



Introduction



Objectives



Activities



References



Credits

## Introduction

Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries and is a major source of income for many countries. Being a people-oriented industry, tourism also provides many jobs which have helped revitalise local economies.

However, like other forms of development, tourism can also cause its share of problems, such as social dislocation, loss of cultural heritage, economic dependence and ecological degradation. Learning about the impacts of tourism has led many people to seek more responsible holidays. These include various forms of alternative or sustainable tourism such as: 'nature-based tourism', 'ecotourism' and 'cultural tourism'. Sustainable tourism is becoming so popular that some say that what we presently call 'alternative' will be the 'mainstream' in a decade.

All tourism activities of whatever motivation - holidays, business travel, conferences, adventure travel and ecotourism - need to be sustainable. Sustainable tourism is defined as "tourism that respects both local people and the traveller, cultural heritage and the environment". It seeks to provide people with an exciting and educational holiday that is also of benefit to the people of the host country.

This module explores the characteristics and objectives of sustainable tourism through a series of case studies. It also helps identify ways in which sustainable tourism can be introduced to students.

## Objectives

-  To appreciate the benefits and problems arising from various forms of tourism, especially in terms of social equity and the environment;
-  To develop a critical awareness of the ways in which tourism can enhance the welfare of people and protect our natural and cultural heritage;
-  To promote a personal commitment to forms of tourism that maximise rather than detract from sustainable human development and environmental quality; and
-  To plan ways of teaching about sustainable tourism.

# Activities

[1. The rise of tourism](#)

[2. The benefits and problems of mass tourism](#)

[3. The benefits and problems of ecotourism](#)

[4. Being an enlightened traveller](#)

[5. Teaching about ecotourism](#)

[6. Reflection](#)

## References

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## Internet Sites

[Ecotourism Society](#)

[Exploring Ecotourism Online Resource Guide](#)

[Sustainable Tourism Research Interest Group \(STRING\)](#)

[United Nations Environment Programme Tourism Project](#)

[UNESCO World Heritage Centre](#)

[UNESCO World Heritage Centre - For Teachers](#)

[World Tourism Organisation](#)



# Credits

This module was written for UNESCO by John Fien, Margaret Calder and Clayton White using material written by Rob Gilbert in Teaching for a Sustainable World (UNESCO - UNEP International Environmental Education Programme).





Begin by opening your [learning journal](#) for this activity.

Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries. For example, there were around 25.3 million international tourist arrivals in 1960. By 1990, this figure had risen to 425 million, 17 times the earlier figure. By 1997, it had risen to 613 million. The World Tourism Organisation forecasts that this figure will more than double to 1.6 billion people by 2020.

The importance of this rapid growth in tourism can be seen by the fact that travel and tourism generated 11% of global GDP in 1999; spending on international tourism reaching US\$453 billion. In addition, the tourism industry employed 200 million people - 8% of total world employment. Thus, tourism is a major source of income and employment for many countries, particularly in the South where it can assist in addressing problems caused by poverty.

Key factors in this growth include:

-  Rising living standards and, especially, increased leisure time, has allowed many people in the North to take longer holidays and to travel to distant parts of the world. Many in the industrialising countries of Asia and Latin America are also becoming international tourists.
-  Advances in transport technology following the introduction of the first passenger jet services in the 1950s and the development of the jumbo jet allow for relatively inexpensive long-distance travel.
-  Long periods of relative political stability have made people feel safe venturing to new and unknown places.
-  Television, movies and other media have stimulated interest in other parts of the world by showing attractive and exciting images of distant places.
-  Increased leisure time and regular holidays are encouraging the growth of in-country or domestic tourism industries.
-  The tourism industry has become highly professional and has promoted travel and holidays through well-financed advertising campaigns.

However, the benefits of holidays for tourists are not always shared by the communities they visit.

As long ago as 1981, a report on tourism to one Caribbean island noted:



We recognise that the attraction of this Island is reduced by overcrowding. As traffic multiplies, attraction lessens (tourists add to traffic); as noise increases, attraction decreases (tourists contribute to noise); as social and cultural instability rise, attraction falls (tourism shakes our cultural stability). As we have greater numbers of tourists, we may be repelling the very tourists that would be our ideal: the long-staying, high-spending, committed to quality visitors.



Source: Quoted in Butler, R. (1991) *Tourism, Environment and Sustainable Development*, *Environmental Conservation*, 18(3), pp. 201-209.



## Tourism Categories

However, not all tourists cause such problems. Therefore, it is important to recognise different categories of tourists.

