

BENEFITS OF STUDENT TRAVEL

Travel is its own form of education, which makes it one of the most important experiences a student can have.

Whether flying across the ocean, driving across state lines or visiting a big city nearby, travel can open a whole new world for our students, especially when done through school with a great teacher and expert tour operator.

From seeing different cultures to meeting new people and learning about history firsthand, student travel has a wealth of benefits that personal anecdotes and professional studies can attest to. There's nothing like experiential learning, and travel provides the greatest experiences of all.

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE MANY BENEFITS OF STUDENT TRAVEL:

TEACHES INDEPENDENCE.

For many students, school trips are their main opportunity to experience what it's like to be away from their family for an extended period of time. Even in a group of chaperones and fellow students, school trips let youth be a different version of themselves while taking on some personal responsibility. Travel is a great way to step outside of your comfort zone for the first time, and it prepares kids for life after school.

CULTURAL AWARENESS.

Travel takes students out of their bubble and exposes them to all kinds of differences. For some students, simply seeing people experiencing homelessness firsthand is an eye-opening culture shock. For others, a trip out of the big city to experience rural life is novel. And of course, traveling internationally is life-changing. Countless students have talked about how a school trip gave them more compassion for those struggling, helped them see how diverse other countries are (America's not the only melting pot), and put life into perspective. Reading books and looking at pictures simply can't do other cultures justice.

CRITICAL THINKING.

Related to the above, seeing other cultures firsthand can help debunk myths and stereotypes students may have learned, which in turn increases their skepticism toward future falsities they'll come across. While the internet connects us to other cultures in ways we never thought possible, the rise of misinformation means critical thinking is more important than ever before.

IMPROVED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE THROUGH FIRSTHAND LEARNING.

Study after study has shown that travel increases intellectual curiosity and a willingness to learn and explore. Student travel also helps reinforce classroom material with experiential learning. If you're a teacher, a museum trip can easily tie into something you've already taught (or plan to teach) this school year, not to mention all the activities and discussion you can have once you've returned. No matter what your "learning style" is, experiential learning hits harder and lasts longer.

CREATES COLLABORATION.

By nature of being together on a long trip, students are bound to form relationships and will likely end up experiencing things together in small groups. Lifelong memories will form, they'll learn how to work and live with different personalities, and those relationships will stick when you're back in the classroom (or band room, or choir room).

BUILDS TRUST.

If a student is agreeing to go on a trip you're leading, chances are they already trust you at least a little bit—but there's nothing like the bonds that form through travel. Students will have to fully trust that you know what you're doing and may come to you when feeling homesick or dealing with bullying, sickness or other issues. Hopefully it doesn't come to that, but the silver lining is that this provides a chance for you to impart wisdom and empathy to developing youths.

LIFELONG MEMORIES.

While not directly related to education, forming positive memories in association with student travel will help students think more positively about school in general. And besides, memories are their own reward.