

Home, Sweet Home



Welcome back! Remember when you journalled about the “you” before the trip. Now’s the time—while the trip is fresh in your mind— to reflect and write to the follow-up questions.

After you’ve answered today’s questions, compare what you wrote with your journal entries before you left.

What three things did you enjoy most?

What three things bothered you or were the most difficult?

What three things did you miss from home?

What three things from home did you not miss?

My greatest single challenge was:

How do you think this travel experience changed you?

What, if anything, will you do differently at home?

What, if anything, would you change about the trip?

What did you figure out about teamwork that you can apply to other situations in your life?

In what other areas of your life can you use the planning and goal-setting skills you developed?

What has your trip inspired you to do?

Reverse Culture Shock

One of the most difficult parts of an international trip can be coming back. When you get home you'll probably want to tell everyone about the great experiences you've had. You may start to notice things about your family, community, and country you might not have seen before. You may miss the food, culture, and excitement of traveling. You may think no one at home understands you or the changes you have experienced. Don't worry. It's a totally normal feeling called reverse culture shock.

Reverse culture shock can be very personal and affects everyone differently. Expect things to feel different from how you left them. You may be more critical of your hometown or the United States. A simple trip to the supermarket could make you feel overwhelmed or depressed. It might be hard to pick up exactly where you left off because you have changed. You may not realize how much your perspective of the world has altered since being gone. This does not mean you have to renounce your experience and give up everything you've learned! It's best to strike a balance between the old and new, just as you did when first adjusting to your host country's culture.

Keep in mind all you gained from your experiences: You are now more independent because you learned how to adapt to a new way of doing things and a different culture. You are more aware of international issues by having discovered that people in the world have different perspectives and concerns. You are sensitive to differences in people. Having immersed yourself in another culture, you have seen alternative ways of doing, thinking, feeling, and communicating. The upside is that all you've experienced can help you in relationships with people at home as well as those whose values and customs might be different from yours.

We're preparing a scrapbook about our trip. We have also created a slideshow of all our pictures for one of the photo-sharing sites online.

— Neha, 17

We're making a PowerPoint presentation and we are sharing it with a fellow Junior troop and at leader meetings. And it is going on the Web.

— Miriam, 15



Progress

18-24
Months

12-16
Months

8-12
Months

3-8
Months

6-8
Weeks

4-6
Weeks

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Express Yourself

Make a scrapbook with your group or individually and record and print the most amazing things about your trip. Share with friends and family. Consider the following:

- I definitely do not want to forget...
- I laughed out loud about...
- Something that brought tears to my eyes was...
- My greatest personal insight was:
- My biggest cultural mistake was...
- My biggest cultural success was...
- I have changed in the following way...

What else can you do to let others know about your experience? How can you pass on the knowledge and insight you have gained? Here are suggestions:

- Write an article for the local paper.
 - Submit an article for the Girl Scout Web site globalgirlscouting@girlscouts.org or your local council site.
 - Work with your council to do presentations for other girls. World Thinking Day would be a great time to present.
 - Find out about other groups that might be considering trips
 - Offer to help them plan. After all, you're an expert now!
- In addition to memorable moments and highlights of your trip, what lessons did you learn that you would want to share with others?



Use The Girl Scout Travel Log to organize your ideas.



Work With It!

- Know that it's normal to feel different after you return.
- Tell your parents how you are feeling. Communication is key. Spend time with friends and family and stay involved in activities.
- Get together with your Girl Scout group and talk about your trip. Think of ways to share it with your community and other girls.
- Laugh! A good sense of humor can go a long way.
- Keep in contact with friends in the host country or travelers you have met.
- Think about how the United States has changed while you were gone and how your world view is different as well.
- Find a receptive audience to tell your "when I was abroad" stories. Connect with people from the place you visited or who share your interest in travel.
- Learn. Read magazines and books and watch movies from the place you visited.

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Make a Difference in the World

You had a great time, didn't you? Now, give someone else a "great" time by creating a Take Action project based on some aspect of your travels. You can choose to make a difference in the community you visited or take something you felt inspired by and act locally. Create and implement a project on your own or with a group. Remember, the impact you make on the world is up to you!

Use The Girl Scout Travel Log to brainstorm, organize, and record your ideas, plans, actions, and results!

You Got Issues (and Solutions)!

Begin your Take Action project by identifying an issue important to you. Go over your responses to the questions under Take Action in **The Girl Scout Travel Log**. Do you see any recurring themes? Did you identify something you felt passionately about? To take on an authentic Take Action project, the issue you're identifying must meet two requirements:

1. Your issue needs to be something you feel passionately about.
2. Your issue must meet a community need.

Start by identifying three potential issues and then narrow them down to one.



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Solution Sleuth

Next, brainstorm and research possible solutions to the issue. Use these questions to aid in your research.

Who is affected? Directly? Indirectly?
(Age and/or ethnic group, community/neighborhood)

How are people affected? (Are rights being violated? Is quality of life impacted? Do some people benefit from the situation? Who and how?)

Why are people affected? (What is the underlying cause of the issue? What factors play a part in this issue? Is one group affected more than another? Why?)

What solutions or actions have already been tried or suggested?

What do the people affected have to say about the issue?

What solution or action might be most effective?

Who is in a position to bring about change?