Four common categories include:

-  Mass tourists
-  Elite tourists
-  Explorers
-  Alternative tourists

Identify the characteristics of these [four categories](#) of tourists.



Interaction

Q1: Name (i) one place in your country, and (ii) one in another country which each of these four categories of tourists might visit.

Q2: Which category has the least harmful impact on the cultures and environments they visit? Why?

Q3: Which category would you like to visit your community for a holiday? Why?

You probably chose the 'alternative tourist' as the one likely to cause least problems. However, this group represents the smallest segment of the tourism market and tends to spend little money in the places they visit. Perhaps, this is why the report quoted above said the 'elite tourist' was 'the ideal'.

The majority of tourists fall into the mass tourism category, the one most often seen as the cause of tourism-related problems. For tourism to contribute to sustainable human development, all tourists need to consider ways of reducing the negative impacts of their holidays.



Journal



## **The Tourism Industry Response**

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) is the world's largest tourism organisation with a 1999 membership of 138 countries and over 350 affiliates from local government, tourism associations and private companies such as airlines, hotel groups and tour operators. It was established as a UN affiliate in 1970 with responsibilities for:

“

The promotion and development of tourism with a view to contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity and universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language and religion.

”

In the three decades since 1970, the WTO charter has expanded to include social and environmental responsibilities. As WTO Secretary-General, Francesco Frangialli, said at a 1998 conference:

“

Through tourism, WTO aims to stimulate economic growth and job creation; provide incentives for protecting the environment and heritage destinations, and promote peace and understanding among all nations of the world. . .

Tourism is a labour intensive sector that can alleviate poverty through its capacity to create jobs, especially in rural areas and among women and indigenous people. The tremendous growth which we expect in the next decades cannot happen without consequences. There will be a huge need for infrastructure and for systems that protect the environment.

”

In summary: A sustainable approach to tourism means that neither the natural environment nor the socio-cultural fabric of the host communities will be impaired by the arrival of tourists. On the contrary, the natural environment and the local communities should benefit from tourism, both economically and culturally. Sustainability implies that tourism resources and attractions should be utilised in such a way that their subsequent use by future generations is not compromised.

Source: World Tourism Organisation (2000) Report of Multistakeholder Working Group on Tourism.

Find out more about the [World Tourism Organisation](#).



Web



Activities





Begin by opening your [learning journal](#) for this activity.



Journal

Like all forms of development, tourism can have both positive and negative impacts. The aim of sustainable tourism is to maximise benefits such as job creation, foreign exchange earnings and new infrastructure while safeguarding cultural heritage and living culture and minimising negative environmental and social impacts, especially of mass tourism.



Interaction

[Identify](#) the benefits and problems of mass tourism.

Q4: Identify the criteria you used when evaluating the impacts of mass tourism.



Journal

Q5: How do the effects you judged to be 'A Benefit' reflect the [four dimensions](#) of sustainable living?

-  Appropriate development (Economic sustainability)
-  Equity and peace (Social sustainability)
-  Conservation (Environmental sustainability)
-  Democratic participation (Political sustainability)



### A Case Study of Mass Tourism

We can learn a lot about mass tourism by looking at how destinations are marketed. As well as being actual places, tourist destinations are products that are 'constructed' as mental images to appeal to consumers.

While the actual places and the mental images are related, the image is not a simple reflection of the physical reality. Tourism operators construct images based, in part, on the physical appearance of the destination, but they also tailor the image to what they think consumers want. On many occasions, this desired image becomes the model for the construction of the physical facilities, and the kinds of services and activities provided. Thus, in a sense, the images also help to construct the reality.

A case study of Thailand illustrates the nature of the images produced for mass tourism.

Thailand is one of the world's major tourist destinations, with nearly 10 million overseas visitors in 1999. Its attractions include the natural beauty of rainforests, islands and beaches as well as the cultural heritage and way of life of the Thai people.

These natural and cultural features have been integrated into the images that have been used to 'construct' Thailand as an attractive destination in tourism brochures. Six of these 'constructed' images are:

 [Bangkok: City of Angels](#)

 [What's Cooking?](#)

 [The Beautiful North](#)

 [Games People Play](#)

 [Romantic Islands](#)

 [Festivals for All Occasions](#)



Web

Visit the [Tourism Authority of Thailand](#) for additional information on these and other images of Thailand.



Journal

Analyse these six tourism images of Thailand to identify the nature and effects of tourism images:

Q6: The Description

-  What aspects of Thailand are highlighted in these images?
-  What have the writers assumed the tourists want? What kind of person is this tourist?
-  How successfully does the material stimulate your interest? How does it do this?
-  Are there things you might want to do in Thailand which are not mentioned? If so, why might these have been omitted?

