Auschwitz. Dark tourism is not a new phenomenon and there's evidence that it goes back to the Battle of Waterloo where people watched the battle taking place from their carriages.*

*Dark tourism has become popular because when you're part of a society that is by and large stable and you've gotten into an established routine, travel to these places leads you to sort of feel alive. Travellers have been drawn to these gloomy locales more in recent years, and as the effects of climate change accelerate and global conflicts like those in Ukraine and Israel unfold, there are an increasing number of such locations to visit. There is an inherent fascination with ruination.*

### EXERCISE 3 MATCH THE WORDS BELOW TO THEIR DEFINITIONS.

- |              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1. genocide  | 6. incarceration |
| 2. tourism   | 7. phenomenon    |
| 3. memorial  | 8. voyeurism     |
| 4. landmark  | 9. assassination |
| 5. ruination | 10. destination  |



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- A. The deliberate killing of a prominent or important person, often for political reasons.
- B. The intentional killing of a large number of people from a particular ethnic group or nation with the aim of destroying that group.
- C. The state of being confined in prison; imprisonment.
- D. The activity of travelling to different places for pleasure, especially during holidays.
- E. A building or place that is easily recognized, and often visited by tourists because of its historical or cultural importance.
- F. The place where someone is going.
- G. Something that exists and can be seen, felt, tasted, etc., especially something unusual or interesting.
- H. An object, often a stone structure, established to remind people of a person or event, especially a tragic or important historical event.
- I. The state of being ruined or destroyed, especially relating to buildings or landscapes.
- J. The practice of observing distressing or private events in a way that is considered unethical.

**EXERCISE 4** FROM THE WORD LIST IN EXERCISE 3, SELECT FIVE WORDS MOST CLOSELY RELATED TO DARK TOURISM.

1. \_\_\_\_\_, 2. \_\_\_\_\_, 3. \_\_\_\_\_, 4. \_\_\_\_\_, 5. \_\_\_\_\_

**EXERCISE 5** DISCUSS THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS BELOW.

1. Why do you think people travel to such places?
2. Would you ever travel to dark tourism sites?
3. Are there any places you would never visit due to their dark history? Why?

**EXERCISE 6** DISCUSS SOME BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF DARK TOURISM. READ THE SECOND PART OF THE ARTICLE [WHAT IS DARK TOURISM?](#) AND CHECK THE ANSWERS.



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*Gawking at a location where the disaster happened can be disrespectful. For instance, a Ukraine travel agency faced controversy after offering tours to the scene of large-scale civilian massacres resulting from Russia's attacks. Many claimed it was "too soon" for tourism to the region, given that destruction is ongoing. Bad conduct by tourists at sensitive sites — smiling selfies at concentration camps, for example — has been widely shunned on social media. Additionally, the ethically questionable 'voyeurism' of visiting an ongoing or very recent tragedy to gape is largely considered taboo.*

*Still, there can be a lot to learn from visiting dark-tourism sites. Climate change is causing more natural disasters and destruction, and the visual impact of climate change-induced landscapes serves as a warning of our industrialization. Visiting such places now can shine a critical light on the effects of climate change. A considered visit can also help provide fiscal resources to affected areas, like the Spanish island of La Palma which experienced a volcanic eruption in 2021 and Morocco which suffered a powerful earthquake in September. However, some locations, like Lahaina, Hawaii, which was nearly razed by devastating wildfires over the summer, have discouraged tourism to allow locals to recover and mourn the losses of their loved ones.*

*Many popular dark-tourism locations are sites with extensive, complicated histories. And thoughtful visitors often leave with newfound knowledge. According to Dark-tourism.com, a website dedicated to the phenomenon, there is an optimal way to participate in dark tourism.*

**EXERCISE 7** IN GROUPS, THINK OF SOME OTHER POSSIBLE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF DARK TOURISM. DEBATE EACH OTHER AND DECIDE WHETHER DARK TOURISM HAS MORE POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE ASPECTS.

### GROUP A

Dark tourism is beneficial and ethical

### GROUP B

Dark tourism is disrespectful and should be discouraged.

**EXERCISE 8** AS A GROUP, DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS BELOW.

1. How has your understanding of dark tourism changed?
2. What do you think are the most important considerations when visiting sites of tragedy?

# Teacher's notes

## Exercise 1. Lead-in

6 mins

To begin the lesson, pair up the students and have them brainstorm five potential reasons for travelling. Elicit answers from different pairs and ask them to think about the reasons why they travel.

*Suggested answers: adventure, relaxation, finding yourself, getting to know new cultures, language acquisition, disconnection, celebration, building relationships with family / friends*

## Exercise 2. Reading for gist Part 1

7 mins

Ask students to consider the definition of dark tourism. Collect responses from different students. Then verify the meaning by reading the first part of the article [What is dark tourism?](#) by [The Week](#).

*Answer: Dark tourism refers to visiting places where some of the darkest events of human history unfolded, e.g. genocide, assassination, incarceration, ethnic cleanings, war or disaster (natural or accidental).*

## Exercise 3 + 4. Teach - vocabulary

5 mins

Introduce students to a new list of vocabulary related to dark tourism and general travel. Engage students by matching the words to their definitions.

*Answers: 1B, 2D, 3H, 4E, 5I, 6C, 7G, 8J, 9A, 10F*

Determine which of the five words could be associated with dark tourism.

*Answers: genocide, ruination, incarceration, voyeurism, assassination, (also: memorial)*

## Exercise 5. Pair speaking

5 mins

Once again, have students work in pairs and provide them with some time to discuss why people travel to certain places and their personal opinions on doing so. Ask for a few responses and then discuss which of the places students would not want to visit, explaining why.

## Exercise 6. Reading for gist Part 2

7 mins

As a group, consider the potential benefits and drawbacks of dark tourism. Then, let students read the second part of the article [What is Dark Tourism?](#) and review their answers.

*Answers:*

*+ : visual impact of climate change-induced landscapes, fiscal resources*

*- : smiling selfies, voyeurism*

## Exercise 7. Debate

8 mins

Divide the students into two groups. Group A makes a list of the benefits of dark tourism, while Group B makes a list of the drawbacks. Pair one student from Group A with one student from Group B and ask them to debate each other. Together, they decide whether dark tourism has more positive or negative aspects.

## Exercise 8. Group discussion

6 mins

As a group, discuss two questions regarding students' attitudes toward dark tourism and factors to consider when visiting sites of tragedy.

## Error correction

3 mins

Provide speaking feedback.