



Cambridge International AS & A Level

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

9239/12

Paper 1 Written Exam

October/November 2024

INSERT

1 hour 30 minutes

INFORMATION

- This insert contains all the resources referred to in the questions.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.



This document has **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

The following documents consider issues related to tourism. Read them **both** in order to answer **all** the questions on the paper.

Document A: adapted from *Visit Cambodia 2.0 – a Chance for Reinvention*, an article written by Markus Bell, published in 'VOD' in 2021. The author is a research fellow at La Trobe University (Australia). VOD was created by the Cambodian Center for Human Rights as a local independent media outlet to produce radio programs and disseminate information to the public.

A high vaccination rate and relative success at containing Covid-19 mean that Cambodia is now taking steps to reopen the country to tourism. With an economy still suffering from the pandemic, the government is counting on tourist dollars to provide a crucial economic stimulus and get people back to work.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization reports that, globally, tourist numbers have fallen dramatically and tourist-dependent Cambodia has felt this sharply.

In less than 25 years, Cambodia's tourism sector had grown from 2.1% of the country's economy to around 19%. According to WorldData.com, in 2019 tourist revenue accounted for USD 5.31 billion, with 6.6 million tourists each spending around USD 800. They toured the temple complex Angkor Wat, drank cocktails in the capital Phnom Penh, and lounged on the country's southern beaches. A vast infrastructure of hotels, casinos, restaurants, and tour guides, hospitality staff, tuk-tuk drivers, and street vendors, all depend on this billion-dollar industry for their livelihoods.

But in April 2020, the country closed businesses and borders in response to the pandemic. According to NagaCorp, visitor numbers to Cambodia fell by 80% in 2020. Tourists from China – Cambodia's largest source of international visitors – dropped by 86%. According to The Asia Foundation, domestic tourist numbers fell by 36%, down to 7.2 million.

As the pandemic rolled into 2021, the economic crisis hit hard. Only 112 544 people visited Cambodia in the first seven months of the year, down from 1 306 143 international visitors in 2020. Almost two years of grounded planes and empty cafes have resulted in boarded-up stores, unemployed staff, and workers leaving the tourist sector.

A full recovery is not expected until 2023–2024. Tourism in Cambodia needs a rebrand, away from temples to sustainable, environmentally low-impact activities. Before the pandemic, the Angkor Wat temple and the surrounding environment struggled to cope with 2.6 million visitors each year. Archaeologists warned of permanent damage due to people handling sandstone carvings. A planned reopening offers Cambodia a chance to change tourism.

Sivlin Chhay, president of the Cambodia Association of Travel Agents, has identified ecotourism and adventure holidays as top attractions for both domestic and international visitors, all desperate for nature after two years of lockdowns. Hiking, mountain biking, kayaking, whitewater rafting, fishing, culinary trails, and village homestays all have the potential for promoting Cambodian culture. These activities will also employ locals, offer varied, customized experiences, and support a sustainable economic recovery. Domestic tourists may also be encouraged to spend their money at home in Cambodia, rather than in Thailand or Vietnam, and foreign tourists will appreciate seeing more of the country.

As the government prepares to open the country, it's faced with the challenge of encouraging people back to work in tourism. The government must support the development of skills needed for tourism, such as commercial cooking and catering, and foreign language tour-guiding. In addition, local businesses that have survived the pandemic will need economic support to expand. Cambodia needs tourism initiatives that go beyond backpackers and temple visits, to offer exciting destinations to locals and attract travel-starved foreigners.

Document B: adapted from *Covid-19 changed Venice forever – what does it mean for tourism?*, an article written by Neal E. Robbins, published in the Italy-related 'Italics Magazine' in 2020. The author is a former professor of journalism and foreign correspondent for international news agencies, an Italian-speaking professional journalist, and the author of several books, including 'Venice, an Odyssey'.

Visitors have shaped Venice for a thousand years. For the first time in living memory, early this year, the city was emptied of tourists, leaving the streets to the residents and the canals to the fish, the cormorants and the swans. The extraordinary period ignited the hope that this could be a turning point.

In the early 1990s, Venice welcomed a manageable 10 million tourists a year. However, over the following decades this grew to 30 million visitors a year, undermining everything. This mass tourism brought more and bigger cruise ships, making daily life oppressive. Tourists crowded the narrow streets, preventing locals from getting on with their lives. The crowds forced out local food shops. The enormous increase in Airbnb*-type accommodation has dramatically reduced the availability of residential housing. All this has caused 1000 Venetians per month to move away from Venice. With the population at 52000, down from around 150000 in 1945, the city is dangerously close to the point where the traditional Venetian community will no longer exist.

Some have accepted the view that Venice is already "dead". But that's untrue. Venice lives, even if it is threatened. Venice is changing, but it is not yet a museum. Critics blame the Venetians, saying they have cashed in on tourism, so they have to accept the consequences; but, in truth, the residents are mostly victims of an overwhelming force of globalising economic change that they did not want. Now, for the sake of saving Venice's living culture and beauty, keeping locals at home matters. Venice without Venetians would be worse than a museum; it would be a ghost town. The last moment to turn things around has arrived.

Some European cities such as Amsterdam and Barcelona have already begun to solve their problems with tourism. Venice, however, has failed to do so, partly due to a commitment to free markets that benefit business interests. But tourism only makes sense if it makes life more liveable for the locals. The solution is in fact no mystery: regulations will control tourism. The city took a step in this direction with a tourist tax that comes into effect this year – but this is at best a partial solution.

Study after study has shown that Venice must go much further and limit tourist numbers to about half the current level. Such regulations have huge implications for an economy now excessively dependent on tourism. Hotels will have to find other uses and property owners will have to take residential instead of inflated tourist rents. Souvenir shops and restaurants will close and new jobs will be needed.

In Venice, we must walk more and take fewer motorboats because they damage the old buildings. Tourists may have to wait to visit the city. We may have to holiday at less popular places or through armchair reading. Most of all, we need to rethink why we travel, remembering both that travel widens our horizons and something a Venetian friend told me: "Travel is a way to learn that everything you really need is already at home."

For Venice – as for other fragile destinations from New Orleans to Dubrovnik – it is about making compromises to save the local culture, heritage and environment.

*Airbnb: online marketplace for short-term homestays and experiences

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