

SPAIN tourism & overtourism

foreign visitors in our country

Objective: make students aware of the need to preserve Spain's cultural identity and keep it from being overrun by mass tourism.

1. RATIONALE

The number of tourists travelling the world is on the rise. The world has become more connected via low cost air travel and technology – including social media.

When you visit another culture, you have the opportunity to be exposed to unfamiliar traditions and perspectives and to gain a broader, more informed and realistic view of both the people and places you encounter. Preconceptions and stereotypes will be replaced by first-hand knowledge. On the other hand, those that travel with a group and merely visit tourist sites and don't interact with locals may not have the chance at all. Merely visiting a place is not enough to expose a person to culture. It takes time and some kind of an effort to learn about people.

What makes a country an attractive destination?

When we design a trip we might take into account several aspects such as: weather conditions, cultural and historical sites of interest, entertainment and leisure facilities, beautiful landscapes, a safe environment, cordiality and hospitality towards visitors and variety of infrastructure for tourism.

Spain has an assortment of geographical and cultural appeals that cause a constant inflow of tourists. One of the main attractions is the Mediterranean Sea. The lush sandy beaches and the relaxing atmosphere attract hordes of sunshine lovers. During their visit, the many fascinations of Spain incline the visitors to explore the country's rich historical wealth.

Does tourism have a negative or positive impact on a travel destination?

Spain has become a power in world tourism. Spain ranked second on the *World Tourism Organization's* list of most visited countries in the world in 2018 and 2019. In fact, travel and tourism have become one of the leading engines of growth for the Spanish economy. Undoubtedly, tourism constitutes an essential industry for the Spanish economic system. It accounts for more than 12% of Spain's gross domestic product (GDP) and it provides jobs to 13% of the country's workforce.

This way, our country, like many places in the world, relies heavily on tourism as a key source of income and employment. The tourists contribute to the economy in a variety of ways such as spending money in restaurants, hotels and stores as well as contributing to the preservation of historical sites and museums and art galleries. A great number of people need to be trained and employed in the hospitality sector. Sectors such as hotel management, restaurants and airport services require a high number of employees.

Unfortunately, tourism can also be a source of problems, especially if it is not managed well. The problem is not the number of visitors that travel to a country but the fact that there are large numbers in certain locations and at certain times of the year. A huge flow of visitors will steadily deplete the beauty, uniqueness, character, resources and environment of a tourist destination over time. Such large amount of travelers can easily mean big challenges for many destinations. More facilities and services will have to be designed to meet the new needs of transportation, accommodation, feeding, entertaining, policing, and cleaning up afterwards.

If we allow mass tourism to impact negatively on our beaches, towns and countryside, the tourist industry itself will suffer. Furthermore, local people may turn against tourists as it is happening in other parts of Europe such as Venice or Amsterdam or in the rest of the world - Botswana or Galapagos. In fact, this massive influx of tourists has already sparked social tensions in some parts of Spain.

The tourism industry is not going to regulate itself. Governments, which, above all, tend to associate sightseers with growth, job creation, development and tax revenue should quickly start to regulate tourism because regulation is the only sustainable way forward if our country is to retain its culture and preserve its ecosystems.

2. PROCEDURE

Students will be divided in groups of 3 or 6 members depending on the total number of students in the class and the characteristics of the class itself. They will choose a representative to speak up in front of the class and a writer who will put down all the group conclusions in the portfolio.

Along the presentation students are asked to do different activities. They will put all this information together in a portfolio. Encourage them to take notes about all the points discussed in their group in order to include them in the portfolio. One document will be produced per group.

Then they will also have to produce a final project in the form of one of the proposed options.

Slide 2

What is the meaning of tourism?

The definition provided comes from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Get students to provide their own definitions. They may find them on the internet but they will explain it in their own words and include the definition they come up with in their portfolio.

Slide 3

Do you think tourism is good and necessary for Spanish economy? Why?

This question requires some kind of explanation from the teacher. Some necessary hints can be found in the rationale to the activity. After the explanation students will report their findings and conclusions in the portfolio.

Slide 4

What do you need to know before you visit Spain?

Individually each of them will choose 3 of the tips and will prepare to talk about them in the group. All additional comments or information will be registered and included in their portfolio.

Slide 5

What are you looking for when choosing where to go on holiday?

In the group they will elaborate a list of possible destinations for each kind of holiday. Go through the categories with them to make sure they have a clear idea about what each of them mean. Then encourage them to add names of places they know or they are familiar with even if the rest of the group doesn't know about them. Invite them to give explanations of why those places would represent that kind of holiday.

Slide 6

Why would you visit these places? / What about these?

The ones on the left are considered must-see destinations in Spain. Savvy travelers, however, will go off the beaten tourist path to visit places that maybe aren't as famous but just as worthy of time and attention. Our country has many underestimated destinations – destinations that will add to the understanding of Spain by visitors.

