

A Weird Tour Solution

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1 Clues

The first hint is that every method of transportation has 2 vowels.

By $\binom{5}{2}$ (5 vowels choose 2), there are 10 possible groupings, which happens to be how many methods of transportation there are.

In the introduction, they also mentioned there are 120 regions, which also happens to equal $5!$ (the number of ways to arrange 5 vowels).

The name of the title is “A Weird Tour” which has all vowels in alphabetical order: A, E, I, O, U.

From there, it’s obvious that it has to do with the permutation of vowels.

2 Begin Solving

Since they give you the hints to the name of the regions, I started with a synonym for “unserious” that contains all vowels in the order AEIOU.

Then, going back to the methods of transportation, I figured that maybe the 2 vowels mean you have to swap the order of those letters; “their strange gradually shifting dialects” alludes to this.

I continue to find synonyms that contain all vowels in the proper order, swapping the two vowels hinted at every time.

FACETIOUS = *AEIOU*
PLANE = SWAP A & E
GREGARIOUS = *EAIIOU*
TOUR = SWAP O & U
READING UP ON = *EAIUO*
BIGBUS = SWAP I & U
EXHAUSTION = *EAUIO*
SUBWAY = SWAP U & A
 ??? = *EUAIO*
TUNNEL = SWAP U & E
SUPER MARIO = *UEAIO*
TRAIN = SWAP A & I
LUPE FIASCO = *UEIAO*
BOAT = SWAP O & A
QUESTION MARK = *UEIOA*
BIKE = SWAP I & E
BUSINESSWOMAN = *UIEOA*
HORSE = SWAP O & E
BURST INTO TEARS = *UIOEA*
LIMO = SWAP I & O
SUBCONTINENTAL = *UOIEA*

3 Final Steps

The last piece of information we did not use are the numbers next to the clues. If you take the nth letter that corresponds to the number n, of each region, you eventually spell out GROUP ELEMENT. That is the clue to the name of the 5th region. We already know the order of vowels is EUAIO. This yields the answer **Permutation**.