

# POSTCARDS FROM AFAR #3

(Time Minimum)

## Travel Diplomacy: "Come with me on my next trip to . . . " Persuasive Writing with Evidence, Sensory Details, and Varied Sentences

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### Lesson Sketch

**Skills:** Students *read* articles about two countries; *reflect* on personal responses and discuss responses with classmates; *compare/contrast* travel possibilities in different countries; *decide* which country they would rather travel to and what friend they'd like to travel with; *select information* that is relevant to their persuasive purpose; *write a short persuasive piece* using strong evidence, sensory language, and complex sentences.

**Grades:** 11–12

**Time:** One 90-minute class

**Featured Resources:** AtoZWorldCulture.com or AtoZtheWorld.com articles for 175 countries

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### Inspirations

*"I soon realized that no journey carries one far unless, as it extends into the world around us, it goes an equal distance into the world within."* ~Lillian Smith

*"He who wants to persuade should put his trust not in the right argument, but in the right word. The power of sound has always been greater than the power of sense."* ~Joseph Conrad

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### Lesson Overview

Students write the text for postcards to friends and invite them to come to Latvia, Mongolia, Peru—wherever their imaginations take them. Students read at will in large collections of articles for any 2 of the 175 countries covered in AtoZWorldCulture.com or AtoZtheWorld.com. Working individually and collaboratively, students encounter their own and their classmates' responses to unfamiliar places and cultures. Expanding cultural understanding, improving reading comprehension with text and tables, and sharpening research skills, students choose where they'd like their friends to join them, select the evidence that will support their arguments, and write persuasively to recruit friends to travel. Students support their preferences with concrete evidence drawn from multiple texts, entice their readers with sensory details, and wow their readers with flowing prose.

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### Lesson Steps

Working in pairs, students select 2 of the 175 countries covered in AtoZWorldCulture.com or AtoZtheWorld.com. For each country, students read through large collections of articles as their interests lead them. Students take notes together regarding similarities and differences between their chosen countries. Students note for themselves and share with classmates any aspects of the two cultures that strike them as especially appealing or unappealing. Individually, imagine that they

have spent two weeks touring their chosen countries, and plan to make another trip to the one that they prefer. Students choose a friend to recruit to join the trip and write the text for postcards (80 words) using salient facts from the articles they've read, and thinking carefully about appealing to their readers using sensory details and flowing sentence structures.

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## Standards Met

1. **Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: College and Career Readiness Anchors for Reading**
  - a. Key Ideas and Details 1, 2
  - b. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7
  - c. Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity 10
2. **Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: College and Career Readiness Anchors for Writing**
  - a. Text Types and Purposes 1, 2
  - b. Production and Distribution of Writing 4, 5, 6
  - c. Research to Build and Present Knowledge 7,8,9
  - d. Range of Writing 10
3. **Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: College and Career Readiness Anchors for Reading**
  - a. Key Ideas and Details 1, 2
  - b. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7
  - c. Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity 10
4. **Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: College and Career Readiness Anchors for Writing**
  - a. Text Types and Purposes 1, 2
  - b. Production and Distribution of Writing 4, 5, 6
  - c. Research to Build and Present Knowledge 7,8,9
  - d. Range of Writing 10
5. **Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: College and Career Readiness Anchors for Speaking and Listening**
  - a. Comprehension and Collaboration 1, 2
  - b. Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas 4,6
6. **Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: College and Career Readiness Anchors for Language**
  - a. Conventions of Standard English 1, 2
  - b. Knowledge of Language 3
  - c. Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 4, 6
7. **National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Standards for the English Language Arts:**
  - a. 1, 3, 4, 7, 8
8. **National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies:**
  - a. 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9

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## Supplies

- Computer lab access with internet connection for student use of AtoZWorldCulture.com or AtoZtheWorld.com
- Access to Microsoft Word
- Notebooks and pens/pencils
- Dictionaries

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## Instructional Plan

### Student Objectives

#### Students will:

- Increase cultural literacy and develop as global citizens.
- Build skills in reading comprehension of text and tables.
- From varied reading materials, select the information that is potentially relevant to support their claims.
- From potentially relevant supporting information, select most compelling information for specific readers.
- Support all claims with concrete evidence.
- Support claims with vivid, compelling sensory detail.
- Support claims with flowing prose by interspersing complex, lyric sentence structures with short, percussive structures.