Q7: The Images

-  What is the dominant image of Thailand in the six 'constructions'? Does it reflect the variety of life in Thailand - or might it reflect a stereotype?
-  What images of Thai people are presented?
-  How well do you think Thai people would recognise themselves in the images? Why?
-  Does the image in any way enhance or demean their standing as human beings?

Q8: The Effect of Images

-  How might the 'constructed' image feed back into the construction of the environment and life in Thailand?

 What kind of environment might the realisation of these images create?

 What impact would this have on the life and work of the Thai people?





## **Bangkok - The City of Angels**

Bangkok beautifully illustrates Thailand's contrasts. Surrounded by the roar of the city, saffron robed monks meditate peacefully in temple courtyards. At night the golden temple spires near the Chao Phya river glisten in floodlight, while the streets flash with neon.

Parts of the city offer a night-life of dubious reputation. Bars, discos, cabarets and the ubiquitous 'massage parlours' all vie for attention. Only a short distance away, graceful dancers will entertain you with a centuries-old repertoire.

It appears that everything is on sale everywhere - from high-rise department stores to market stalls, pavement sellers to sampans plying their trade on the canals that thread the city. The beautiful Thai silk for sale is genuine but the \$15 'Rolex' watch is not.

In Bangkok the contrasts and contradictions of Thai life are brought home to the traveller in vivid colour. Our outstanding tours will introduce you to the city and its surrounding attractions. Tour the city's temples and Grand Palace, the floating markets, the delightful Rose Garden Resort and the infamous River Kwai.



## **The Beautiful North**

North from Bangkok you can experience the legendary beauty of the mountains, where Thailand's fascinating hill tribes live out their ancient cultures. Due to their isolation, these people have kept their customs, dialects and dances.

Dotted with mist-covered mountain ranges, this is also an area to go trekking and literally get off the beaten track. Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai offer fine accommodation and are good bases from which to tour the area.



## **Romantic Islands**

If tropical islands are your thing then head for idyllic Phuket. This picturesque island is rapidly becoming one of Thailand's most popular destinations.

Imagine enjoying the cool breezes off the Andaman Sea as you relax with a cool drink after a heavy day of swimming, sunbaking and beach massages. Or setting off for the day to nearby Pi Pi or Phang Nga islands.

Alternatively, you can dine at the beach-front restaurants on the delightful island of Koh Samui across the peninsula in the Gulf of Siam.

These islands, with their mix of perfect beaches, charming people and first class accommodation, are natural settings for restful, romantic holidays.

## What's Cooking?

Western style menus are common in the tourist areas and international hotels, but while you're in Thailand you mustn't miss the local cuisine.

Building on the traditions of India and China, Thailand has blended a unique style. In the south the specialty is seafood whilst in the north sticky rice dishes are staple favourites.

However, be warned. Thai curries can be excruciatingly hot to the Western palate, though if you avoid the fiery sauces, you will be rewarded with a varied and subtle style of cooking that uses the freshest of ingredients.



## Games People Play

If you enjoy a game of golf, a tennis work-out or a flutter on the horses, you will be delighted by a trip to Thailand.

Watersport enthusiasts will find excellent facilities at the seaside resort of Pattaya or the islands of Phuket and Koh Samui.

Thailand's golf courses are numerous - there are ten 18-hole courses in Bangkok alone; and you can enjoy a day at the races at the Royal Bangkok Sports Club or the Royal Turf Club.

Be a little adventurous and see a bout of Thai boxing. Essentially a martial art but also a spectator sport, Thai boxing is a brutal but fascinating spectacle. Hands, elbows, shoulders, feet and knees are used to the accompaniment of traditional music.



## Festivals for All Occasions

Thailand's festivals and celebrations are usually very noisy and always extremely friendly.

The Thai New Year is celebrated with religious pilgrimages, beauty parades, dancing and good-natured water throwing. The celebrations continue throughout the year and for the King's birthday in December the whole city is decorated in his honour.

If you enjoy colour and spectacle then try to time your visit to coincide with one of these intoxicating and memorable celebrations.





Begin by opening your [learning journal](#) for this activity.

Increasing awareness of the problems of mass tourism is leading many holidaymakers to seek more responsible and sustainable forms of tourism.

One of the most common forms of sustainable tourism is ecotourism, the term most commonly used to describe any form of holiday or recreation in natural surroundings. The Ecotourism Society also adds the concept of social responsibility in its definition of ecotourism as:



Purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem, while producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people.



Source: [The Ecotourism Society](#).

