

# Travel/ Article Writing



## Introduction

Travel writing is part reporting, part diary and part providing travel information. Travel writers create their art using a multitude of different styles and techniques but the best stories generally share certain characteristics, notably:

- A clear writing style is used by a writer who knows the point of the story; gets to it quickly and gets it across to the reader strongly with brevity and clarity.
- Strong sense of the writer's personality, ideally demonstrating intelligence, wit and style.
- Use of the writer's personal experiences, other anecdotes and quotations to add life to the piece.
- Vivid reporting - the ability of the writer to convey to readers, using as many of the senses as possible, the travel experience through the use of words alone.
- High literary quality and the accurate use of grammar and syntax.
- Meaty, practical and accurate information that is useful to the reader.

## Be Fresh

Give your story a fresh point of view and, if at all possible, cover some out-of-the-ordinary subject matter. You must reach beyond the pure listings of information often provided by PR firms and tourist boards to travel writers as a matter of routine.

Be creative in your writing. Strive for the best and strongest use of English and the most original and powerful metaphors and similes.

## Be Personal

Take a personal approach. This doesn't necessarily mean writing in the first person, although that may be appropriate. Rather, take your own approach to the location you visited. Incorporate an activity you've tried or an adventure that thrilled you, and get the experience across to your readers.

To stand out from the crowd, your story must have a personal voice and point of view. Remember that most places you write about will already have been written about. Your challenge is to find something new and original to say.

## **Be Funny**

Travel writing should have a light, bright, lively and fun tone. Travel, the process of leaving the familiar to go to the foreign and unfamiliar, is often rich in comedy and comical events. Incorporate comedy into your writing where appropriate and don't be afraid to make your readers laugh.

Also, don't be afraid to incorporate mishaps into your pieces. These can be just as interesting reading particularly if they incorporate an element of comedy or humor with it.

## **Be Surprising**

Surprise your reader. Give the reader something out of the ordinary; something that only someone who has been to the location would know. Do this by trying unusual activities, meeting new people, and getting involved in strange scenes as you travel. You must be an involved traveler and do more than just gather facts one can find in a guidebook.

## **Be Balanced**

Travel writing must blend your personal observations, descriptions and commentary with practical information useful to your readers. The precise balance depends on which outlets you are aiming your story; two-thirds or even three-quarters colorful description to one-third or one-quarter facts are a reasonable guideline.

## **Use Quotes**

Quotes lift stories. Work in quotes from visitors to locations, or participants in activities. Let them express their thoughts about how they feel about a place or activity.

## **Identify Who You Are Writing For**

Before you travel, consider which outlets/publications your destination and story are likely to appeal. You should also study the writers' guidelines issued by those publications. If you wait until you return home before you decide, you may have missed the opportunity to obtain facts and photos important to that target audience or consistent with the publications who would want your story.

## **Think like Your Reader**

What you're trying to achieve by studying past articles and writers' guidelines is to get inside the minds of the readers of those publications. You want to develop as clear an impression as possible of what readers of those publications want to read, their travel aspirations, how they like articles written and what information they want to know. You want to be able to think like your reader. Only then will you be able to identify how you can help your reader. Only then should you start writing your article.

## **Focus on the Main Point**

Decide what the main point is that you want to get across to your reader; what main point about a location or activity you want to convey then work your impressions and facts around it. Good travel stories have a definite, central theme. Make this decision before you begin to write. It will give your writing context and meaning. It will reduce the possibility of rambling and including insignificant facts.