



# Writing Tourism at University

GUIDES FOR WRITING IN SPECIFIC DISCIPLINES



## 1 What is Tourism?

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.

Tourism has an impact on the economy, on the environment and built-up areas, on the local population of the places visited and on the visitors themselves. A global focus on the development, management and supervision of tourism must be adopted because of the above-mentioned impacts, because of the wide range and variety of factors required to produce goods and services acquired by the visitors as well as because of the wide spectrum of agents involved or affected.

This focus is highly recommended for the formulation and application of national and local tourism politics as well as international agreements or other processes related to tourism.

Tourism is a cross-cutting discipline that involves several spheres, from the economic sphere (the economic activity of the host country increases; it creates job vacancies to supply what tourists need) to the social sphere (integration/disintegration factor of local population), and including the geographical sphere (movement of persons, destinations most frequently visited), among others.

Hence, given its multidisciplinary profile, the career opportunities of graduates in Tourism can be very high and diverse and in several sectors such as business, promotion, cultural, sociological, anthropological and technological sectors, among others.

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## 2 General features of writing in Tourism

In tourist texts, rigour and objectivity must be present. In a research article, for example, where the information presented comes from must be stated and the sources must be clearly indicated. Objectivity can be expressed through written language by using neutral and aseptic language and by the lack of references to interlocutors.

A neutral, informative tone must be used although with the use of social networks such neutrality becomes less clear and this results in a more direct and informal language. It is

important to use a simple and direct style that avoids confusion, ambiguous language and complicated sentences.

The register used must be controlled at all times, depending on the recipient and the medium (oral or written). Orally, the tone can be more colloquial, although it must always be adjusted to the type of public (a different register will be used when doing the final degree project presentation or when informing people who visit the tourist information office), but written language is usually more formal. In both cases, though, register mixing must be avoided.

During their stay at the university, future tourism professionals must acquire an optimum level of language and use it appropriately. They are expected to use it accurately and to be flexible and have a certain capacity for adaptation. They are expected to express themselves appropriately, for example, in the following situations:

- They must master the register that must be used, both orally and in written form. Future professionals in the tourism sector must be able to express themselves in the different linguistic registers clearly, rigorously and objectively, from the technical register to the most common one in texts about promotional and non-promotional tourism.
- They must write expressive, persuasive, positive, motivating and sometimes customized texts. They must maintain their clients' confidentiality and uphold their brand image by using inclusive language without prejudices.
- They must be able to express themselves in writing in both face-to-face and virtual environments. To be competitive, they must be familiar with digital tools, digital uses and digital content: electronic tourism (tourism and web), m-tourism (mobile tourism through smartphones or tablets) and tourism 2.0 (the use of social networks for tourism).
- They must master the different written textual typologies, and above all, they must be able to verbalize, describe and engage their target reader while still being creative in their writing.

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During their university training, future professionals in the tourism sector must express themselves in writing in specific situations and with different goals.

Tourism undergraduates must carry out many projects about tourism development. These texts tend to be descriptive, argumentative and analytical. Students are expected to be critical and analytical. They must be able to understand, analyze and acquire information through reasoning, acknowledging the sources consulted and respecting conventions. Students face the challenge of writing using robust and convincing arguments.

### 3 Common texts in Tourism

**Research or scientific articles** usually have a fixed structure, although the rules of the organization where they will be published must be taken into account. They must make an academic contribution and they must be rigorous.

A scientific article must persuade the scientific community that the idea is original and that it is framed in previous work about that topic; that the methodology used to collect data is appropriate; that the analyses are exhaustive; that the implications of the results are appropriate and that the work is relevant.

Articles must persuade the reader about the quality of the information that they convey. The information must be presented in such a way that the reader has the opportunity to evaluate it him or herself. To evaluate the quality of information and increase its credibility, the following requirements must be considered:

- Refer to the sources that endorse the information presented.
- Make the data collection methods used explicit.
- Foster theoretical constructions in objective data.
- Present and analyze opposing hypotheses.
- Choose a language that makes the text flow and that facilitates comprehension.

As for their structure, research articles include the following parts:

- Title, which must be explanatory, brief, concise and informative, and must not include abbreviations.
- Names of authors and their affiliation. They must be ordered according to their contribution to the article, and job titles or forms of address should be avoided.
- Abstract, a succinct text that includes the introduction, objectives, methodology, results, discussion, conclusions and most relevant recommendations. It must help

the reader to identify the basic content rapidly and exactly, and determine its relevance.