Thus, ecotourism is a form of tourism to relatively undisturbed natural areas for the main purposes of admiring them and learning more about their habitats. Ecotourism also seeks to reduce its impacts on the area visited. It also contributes to the conservation of natural areas and the sustainable development of adjacent areas and communities, generating further awareness among resident and nearby populations and visitors.

Although a relatively new part of the tourism industry, ecotourism has spread rapidly throughout the world. The most popular ecotourism destinations are spread relatively evenly throughout the world and include sites in Central and South America, Canada and the USA, Antarctica and Australia.

Another important ecotourism destination is Africa. For example, Kenya employs 55,000 people in its wildlife tourism industry alone. The Kenya Wildlife Service recorded \$24 million of revenues from wildlife tourism in 1990. For 1995, it was \$54 million with 25% of earnings paid to communities in areas adjacent to parks and reserves.

A recent study of Amboseli National Park in Kenya determined that each lion there was worth \$27,000 and each elephant herd as much as \$610,000 in tourist revenue

per year.

Source: [Green Money: Ecotourism](#).



## Case Studies of Rainforest Ecotourism

One of the major attractions in ecotourism is the rainforest. The benefits and problems of ecotourism can be analysed through case studies of rainforest ecotourism in Rwanda and Brazil.

Drawing on research by the [Rainforest Action Network](#), these case studies invite you to explore answers to three questions:



[Do rainforests benefit from ecotourism?](#)



[Can ecotourism harm the rainforest?](#)



[Does ecotourism affect the people of the rainforest?](#)

Answers to these three questions may be recorded in your learning journal.

Journal



## Other Forms of Alternative Tourism

As the rainforest case studies illustrate, ecotourism can have positive and negative effects. This is also true of other forms of alternative tourism such as cultural and historical tourism.

Cultural tourism tends to focus on the indigenous people of an area and their traditional customs, arts, crafts, ceremonies, architecture, religion and lifestyles (eg., visits to hill tribes in Thailand or a Masai village in Kenya) or on visits to art galleries, cathedrals and temples (eg., St. Petersburg in Russia, Kyoto in Japan or the Louvre in Paris, France).

Historical tourism tends to focus on the 'glories of the past' in the form of monuments, museums, and historical sites (eg., Pompeii in Italy, Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Borobudur in Indonesia, or the Great Wall of China).

Q12: Identify an example of cultural and historical tourism in your country or continent.

Q13: Identify some possible benefits and problems of these two forms of alternative tourism.

Journal



Web

Further information on ecotourism and cultural tourism is available in an [Internet bibliography](#).





## **Do Rainforests Benefit From Ecotourism?**

Income from tourism must reach the people who will ultimately decide the forest's future if ecotourism is going to be influential in saving rainforests. Unfortunately, too often the money generated does not benefit these people.

All too often it goes to the North, where the tourists originated, giving little economic protection to the forests. Profits leak back to the North through tour companies, plane tickets, foreign-owned accommodation and use of non-local supplies. As a result, the World Bank estimates that only 45% of worldwide revenues from tourism remains in the host country.

The percentage is often lower in the South. A study of the [Annapurna](#) region of Nepal, a popular ecotourism destination, found that only 10 cents of every dollar spent stayed in the local economy - and that much of that small amount ended up in the large cities or in the hands of the wealthy elite.

Tourist dollars should help to improve management of conservation areas on which the tourism is based. However, the money from tourism often does not end up with the agencies that manage these areas. In Costa Rica, for example, the park service does not earn enough money from its entrance fees to manage and protect its numerous parks. Only 25% of its budget comes from fees. The other three quarters must come from donations.

Tourists often resent paying large sums of money on entrance fees. Although these fees are only a small portion of the money spent on a trip they can be the most important dollars spent in protecting the resource because they go directly toward protecting the site.



## Case Study: Tourism Helps Save Rwandan Gorillas

Tourism is largely responsible for saving the gorillas of Rwanda from extinction. The gorilla was threatened by both poachers and local farmers, whose land clearing practices were destroying the gorillas' natural habitat.

Rwanda's Parc des Volcans, created by Dian Fossey as a wildlife preserve, has become an international attraction and the third largest source of foreign exchange for Rwanda. Revenues from the \$170-a-day fee that visitors pay to enter the park have allowed the government to create anti-poaching patrols and employ local farmers as park guides and guards.

Even this success is in danger from civil war that encroaches and endangers both the forest and tourist industry.

Source: Adapted from [Rainforest Action Network](#).



