

Reading

1 Speaking

Discuss these questions with a partner.

1. Have you travelled much?
2. What's your favourite place you've been to on holiday? What was the most disappointing place? Why?
3. Do you know anyone who never goes away on holiday? Why don't they?
4. Do you live in a tourist area? Is this a good or bad thing?
5. Have you heard of any arguments put forward against travel and tourism? Think in terms of culture and society, economics and the environment.

2 As you read

You are going to read an article by the father of a family that never goes away on holiday. Read and find out why. As you read, also decide which of the words in red means:

1. a huge argument
2. achievements
3. a feeling of being unable to think clearly
4. angry and silent because you didn't get your own way
5. make me annoyed
6. ripped off
7. occasional
8. required for a particular purpose
9. do unimportant things in a leisurely way
10. look for customers
11. push and knock against people in a crowd
12. spend lots of money on something extravagant

When you have finished reading, cover the text and discuss the reasons the father gives for not going on holiday.

Can you remember all the words in red and how they were used?

3 Comprehension

Which of these statements about the text do you agree with?

1. The writer is just tight-fisted.
2. The writer is basically just a bit of a lazy slob.
3. The writer is too soft on his children.
4. I feel the same way about sightseeing as he does.
5. I think the writer's a bit xenophobic.
6. He must've just been unlucky with problems on holiday.
7. None of those things have ever happened to me.

Have a break from holidays

While many of our friends are on holiday in exotic far-flung places this summer, our family will be staying at home to get away from it all, as we have done for the last five years. We generally just **potter about** at home; catch up with some reading; do a spot of gardening – nothing too strenuous – just mow the lawn or do a bit of pruning – that kind of thing. The kids are old enough to go off on their own and often go to the local park or open-air pool. We often have visitors and this year we've got some friends coming over from the States, so we might go on the **odd** day trip somewhere – visit a stately home or something like that. On the whole, though, we don't bother going much beyond our local area. It's a pattern we're going to stick to for the foreseeable future for a number of reasons.

First and foremost, it's just much more relaxing. You don't have any of the inconveniences and annoyances which are so often associated with travelling: endless queuing at airports; getting **fleece**d by taxi drivers and souvenir sellers; getting an upset stomach from dodgy food and the local tap water. And that's not to mention the kids whining 'Are we there yet?' every two minutes; 'Do we HAVE to go to the museum?'; endless choruses of 'BORING!' Honestly, there's nothing like dragging a couple of **sulky** teenagers round some Roman remains to put you off that kind of thing for life. All this whining would inevitably **wind me up**, which in turn would lead to a **blazing row** where I would rant and rave about how ungrateful they were, and how anyone else would leap at the chance to see the places we were taking them, and then I'd threaten them that next time we'd just stay at home! Well, finally I carried out the threat – and everyone's far, far happier, not to say better off! By saving

money on travel, we can afford to **splash out** on a slap-up meal in a decent restaurant and get the best seats in the house if we go to the theatre, which, by the way, is of greater benefit to our own economy.

If the truth be told, I can't say I ever **really** enjoyed going sightseeing anyway. I think we were going on holiday simply out of habit and going sightseeing out of some weird sense of duty. I felt it was what you ought to do when you go abroad and that it would be educational for the kids. Most of the time, though, these places actually just left me cold. I wandered through them in a **slight daze**, took the **requisite** photos, made the required comments about how fascinating it was, but essentially felt nothing! Even the really big monuments, which are genuinely impressive, didn't move me in the way I expected. Take the Pyramids. I'd always wanted to go and see them. I'd imagined myself trekking through the desert on a camel to reach them, the sun beating down on my back. The reality, when I finally went there, was that I only had to trek through the streets of Cairo in a taxi to reach them. Far from being in the middle of the desert, they are surrounded by the slightly run-down suburb of Giza. While they are hugely impressive **feats** of engineering, you have to **jostle with** hoards of tourists to get anywhere near them, fighting off the crowds of locals as they **tout** for business, hassling you to change money or to take a camel ride. I don't blame these people – they're just trying to earn a living – but frankly, I could've done without it and, for me at least, it meant the Pyramids didn't live up to my expectations. And that's it. I've come to realise that famous places are just so much more enjoyable in anticipation than in reality, so it's best not to shatter your dreams and simply never visit them!