

English Language and Composition
Reading Time: 15 minutes
Suggested writing time: 40 minutes
Assignment devised by Eileen Bach 2012
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Directions: The following prompt is based on the accompanying six sources.

This question requires you to integrate a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. *Refer to the sources to support your position; avoid mere paraphrasing or summary. Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument.*

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.

Introduction

Everyone likes a vacation! The more exotic locale, the greater interest in getting away, and often, the cheaper rate. But speaking of money, some people find it difficult to justify spending money on a luxury vacation. That's where voluntourism comes into play: you can enjoy getting away, learn while living with locals, and best of all – make a positive contribution to the world. But are these “feel good” vacations beneficial to all concerned?

Assignment

Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. Then in an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources for support, evaluate the pros and cons and take a position on the value of “voluntourism.”

Refer to the sources as Source A, Source B, etc.; titles are included for your convenience.

SOURCE A (Flight Centre)

SOURCE B (Duo Links)

SOURCE C (New Ways to Get There)

SOURCE D (Walking, Running, Rolling!)

SOURCE E (Low Income)

SOURCE F (Graph)

Source A

Flight Centre: <http://www.ideamarketers.com/?Voluntourism&articleid=1327412>

What's the newest travel trend on the scene? It's voluntourism, the bringing together of volunteering with tourism to create an aid-giving, hands-on and feel-good holiday combo. Today, these hybrid trips are available in many Third World or underprivileged countries that not only need the time, skills and money of Westerners but also offer beautiful historical and natural attractions.

Interested? Here are some of the benefits of voluntourism:

- **Helping people.** Voluntourism allows you to do something good for those less fortunate or the environment *and* travel at the same time.
- **Get off the beaten track.** Because voluntourism often takes place in local villages, communities and isolated areas, voluntourism takes travellers off the beaten track [and] working and meeting the locals allows voluntourists to get a first hand insight into the local culture and customs.
- **Giving skills as opposed to money.** Those participating in voluntourism will be giving their time and their skills as opposed to just money, allowing for a more rewarding and engaging experience.

While there is a cost involved in voluntourism (for the supplies of the volunteer work and the tourism included), voluntourism programs are usually conducted in developing countries and as such those wishing to do further travel can look forward to relatively cheap holidays. While there are some criticisms of volunteering holidays (most of which warn of the risk that voluntourism caters to the Westerner's needs as opposed to those of the developing country), it is still an avenue through which people from all over the world can engage and help in the fight against poverty.

Source B

Slack, Julie. "Duo Links Volunteers to Africa." *Mississauga News*. 11 January 2012

Laurelle Land is so passionate about making a difference in impoverished African villages that she started a business to help others volunteer there as well. The 28-year-old Erin Mills resident and her boyfriend, Troy Spitzig, created **VolunTourism** Africa last year. Their goal isn't to make money, but rather to make it easier for people to plan a volunteer trip to help developing nations. The online company (www.voluntourismafrica.org) offers clients a consultation that arranges all their travels abroad, from their host family and air flight information to their itinerary and volunteer placement. Land has been to Tanzania several times, volunteering at an orphanage.

The online business will help volunteers plan a trip that can also take them to see wildlife reserves, mountains and more. They can plan trips from two weeks to several months in length. "I truly believe it is something everyone should experience at least once," Land said. "We are too accustomed to vacationing at all-inclusive resorts and too afraid to go out of our comfort zone. If more people took a chance to do this, it would create awareness about the suffering in the world, and it would make people realize just how lucky they are." In addition to starting the business, Land has been busy fundraising for the orphanage in Tanzania. She raised \$11,000 upon her return from the African nation in 2008, simply by asking friends and family for donations.

The following year, she saw firsthand what that money had done. The orphanage had been repainted, there were desks for the children, a new washroom was constructed and a chicken coop had been built to provide food and income. Land then looked to the Streetsville Rotary club for more funding. The club provided a \$15,000 grant that will be used to start a trade school for young adults in Arusha, Tanzania.

Source C

“New Ways to Get There.” *Sunday Times*, 6 November 2011

VOLUNTOURISM

For travellers who want to combine adventure and philanthropy, ITC has created its Giving programme — basically, a mini-gap year for grown-ups. "The feedback from many of our customers suggested that they wanted to be able to make a contribution to society rather like students do on their year off," says Jennifer Atkinson, CEO of ITC Classics. "We spent a long time selecting schemes that are sustainable and where we can match our customers' skills to the communities' needs for everybody's benefit."