Q9: Identify aspects of ecotourism in Rwandan that are:

-  Benefits
-  Problems
-  Both a benefit and a problem
-  Neutral in effect.





## **Can Ecotourism Harm the Rainforest?**

Despite many scientific advances, we know very little about rainforest ecology. Thus, it is difficult to know how many people can visit a rainforest in a day without disrupting the forest ecology. There is some evidence that just the presence of travellers walking on trails through the forest changes the behaviour of animals in the forest.

A major impact on the forest are the pressures caused by accommodating the physical needs and comforts of tourists; impacts of providing wood for fuel, accommodation and access routes, together with the problems caused by tourists' rubbish, put a large stress on the environment. For example, litter has been strewn along the trails of popular Himalayan tourist routes, and the alpine forest decimated by trekkers looking for fuel to heat their food and bath water.

Only a limited number of people can visit an area before that area is adversely affected. However, deciding that number is often very difficult.



## **Case Study: Manuel Antonio National Park, Costa Rica**

In Costa Rica, Manuel Antonio National Park is a victim of its own popularity. It is a popular tourist spot for both international and Costa Rican tourists who come to see its beautiful beaches and natural scenery. It is also the home of one of the last surviving populations of spider monkeys in the country.

The popularity of the park has led developers to build many hotels in the area. This excessive building in the area combined with high visitation in the park has threatened the monkey population as well as other wildlife.

While half of the park has been closed to tourists, it is necessary to severely restrict visitors to the rest of the park, and even to enlarge it, if a viable ecosystem is to be maintained. However, there is opposition to any further restriction to local land use and access to the park by the local tourist industry.

Costa Rica is one of the few countries that has a national policy to promote ecotourism as a non-consumptive use of their rich rainforests. Costa Rica has the difficult task of trying to foster its tourist industry while limiting the number of visitors to sensitive environments. However, the enormous success of the industry has overwhelmed the forest and prompted a call for a comprehensive study into methods to manage and limit tourist impact on the forest.

Source: Adapted from [Rainforest Action Network](#).



Journal

Q10: Identify the aspects of ecotourism in Costa Rican that are:

-  Benefits
-  Problems
-  Both a benefit and a problem
-  Neutral in effect.





## **Does Ecotourism Affect The People Of The Rainforest?**

The pressures of ecotourism go beyond the natural world. Ecotourism can also disrupt local people and their social structures. Indeed, it is difficult to bring the benefits of tourism to traditional people without disrupting their way of life.

Ecotourists bring their modern material comforts, such as preserved foods, cameras, razors and so on, with them. These can often be unimagined luxuries for local people who cannot pay for them without major changes in their lifestyles.

The local use of the forest for firewood, meat and agriculture can sometimes conflict with tourists' wishes to keep the land pristine. To protect the tourist industry, regulations are sometimes made that prevent locals from using these forest resources. With their livelihood eroded and often without the skills to work in the tourism industry, local people can be left with no alternative income. There have been many cases where the original inhabitants of an area are pushed out so outsiders can move in to try to profit from tourism.

Careful planning is needed to attract enough tourists to make money and still maintain the unspoiled forest and indigenous communities within them. Opening an area to tourists without such planning can quickly destroy the forests upon which the tourism is based. Alta Floresta is one example of a tourist project that has been planned with care.



### **Case Study: Alta Floresta, Brazil**

Alta Floresta, a town in the Brazilian highlands, is the home of an innovative research centre and ecotourism centre. The research centre was set up to study sustainable ways of using the forest and to help people in the area benefit from the changes that come from ecotourism.

The project emphasises community involvement through schools, hospitals and training programs. Local people are trained in sustainable farming practices and the harvesting of non-timber forest products. Instead of being forced out of the economy, they are trained to work in the tourist centre and lodge, thus becoming an integral part of the whole project. The tourist centre also educates travellers on the biology of the rainforest

and causes of its destruction.

For more information, see an analysis of ecotourism at Alta Floresta by [Brazil Nature](#).

Source: Adapted from [Rainforest Action Network](#).



Journal

Q11: Identify aspects of ecotourism at Alta Floresta that are:



Benefits



Problems



Both a benefit and a problem



Neutral in effect.





Journal

Begin by opening your [learning journal](#) for this activity.

Must tourism have negative effects on the environment and people of host countries? Can it be organised to support the historical, cultural and environmental heritage of an area?

The World Tourism Organisation argues that, with care and proper policies, the cultural and environmental heritage of an area can be protected. One requirement is that tourists themselves act in ways which will sustain rather than damage host cultures and environments and follow an appropriate code of ethics.

'Tourists' who follow such a code of ethics often prefer to call themselves 'travellers'.