### Session One

#### Teacher introduction

- Introduce the idea of travel diplomacy: learning about culture and promoting peace through travel.
- Let students know that many small classroom activities will lead to one writing exercise—if students participate in small assignments along the way, the final writing assignment will be a snap.
- Set ground rules for partners working together: respecting each other's ideas even if you don't agree, strategies for achieving consensus, etc.
- Pair students into partner working groups, and ask students to move to shared work stations.

#### Student Directions

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##### What countries would you like to visit? Country selection

- Choose partners
- Move to shared work stations
- Go to AtoZWorldCulture.com or AtoZtheWorld.com

- Peruse list of countries
- Choose two countries to mentally visit for this exercise.

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### What are your first impressions? Reflection and note taking

- Go to Country 1, then Country 2, reading at will as your curiosity leads you.

Discuss the following questions together, and take individual notes on your answers:

- What have you read so far that is like what you expected for these countries?
- What surprises you about these countries??
- What do you notice that these countries have in common?
- How are these countries different?
- Based on what you've read so far, which of these countries would you rather spend more time in?
- On what are you basing your decision? Some travelers might consider such factors as food, music, safety, scenery, weather, language/s spoken . . . which factors are most important to you in making your decision?

### Teacher introduction

- Instruct students to discuss the questions below with their partners, and to take notes as they discuss—remind students not to get so caught up in conversation that they forget to write down their conclusions.

### Student Directions

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#### Choosing a travel companion: Reflection and note taking

Discuss the following questions together, and take individual notes on your answers:

- What two friends (someone not in this class) would you possibly like to invite to join you on a trip to your preferred country?
- Which of these friends is the more compatible travel companion for you? Choose carefully—a good friend does not always a good travel companion make! Consider the answers to the following questions:
  - Do you and your friend like to get up and go to bed at around the same time?
  - Are you similar in the extent of your willingness to be adventurous eaters?
  - What about planning vs. improvising? Do you and your friend have similar preferences when it comes to planning vs. jumping in?
  - What other qualities are important to you in a travel companion?
- Now that you have identified how you and your friends are alike and different in terms of travel, identify the more compatible travel companion. That's not necessarily the person who's just like you—there is such a thing as a complimentary difference. For example, sometimes a morning person and a night person travel well by taking turns being in charge in the am and pm. Sometimes a shy planner and a gregarious improviser work well together when one of them plans the day and the other one does all the asking directions of strangers. Travel companions need a balance of complimentary strengths and weaknesses. With this in mind, choose your travel buddy.

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## Planning to persuade: Reflection and note taking

Discuss the following questions together, and take individual notes on your answers:

- Of the things you've read so far about your chosen country, which would your proposed travel companion find most appealing? Make a list.
- Of the things your proposed travel companion would find most appealing, which could you describe in most vivid physical detail? The famous green chile sauce? The music that spills out into the streets from the nightclubs? The warm turquoise water off the coast? The tropical breezes? The rare, brightly colored lizards in the jungles?
- Sketch out 3 vivid descriptions using one or more of the five physical senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch—meant to entice your friend to travel with you.

## End of Session One and Homework

### Teacher introduction

- Remind students that their notes and reflections from the class before will support their writing. If students get stuck, they should go back and review their own prior notes.

### Student Directions

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#### "Come with me on my next trip to . . ." Composing

- Re-read your notes on what your friend would find appealing and how to describe some of those appeals in sensory language.
- Write the first draft of your postcard to your friend (around 80 words) inviting your friend to join you for your next trip to your selected country. Include:
  - A hook sentence that gets the reader's attention: "Which South American country's cuisine includes curries from India and noodles from China? That's right: Suriname."
  - A topic sentence or topic sentences that lay out the paragraph's primary subject and/or claim—such as where you want your friend to join you, and why.
  - Evidence from the articles you've read that supports your preference. For example, perhaps you can point out that your chosen country is among the safest and most stable in its region, and that its people speak a language that your friend wants to learn.
  - Complex sentences mixed in with short sentences for prose flow: "Mongolians' special achievements in sports include inventing their own style of archery, hunting with eagles, and racing some of the fastest, toughest horses in the world. But these traditions won't last long. See them while you can."
  - A concluding statement that ends your postcard on a strong, persuasive note: "What will you regret more ten years from now: going on the trip, or missing it? Don't miss this chance at adventure."