



How a School Trip  
can prepare pupils  
for life after school



*In this article, we look at the research to demonstrate how a school trip can help prepare pupils for life after school.*

*We hope that you find these insights useful in planning your trip and getting all parties excited for what you might achieve.*

School trips are one of the most exciting experiences pupils have during their education years. The memories from school travel can last a lifetime, but so too can the skills gained as part of a school trip.

Travelling with a school group creates a dynamic learning environment, provoking the desire to learn, experience and grow.

Even pupils who are challenging to motivate, or struggle with behavioural issues, benefit from a learning experience that can provide context to classroom subjects and teach practical skills for life.

There is strong anecdotal evidence to support the benefits of out-of-classroom learning, as well as statistics proving how much of an impact a school trip can have on academic attainment, personal relationships and capacity for learning.





In Ofsted's 2008 report '**How far should you go?**' it was determined that out-of-classroom learning had a significant impact on raising standards in pupils emotional, social and personal development. Organising a school trip isn't easy, but the long-term benefits to pupils make the planning, problems and execution worthwhile.

### **Improved critical thinking skills at an early stage**

Critical thinking is a crucial skill in many careers. It's the ability to rationalise, think clearly, understand information and make logical connections between ideas. The reason school trips enhance critical thinking is that they require active learning rather than passive absorption of information. School travel gives pupils experience of real-life learning scenarios, giving them exposure to essential challenges of thinking.

In the recent study "**The Future of Jobs**"

report produced by the World Economic Forum, critical thinking and the ability to solve complex problems were identified as the top skills sought-after by employers. Researchers interviewed 350 managers across 15 countries to determine the most desired skills for jobs in tomorrow's workplace, and critical thinking came out on top. Critical thinking is a crucial skill for many professionals, including lawyers, doctors, engineers, accountants and scientists. Developing critical thinking at an early stage can help pupils build the skills they need to effectively analyse and solve problems, create strategic plans and build innovative solutions in their future careers.

### **School travel broadens pupil's worldview**

A person's worldview refers to their belief system, attitudes and values towards the world - it impacts everything they see, do, think and feel. Worldview is shaped by the →

society we live in and how we are brought up, but also by the experiences we have throughout our lives. Experiencing different languages, cultures, religions and societal norms as part of a school trip can challenge a pupil's way of thinking.

They may begin to see their own life path differently and become more understanding of those with a different worldview to their own. Perhaps they would like to live in a different country, travel or learn languages. Maybe they can see themselves as a ski instructor or working for an international business. A new culture can have a significant impact on big-picture thinking for pupils in the long-term, particularly pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who may never have experienced cultural travel.

## **Contextualises and compliments classroom learning**

Visiting new places, historical sites, and using modern foreign languages exposes pupils to the real-world situation where they may use classroom learning. Learning in this way can also give a sense of gravitas to what pupils are learning. For example, World War trips can have an emotional impact on pupils, inspiring long-term empathy and understanding of why peace and co-operation are high on political agendas. Practical not only makes course material easier to understand but can assist pupils in considering how their studies might affect their life after school.





## School travel builds confidence and independence

According to a **study** conducted by Outward Bound, 93% of teachers agreed that residential trips have a significant influence on pupils confidence and self-esteem. Similarly, 94% of teachers indicated that following a school trip, pupils were more likely to attempt things they believed to be difficult.

An international school trip is often the first time pupils have been away from home or spent time away without a close family member. While everyone needs to step out on their own at some point, exposing school-age pupils to circumstances where they must take responsibility for themselves can help prepare them for what comes after school. Regardless of whether pupils are thinking about college, university or the world of work, a school trip will help them step out of their comfort zone and understand just what they are capable of doing for themselves. Contrary to what parents might think, taking responsibility for themselves can give pupils a sense of pride and confidence, encouraging independence.

## School trips can provide motivation towards career goals

Many pupils may not know what they want to do, but some might find their calling as part of a school trip. Seeing adults living in other countries or working in exciting jobs can help pupils to consider what kind of career path they want to follow and what they might need to do to get there. For example, visits to international institutions may inspire pupils

to study law or politics, and they will then understand the need to work hard at school. Being able to 'see' their dream career and find out more about how to work towards it can start a fire in even the most difficult to motivate members of the classroom.

## Allows pupils to experience different styles of learning

As a teacher, you understand that not all pupils learn in the same way. Some students love traditional methods of study, whereas others thrive in social situations. School travel allows pupils the opportunity to experience a variety of learning styles throughout the trip. They can learn from each other, but also understand how they learn best. This can set them up for the next stage of life. For example, practical learners may consider an apprenticeship with renewed confidence that they learn by doing.

## School trips provide benefits for disadvantaged students

Ofsted's 2008 **report** 'How far should you go?' concludes that well-planned out-of-classroom activities, including trips, were necessary to ensure equal and full access for all learners by removing barriers. School travel is particularly advantageous to disadvantaged pupils, who are given the opportunity to visit places and take part in cultural learning they may never otherwise experience. As a result, school travel can go a long way to narrowing the attainment gap and promoting social inclusion.

## Particular benefits of ski trips

Ski trips can provide additional benefits to pupils given they are physical in nature and provide additional opportunities for social activities. The House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, Education Outside the Classroom: Second Report of Session 2004–05, identified key benefits of ski trips in particular. The specific benefits identified included:

- Physical skills and understanding
- Health and fitness
- Personal development
- Enhanced social skills
- Opportunities to set and achieve personal goals
- Increased environmental awareness

The study also identified that group activities such as skiing, and adventure expeditions significantly improve self-confidence. The committee made clear that outdoor education is a vital part of the social inclusion agenda as it offers pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to experience the great outdoors, and other elements of travel that many others take for granted.

We know that school travel can have a great influence on how pupils interact and perform at school. However, the real purpose of school is to prepare children for what comes next and equip them with the personal and practical



skills they need to succeed. School travel can clearly play an important part in developing specific skills in ways that pupils don't experience through classroom learning. As we have learned, this is particularly important for pupils from a disadvantaged background, those with a different learning style or those who are difficult to motivate. All pupils may discover that after a school trip, they have greater self-confidence, desire to learn, increased motivation and an enhanced world view. In our opinion, these outcomes are entirely worth the effort and organisation.

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