The distinction is between the 'traveller' who visits in order to learn and experience the cultures and environments of the places visited, and the 'tourist' who visits to be entertained by images and experiences created especially for the tourist market.

Being a traveller involves [six general principles](#):

-  Preparing in advance
-  Choosing the right tour operator
-  Respecting local customs, cultures and lifestyles
-  Considering the impact of your presence
-  Presenting yourself realistically
-  Continuing the experience when you return home.



## Policies for Sustainable Tourism

Just as individuals can learn to be enlightened travellers, governments and tour operators can also support and encourage sustainable tourism through appropriate policies and regulations such as:

- Tourism development projects can be required to include local representatives on planning teams.
- Tourism development projects should be compatible with the needs and practices of local communities.
- Planning controls can be designed to ensure regional dispersal of tourism development to avoid over-concentration and regional inequality.
- Good agricultural land can be made off limits for tourism.
- Hotels can be required to install effluent treatment plants.
- Environmental safeguards can be rigidly applied in the development approval process.
- Minimum levels of local employment and resources should be enforced.
- Minimum wage levels approved by independent labour unions should be enforced.
- Levies can be imposed on the tourist industry to fund the teaching and development of traditional skills and art forms.
- Codes of conduct can be formulated and distributed at tourist outlets.



Such initiatives were among the policies recommended by participants at the 1995 World Conference on Sustainable Tourism which developed a [Charter for Sustainable Tourism](#).

A wide variety of codes of conduct for responsible tourism have been developed. These provide guidelines for the tourism industry. Depending on their specific objectives, codes of conduct can address general aspects of tourism, specific destinations, or the different players in the industry.

Investigate [codes and charters for sustainable tourism](#).



Q14: Identify actions that could address any problems related to tourism development(s) in your own country? Are there barriers to implementing these suggestions? Is there any way you and your students could help to implement any of these actions?



## **Being a traveller - Six general principles**



### **Preparing in advance**

- Prepare for your trip by learning about the culture, history and customs of the people.
- Try to learn some of the language of the place you are to visit, such as basic greetings and 'thank you'.



### **Choosing the right tour operator**

- If possible, stay with local people or in modest accommodation which does not require the expensive resource-consuming style of international hotels.
- Make sure the tour operator runs an environmentally sound business which supports small-scale projects.
- Employ local guides whenever possible.
- Select tour groups that design tours with the input of the community.



### **Respecting local customs, cultures and lifestyles**

- Treat local people the way you would like to be treated by tourists in your home community.
- Respect and try to fit in with local customs.
- Be sensitive to the intrusion of photographing people and places.
- Accept that other people have different, not wrong or inferior, ways of living.
- Avoid relationships, especially sexual ones, that are not based on equality of respect.
- Respect the rights of people, especially when you are in the powerful position of being relatively wealthy.
- Do not dress in ways which might offend local beliefs, especially in places of religious or spiritual significance.



## **Considering the impact of your presence**

- Drink and eat local food so that more of the expenditure stays in the country.
- Get around on foot or by bicycle or local transport rather than tourist coach.
- Think about the impact of tourism on the places and people you visit.
- Avoid off-road tours which could damage soil and other aspects of the natural environment.
- Don't litter.
- Be careful that in bargaining you are not exploiting the poverty and need of sellers.
- Avoid buying products that come from or are made from protected species.
- Try to conserve limited (non-renewable) resources like firewood or water.



## **Presenting yourself realistically**

- Share information with local people about the social, environmental and economic realities that you face in your own country; do not glamorise Western culture.
- Talk to local people about their country and their views of tourists.



## **Continuing the experience when you return home**

- Join environmental groups and support human rights organisations, in your home country.
- Once home, tell your friends about the everyday life of the people you met as well as the tourist images.



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### **An Ecotourism Simulation Game**

This activity simulates the planning and decision-making processes involved in a case study of ecotourism in Ecuador. The simulation is modelled on the 'Choose Your Own Adventure' type of game, and is called 'Amazon Interactive: The Ecotourism Game'.

The game may be used by students in the later years of primary school (depending on their reading skills) right up to senior secondary school.

The indigenous Quichua community of Rio Blanco in the Ecuadorian Amazon was founded in 1971 by Quichua migrants from the Andean foothills. They moved to Rio Blanco because population growth and the movement of agricultural workers into their area meant that land was becoming scarce.

The local economy is no longer based on subsistence agriculture and hunting as many of the Quichua have started producing cash crops such as coffee, cacao, rice and maize.