Distribute the names of places among the students or you may decide to let them choose the destinations but making sure that each of them takes names from both sides. Students in their group will distribute the work to search the information on the Internet. They need to find out about the weather, cultural and historical landmarks, natural landscapes, entertainment and leisure facilities, the character of their people and anything they may consider relevant.

As students start checking on the places, they should be directed to the fact that visiting less touristy places has nothing but advantages: discounted prices, fewer tourists around or a more authentic experience. The only drawback is that these destinations may not produce such good shots and stories for their Instagram!

Slide 7

What impact does tourism have in the visited country?

This slide is meant to make the students reflect on the fact that although tourism brings high benefits to the host country, at this point they have surely realized that it may bring some problems as well. By now and reached this point, they should become aware that among our priorities should be to find solutions that will allow tourism to happen but without this being a burden for the locals and citizens in general.

Slide 8

Recognize the impact tourism has on the country being visited

Students in the groups will first discuss and contribute to each of the issues. Then they will make lists about the benefits /problems/ solutions. When they are ready, representatives of each of the issues will get together with representatives of the same issues from the other groups to share their ideas and complete their lists. Finally, they will come back to their group and tell the other members. They will then put everything together.

Slides 9, 10 & 11

Providing examples of each issue: benefits / problems / solutions

The teacher will show them each of the slides that provide items corresponding to the categories. The teacher will go through all the information with the students helping with vocabulary and clarifying anything they need to understand. In the group they will now compare their own lists adding to them the new points.

Slide 12

Final product

Now that students have found out about the drawbacks of overtourism, they surely want things to change. Here are some mottos that they can use or may help them get inspiration for ideas.

Slide 12

Websites

Here is a list of possible websites to use. Tutorials for their use are easy to find on the Internet and easy to implement and use.

3. FINAL PRODUCT

3.1. They will create a **portfolio** with all the information they are asked to gather in the different activities. They will create this portfolio either in a written version or the teacher can opt for an online version using Padlet as a student portfolio tool. The teacher will create boards for every student and then they will make themselves visible only for members of their group. They will post all their findings for their assignments and they will report the discussion conclusions. They can also add videos and pictures.

When the students finish with the project, there is a variety of ways that they can share. First they could email it or copy and paste an invite code. They can also give access and make it visible for the rest of their peers. That will allow the teacher to check all the work in the big group, share the link in the school page / class blog, etc.

Using Padlet as a virtual posterboard is preferable to a traditional posterboard because the students are able to work in a group setting even when they are not at school. It also allows them to add other files to creatively contribute their own ideas (video clips, pictures, etc.).

3.2. They will have to work on a **campaign** called: *“Visit Spain but another Spain”*

They will create a poster, a presentation, an infographic or a leaflet / brochure. Alternatively, they can create a video.

Here is a list of possible websites to use. They are user-friendly and for all of them it is easy to find tutorials that will guide you and the students, they are very intuitive.

Virtual posterboard: <https://es.padlet.com>

Poster creator: <https://edu.glogster.com> <https://www.canva.com>

<https://www.microsoft.com/es-es/microsoft-365/powerpoint>

Video: <https://screencast-o-matic.com/> <https://scratch.mit.edu/>

Otherwise there is always the possibility of doing it on paper.

Possible ideas for their projects:

- Directing tourism towards outstanding and off the beaten track places to visit because of different reasons.
- Be sarcastic about the burdens of an overcrowded and too touristic place. Negative advertisement
- Tips to respect the visited destination and avoid leaving footprints (eg. ensure all garbage is collected and that tourists don't damage environmentally vulnerable areas).
- Draw the traveller's attention towards particular interesting places because of their production, unspoilt natural wealth or cultural heritage.
- Highlight some features of the people, infrastructure or cheap prices in certain areas.
- Proposals for “one-in-a-life-time” experiences.

- Promote cultural tourism as an alternative to sun and beach tourism enhancing the wealth and quality of museums, cultural displays, monuments, fiestas and traditions, etc.
- They could also focus on solutions and put forward a possible formula to put an end to overtourism offering alternative types of tourism as alpine destinations, rural tourism (going back to nature and experiencing some authentic agricultural processes), volunteering.
- A comparative between mass tourism and sustainable tourism.
- Ideas for de-marketing: pricing, discouragement of certain segments from visiting that destination in certain periods, a range of prohibitive measures such as setting limits on the tourists allowed to visit a site at one time by authorities, all visitors must have a guide (who briefs them on the country's history and culture), fine people eating outdoors in cities, prohibiting package holidays, etc.

Once everything is ready, the campaign can be exhibited at school in a community act, it could also be uploaded into the school blog, web page or on any other appropriate virtual learning environment. Posters could also be printed and displayed.