In South Africa, for example, ITC has forged links with a community project in Port Elizabeth that has been running for 15 years, supporting the education of disadvantaged students. Volunteers have an orientation day to discuss what expertise they could share with the community. The next four days are spent working with local children and on the final day some of the youngsters are taken on a trip to a game reserve or perhaps for a beach picnic — something they will probably never have done before. Most nights will be spent at the Singa Game Lodge, a 12-room boutique decorated with handcrafted pieces to create a stylish sense of place. Other destinations include India, Thailand, Peru and Morocco.

Five days costs from £2,450pp [\$3,843 per person] including flights, accommodation, preparation in the UK, five lunches, all transfers and an excursion. Medical insurance is not included and volunteers must arrange their own Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks, a requirement of all companies organising adult participation in community projects.

Source D

“Walking, Running, Rolling Holidays!” *New York Examiner*, 3 January 2012

Big name celebrities and pro sports teams maintain charitable ties with almost every form of travel promotion, and endorsements draw big bucks. Popularized over a decade before his death, a wheelchair-bound Christopher Reeve fundraised for his foundation in snowy Vail, Colorado where he attracted donations with a galaxy of screen stars and 'big air' skiing competitors. The sports-and-philanthropy-celebrity event was born- again, again, this time Hollywood-sized. Celebrities brought their friends and fellow donators. Olympians Mike and Jen Brown helped organize the whole ski-and-charity event and just "Watched the donations roll in." Lesson learned. Now most ski resorts reconfigure in summertime to accommodate sunshine celebrity hikers, bikers, yogis, even balloonists for a cause.

At anybody's disease-of-the-week charity fundraiser, don't forget to write down a healthy sum on the Silent Auction bidding forms: you may give to a cause and experience anything from a series of philanthropic massages to following a famous explorer on his trek from pole-to-pole. For a price. Staggering through wine country? A number of wine and spirit makers support athletic events combined with charity, and some visits from the caves of France to the growing fields of Napa, Sonoma, South Africa and Chile are now official philanthropic destinations (see: the Mondavi Trust; entrepreneur Barry Sternlicht's ventures as new owner of Taittinger caves and Paris' Hotel Crillon; as well as Explora, the high end eco-lodges built by a Chilean vineyard owner who officially protects the ecology of the Atacama and Patagonia) for well-heeled guests.

Source E

Clemmit, Marcia. "Volunteer Programs Lacking for Low Income Kids."
CQ Researcher, 27 January 2012

Volunteer Programs Lacking for Low-Income Kids

"It's not because adolescents aren't interested."

Volunteer opportunities are much scarcer for students from low-income families than for those from wealthy backgrounds — a problem that can have life-long impacts, including low participation in voting and other civic engagement, scholars say.

"There is a huge socioeconomic gap" in service opportunities, as there is for most other educational opportunities, says James Youniss, a research professor of psychology at Catholic University, in Washington.

"If a school has low-income students or many immigrants," for example, "it's less likely to have" programs known to improve students' civic involvement, including service-learning programs that link classroom work with volunteer opportunities, Youniss says. It's well known — and often lamented — that poor people generally vote at lower rates than better-off people, and fewer opportunities to build civic engagement during youth are partly to blame, he says.

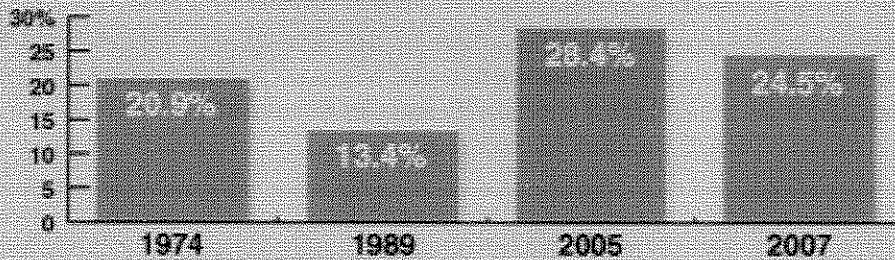
Source F

Clemmit, Marcia. "Volunteer Programs Lacking for Low Income Kids."
CQ Researcher, 27 January 2012

Teen Volunteerism Declined

Teen volunteerism rates have fluctuated drastically in the nearly four decades beginning in 1974. After declining to a low of 13.4 percent, volunteering more than doubled, to 28.4 percent in 2005, but then dropped nearly 4 percentage points in the next two years.

Volunteer Rates Among Teens
Ages 16 to 19, 1974-2007



Sources: "Reaching Our Goals: An Overview of Research in Support of the Strategic Initiatives," Corporation for National and Community Service, March 2009, p. 3, www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/08_1113_rpd_reachingourgoals.pdf; "Volunteer Growth in America: A Review of Trends Since 1974," Corporation for National and Community Service, December 2006, p. 2, www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/06_1203_volunteer_growth.pdf