Rapid population growth and rising costs of living in the past twenty years have forced the community to expand the amount of land under cultivation. As a result, the rainforest has been decreasing. By 1995, forest accounted for less than half of the community's main block of land.

Facing continued population growth, the community is considering the development of an ecotourism project as an alternative economic activity which may also protect the forest.

This is the scenario for 'Amazon Interactive: The Ecotourism Game'.

Teachers can prepare for the simulation game by reading more about the [Rio Blanco project](#).



Web



## Background Research

Students can be prepared for the simulation through a research project:



-  [Where is the Amazon?](#)
-  [How rainy is the rainforest?](#)
-  [Who lives there?](#)
-  [Making a living in the Amazon](#)
-  [Conservation and coffee in Ecuador](#)



## Amazon Interactive: The Ecotourism Game

In this simulation, students take the role of a Quichua family living in a community of about 100 people on the banks of the Rio Pangayacu which eventually flows into the Amazon. Where your parents and grandparents used to live by hunting, fishing and growing a few crops, your community grows coffee, corn and rice to sell in the market at Rio Blanco.

Increasingly, foreign tourists, mainly from North America and Europe, have come to your community. Your neighbour, Augustin, and other people in the community believe that an ecotourism industry should be started to cater for these tourists and to increase local incomes.

However, others are afraid of the damage that this might cause to the remaining rainforest. But Augustin says that if we can earn money from the tourists, we would not have to clear any more forest for our farms.

You and the rest of the community have to decide what to do. Can you balance the need for income and social development with the need to conserve the rainforest?



Click [image](#) to play the game.

Analyse what you learnt about ecotourism in the simulation game and how you might use it in your teaching:

Q15: What were the two wisest decisions that you made in the simulation? Why?

Q16: Name two not-so-wise decisions that you made. Why were they not-so-wise?

Q17: In your experience, to what extent can ecotourism contribute to the four principles of sustainable human development? Why?

-  Economic sustainability: Appropriate development



Interaction



Journal

-  **Social sustainability: Equity and peace**
-  **Environmental sustainability: Conservation**
-  **Political sustainability: Democratic participation**

**Q18: Identify (i) a grade level and (ii) a syllabus topic where you might be able to include this simulation in your teaching.**

**Q19: How could you use the simulation if you did not have computer access for your class?**





Begin by opening your [learning journal](#) for this activity.



**Completing the module:** Look back through the activities and tasks to check that you have done them all and to change any that you think you can improve now that you have come to the end of the module.



Q20: Identify four defining characteristics of sustainable tourism.



Q21: List the key message you will take from each of the five activities you have completed.

Q22: The topic of sustainable tourism has great potential in education for a sustainable future. List four points that you would include in a rationale for including sustainable tourism in the curriculum.

Q23: How do the points in your rationale relate to the four points in this [model rationale](#)?



## **A Rational for Teaching About Sustainable Tourism**

Four reasons to teach about sustainable tourism are:

- While tourists are predominantly from the wealthier countries of the world, tourism and travel is nonetheless an increasingly widespread experience for people in many countries. So studying the impact of tourism on development has direct implications for the way visitors think about and conduct themselves in travel to other places. It provides useful opportunities to develop understanding of economic, social and cultural differences. Helping students to become understanding 'travellers' rather than simply 'tourists' can have real benefits if it leads people to assess how they behave when travelling and how they relate to people from other cultures.
- Increased world tourism means that there should be no shortage of people and resources on this topic. Visitors can give first hand accounts of the developing world and developed: people from developing countries can give a different perspective on the impact of tourism; and tourist promotion agencies and literature allow the study of the public image of tourism to the overseas consumer. All these provide resources for close study of the tourist industry and experience.
- Tourism is a major growth industry worldwide, and its positive and negative effects are evident everywhere. This means that the study of tourism in the developing world can be related to the students' experience of tourism wherever they live, and in many cases responses to issues can be compared with similar issues in students' own locations. This comparison can provide a bridge between people in many countries, with great potential for empathy and understanding.
- Tourism has been closely linked to cultural and economic imperialism. For instance, the hotel market is dominated by American multinationals like Holiday Inn, Best Western and Sheraton. In 1991, eight of the top ten tourist hotel chains were American, one was British and one French. Also, tourism has brought certain images and experiences of the developing world to members of colonising nations, and these need to be critically examined by all involved. As a result, the study and teaching of tourism and development offers opportunities to developing nations to inform the rest of the world about their own histories, culture and environments, how they should be understood, and how they can be protected.

