

WRITING: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

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Now you are going to write a newspaper article yourself. Your article will deal with *My Gap Year*, an organization that offers gap year experiences in Cambodia. Inform yourself about their activities with this blog entry by programme director Rhyle Simcock. Before writing your own article, list the various jobs and activities that are part of the "Cambodia Building Blocks Adventure" programme.

mygapyear | TRAVEL DESTINATIONS VOLUNTEER ADVENTURES TEACH SKI

Our latest group of Volunteers for the month of July is done and dusted! A huge shout out to Yenara, Abbey, Ellyse, Ryan, Liam, Kate, Poppy & Larissa for joining us on our latest Adventure.



We set out to build three houses, two water wells¹ and a toilet in just two weeks! But not before a visit to the long lost ancient civilization that is the Angkor Archeological Park.

The group did a fantastic job building the first house. Some of the girls got their hands dirty sawing bamboo, whilst the others inadvertently found themselves running a pop-up kindergarten. By the end of the first day word had gotten out and there were over 30 children descending on the project site like it was Christmas.

Day two had the boys digging a hole for the toilet, also being donated to the family with the house. Toilets are important as they help divert human waste away from sources of water & agriculture.

At night the group ate out in some of the best local restaurants in town, trawled² through the endless array of night markets and experienced the epic PHARE Cambodian Circus (No Animals).

Every day the group diligently got up and slugged³ it out in the scorching heat for a great cause. The first house was up and ready by day four and the Volunteers took the weekend off to have a celebratory night out in town, visit the floating village and have a well-earned rest by the pool. Week two had the group testing their teaching capabilities at one of Siem Reaps⁴



most important Children Centres. As usual this proved more fun than work as the group spent the next five days teaching English games, singing songs, doing arts & crafts, and playing football.

During this time the local My Gap Year staff were busy back at the project site building the final two houses & water well. We got there in the end with two very happy families the reward⁵ for all those involved. With construction complete & time at the Children's Centre coming to a close it was time for the group to spend the last few days getting some serious R & R⁶. Including a visit to the always magical Kulen Mountain & sacred waterfall, and one last night out in town to finish with a bang⁷.

Thanks Dabbers⁸, Rhyle Simcock Program⁹ Director

Annotations

- ¹ **well** = a hole in the ground where water comes out
- ² to **trawl** /tra:dl/ = here: to wander through
- ³ to **slug it out** (infml) = to work hard
- ⁴ **Siem Reap** = name of a city and province in the north of Cambodia
- ⁵ **reward** = sth that you get because you have worked hard
- ⁶ **R & R** = rest and relaxation
- ⁷ **with a bang** (infml) = successfully
- ⁸ **dabber** = here: sb who can fix things
- ⁹ **program** (AmE) = programme (BrE)

7 CHOOSE

Work on either of the tasks below.

- A** The company *My Gap Year* was founded by Debra Daniels of Brisbane, Australia. A local newspaper wants to write about the company and what they do, using the example of a particular activity. The writer has chosen the blog entry as a starting point. Convert the blog entry into an informative article giving the reader some insight into the "Cambodia Building Blocks Adventure" programme.

Use what you have learnt about newspaper articles from the analysis of "Gap years: Wasted youth?" as well as checklist A.

Checklist A

Informative newspaper article

- ✓ Use a clear structure:
 - headline + subheading
 - introduction (answering important wh-questions, interesting lead into your article)
 - main part with clear paragraphs: most important information first, then details in order of importance ("inverted pyramid")
 - concluding paragraph (optional)
- ✓ To make your article interesting and approachable, include
 - description
 - examples
 - quotes (experts)
 - figures
- ✓ Register: mostly neutral or formal; keep your target audience and the purpose of your article in mind

- B** While many gappers organize everything themselves, others choose to pay a company like *My Gap Year*, which sells gap year experiences to young people.

- a) Collect arguments for these two approaches in a T-chart.
b) Use what you have learnt about including facts and opinions to write an argumentative article for a school newspaper titled "Why pay for volunteering?!" Checklist B can help you, too.

why it is good to organize your gap year yourself

why it is good to use the expertise of a company

...

...

Checklist B

Argumentative newspaper article

- ✓ Use a clear structure:
 - headline + subheading
 - introduction (with concise statement of your opinion)
 - main part with clear paragraphs: arguments and counter-arguments arranged in a way that supports your opinion
 - concluding paragraph (emphasizing your opinion/summing up your line of argument)
- ✓ To make your article convincing, include
 - factual evidence
 - quotes (experts)
 - statistical evidence
- ✓ Register: neutral, formal or even informal; keep your target audience and the purpose of your article in mind
- ✓ Give a clear point of view
- ✓ Don't
 - add new ideas in the conclusion
 - settle on a "mixed" view of the topic (*I think both sides can be justified...*)

8 Peer editing

Find someone who has written the other kind of article. Use your partner's checklist (A or B) to comment on their article's quality. Pay special attention to elements that show what kind of article (informative or argumentative) your partner has written: How well have they been implemented? To help your partner improve his/her article, note down

- the top two: What paragraphs, arguments, stylistic devices, ... are especially convincing? Why?
- the bottom two: Where does his/her article need improving? How can he/she achieve that?