Who or what stands in the way of change?

Remember to speak to your adviser and other adult champions of change. Is there a community leader, county representative, business person, clergy, parent, or Girl Scout volunteer who could offer advice or suggestions on how to implement your solution? Investigate organizations and government agencies who can steer you in the direction of research and people in the know.



Putting the Pieces Together

Now that you have your issue and solutions, start to build your Take Action plan. Think about each statement below. Do you have information to complete each statement in detail? If not, go back to the drawing board; do more research and work with an adult adviser. The more complete and detailed your plan, the more successful you'll be! When you're ready, use the Girl Scout Travel Log to write about your plan.

- My project focuses on this community issue:
- My project involves this realistic plan of action:
- My project will take this amount of time to complete:
- My project goals are:
- The impact of this project will be:
- This project could be sustainable if:
- I'll know I'll have succeeded because:

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Where You're Going, Where You've Been

Now that your travel experience has come full circle, take time to reflect.

First, figure out what's changed about you. Think about each statement below in relation to your travel experience, from the very first moments of brainstorming location ideas to working on your Take Action plan. Put a check next to each statement you feel is true of you. You can record this in *The Girl Scout Travel Log*, too. Because of my trip:

I have a stronger sense of self

(For example, I learned it's okay to be different from other kids around me; I did things that made me feel good about myself.)

I gained practical life skills

(For example: I learned how to do things I didn't think I could do; I learned how to take care of myself.)

I seek challenges and new opportunities to expand my knowledge

(For example: I tried new activities even if they were hard to do.)

I can think critically about and use different viewpoints to look at issues and ideas

(For example: I tried to solve problems for myself before asking for help; I was willing to change my mind about something if I learned new information.)

I developed healthy relationships with other girls and adults

(For example: I learned I could disagree with someone and still be her friend; I felt like I belonged.)

I know how to work together with other girls toward a common goal

(For example: I worked with a small team of girls to research where we'd stay; I read maps and figured out where we were going while traveling.)

I feel connected to my community and others

(For example: Connecting with other girls helped strengthen my sense of belonging to the Girl Scouts; I interacted with people of different cultures and it helped me feel part of the global community.)

I have educated and inspired others to act

(For example: I will share with others what I learned from my travels.)

I made a difference in the world

(For example: I made decisions about what kind of Take Action project we would do; I felt empowered to make a difference in my community.)



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Put The "New" You Into Action

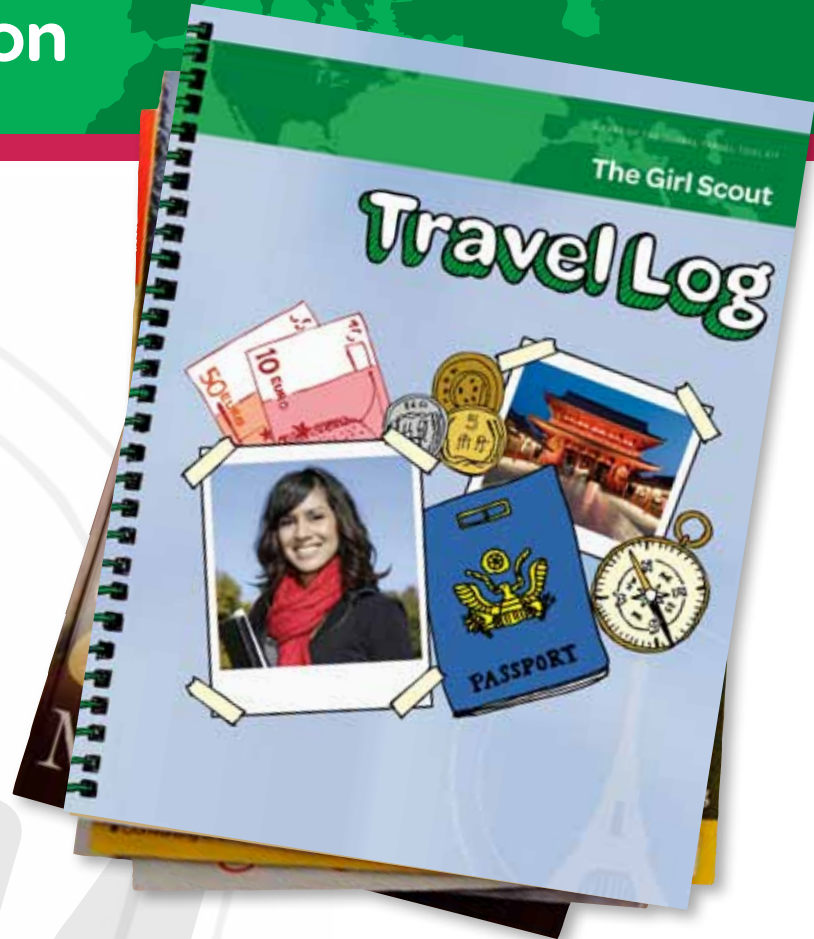
Sustain the changes within you. Keep the momentum going by applying what you learned about yourself right now and in the future.

Choose at least two statements (from the previous page) that you checked. In your journal, write how you can use these skills to help with something else you plan to do this year.



The most significant thing I learned is that no matter what our backgrounds or where we were from we were still able to help each other.

— Ayana



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