**Activity 1 - The rise of tourism**

**Q1:** Name one place in your country and one in another country where the four types of tourists, are likely to visit.

Type of tourist	Place likely to visit	
	In your country	In another country
Mass tourist		
Elite tourist		
Explorer		
Alternative tourist		

**Q2:** Which of these four kinds of tourists might have the least harmful impact on the cultures and environments of the places they visit? Why?

**Q3:** Which category would you like to visit your community for a holiday? Why?

**Activity 2 - The benefits and problems of mass tourism**

**Q4:** What criteria did you use to evaluate the effects of mass tourism in the interaction.

**Q5:** How do the effects you judged to be 'A Benefit' reflect the four principles of sustainable living.

<b>Economic sustainability: Appropriate development</b>	
<b>Social sustainability: Equity and peace</b>	
<b>Environmental sustainability: Conservation</b>	
<b>Political sustainability: Democratic participation</b>	

**A case study of mass tourism - Tourism images of Thailand.**

**Q6:** The Description

What aspects of Thailand are highlighted in these images?

What have the writers assumed tourists want? What category of tourist is this?

How successfully does the material stimulate your interest? How does it do this?

Are there things you might want to do in Thailand which are not mentioned? If so, why might these have been omitted?

**Q7:** The Images

What is the dominant image of Thailand in the six 'constructions'? Does this image reflect the variety of life in Thailand - or might it reflect a stereotype?

What images of Thai people are presented?

How well do you think Thai people would recognise themselves in the images? Why?

Does the image in any way enhance or demean their standing as human beings?

**Q8: The Effect of Images**

How might the 'constructed' image feed back into the construction of the environment and life in Thailand?

What kind of environment might the realisation of these images create?

What impact would this have on the life and work of the Thai people?

**Activity 3 - The benefits and problems of ecotourism**

**Case studies of rainforest ecotourism**

**Q9:** Do rainforests benefit from ecotourism? Identify some aspects of ecotourism in the Rwandan case study that are:

<b>Benefits</b>	
<b>Problems</b>	
<b>Both a benefit and a problem</b>	

<b>Neutral in effect</b>	
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**Q10:** Can ecotourism harm the rainforests? Identify some aspects of ecotourism in the Costa Rican case study that are:

<b>Benefits</b>	
<b>Problems</b>	
<b>Both a benefit and a problem</b>	
<b>Neutral in effect</b>	

**Q11:** Do ecotourism affect the people of the rainforest? Identify some aspects of ecotourism in the Brazilian case study that are:

<b>Benefits</b>	
<b>Problems</b>	
<b>Both a benefit and a problem</b>	
<b>Neutral in effect</b>	

**Q12:** Identify an example of cultural and historical tourism in your country or continent.

<b>Cultural tourism</b>	
<b>Historical tourism</b>	

**Q13:** Identify possible benefits and problems of these forms of alternative tourism.

<b>Possible benefits</b>	<b>Possible problems</b>

#### Activity 4 - Being an enlightened traveller

**Q14:** Identify two actions that could address any problems related to tourism in your own country? Are there barriers to implementing these suggestions? Is there any way you and your students could help to implement any of these actions?

Actions	Barriers	What we can do
1.		
2.		

#### Activity 5 - Teaching about ecotourism

**Q15:** What were the two wisest decisions you made in the simulation? Why?

Wise decisions	Reason
1.	
2.	

**Q16:** Name two not-so-wise decisions that you made. Why were they not-so-wise?

Not-so-wise	Reason
1.	
2.	

**Q17:** To what extent can ecotourism contribute to the four principles of sustainable human development? Why?

<b>Economic sustainability: Appropriate development</b>	
<b>Social sustainability: Equity and peace</b>	
<b>Environmental sustainability: Conservation</b>	

<b>Political sustainability: Democratic participation</b>	
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**Q18:** Identify (i) a grade level and (ii) a syllabus topic where you might be able to include this simulation in your teaching.

<b>Grade level</b>	
<b>Syllabus topic</b>	

**Q19:** How could you use the simulation if you did not have computer access for your class?

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### Activity 6 - Reflection

**Q20:** Identify four defining characteristics of sustainable tourism.

1.
2.
3.
4.

**Q21:** List the key message you will take away from each of the five activities you have completed.

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Key message/s</b>
1. The rise of tourism	
2. The benefits and problems of mass tourism	

3. The benefits and problems of ecotourism	
4. Being an enlightened traveller	
5. Teaching about ecotourism	

**Q22:** The topic of sustainable tourism has great potential in education for a sustainable future. List four points that you would include in a rationale for including sustainable tourism in the curriculum.

1.
2.
3.
4.

**Q23:** How do the points in your rationale relate to the four points in the model rationale?

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