- Keywords, which describe the content of the article. They are not randomly chosen; they are chosen from a controlled Thesaurus.
- Body of the article, which consists of the introduction, background, theoretical framework, method, results and discussion of the results, as well as the conclusion.
- Bibliographical references used and mentioned in the article.
- Optionally, annexes, which include documentation to complement the results presented or to check data.

**Scientific reports** must be written bearing in mind who the reader will be and they must be restricted to their requirements. Like in any other type of academic text, the writing must be clear and simple because the main goal is to communicate, to send information to the receiver. Taking this receiver into account, it is important that the document is formally attractive (you can use different font types to attract the receiver's attention; you can add graphs, highlight items, etc.).

In these types of texts, the sources used must be listed in the references. Moreover, texts must adopt a neutral position and be analytical with respect to the object, the phenomenon or the fact under analysis. If the report includes an assessment (in this case the report not only presents information but also assesses it), the author's opinion can be expressed, without exaggerating.

A **review** is a text that presents information and a critical assessment about books, articles, papers or any other type of texts (research, cinema, theatre, etc.). In the academic sphere, the reviewing procedure has three basic goals: to understand the text, to analyze it in depth, and to assess its importance regarding an extensive bibliographical production. As a communication instrument between two or more people, it cannot be understood without a context.

A review includes two main parts: the formal description of the text being reviewed (author, title, subtitle, place of publication, editorial, issue, year of publication and page number), and the body, in which the text and the author are contextualized, the text being reviewed is summarized and a personal assessment with justified arguments is included.

At the end of the tourism degree, the student must present an **academic paper**, which is essential to pass the subject. When writing it, the student must:

- Define clearly the topic under study and the territorial sphere in which it is proposed. The student must also determine the scale and the chronological period dealt with.
- Write a good introduction that encourages people to read the paper. Usually, a good introduction presents the topic under research, indicates the method and the main research problems, and explains the sections that the paper includes.
- Determine the objectives, from a research question and hypotheses, differentiating two levels: general objectives, which accept a certain degree of abstraction, and specific objectives, which must include specific issues of the topic under research. It is important to make sure that all the objectives stated in the paper are achieved, because this is a criterion that the committee considers when assessing the paper.
- Review the literature related to the topic under research to see how previous work has addressed this topic in order to define the theoretical background.
- Specify the methodologies applied, the data collection methods and the method of analysis of the data used, and list the technical and computer resources, etc. If the study is not empirical but rather a practical application, the weight of the methodology is less relevant.
- Present the main results obtained from the research that has been conducted.
- Present the most important conclusions, emphasizing the most significant contribution. The limitations of the study and ideas for further research can also be included in the conclusion.
- Include the bibliography with the references.

Academic papers are usually argumentative and analytical essays intended for specialized users. Therefore, the language used is precise, and with the appropriate terminology. The voice of the author must not be present and, for this reason, the linguistic resources that favour impersonality should be mastered, for example the use of the third person singular (*This paper provides new data about tourist movements in France at the end of last century*) or the use of the passive (*In this paper two main objectives have been raised*).

Apart from the above-mentioned texts, future tourism professionals must be able to master different types of written texts. When they graduate, they must be able to use the language in current professional communicative situations that are part of the internal and external communication of the company, through their e-mail, their text messages system and social networks, to meet the demand of a client and give the client information; manage, modify and confirm a booking; collaborate and organize events with other professionals, etc.

Additionally, they must know other types of written texts, such as invoices, budgets, reports, commercial letters and complaints, reservation sheets and e-mails, menus, recipes and orders, etc.

Moreover, when they exercise their profession, they should easily be able to write texts aimed at the general public as well as leaflets, catalogues, advertisements, advertising posters, promotional fairs, and non-promotional guides and articles.

Throughout the tourism degree, the student must master the argumentative texts that characterize promotional tourist texts. In order to inform, convince and persuade the reader, the student must know how to use the following stylistic methods: the use of adjectives and nouns, nominalization, superlatives, comparatives, etc.

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## 4 Writing conventions in Tourism

**Quotes and bibliographic citations.** All the contributions that have been obtained from any other work and that have been included in the paper must be referenced. The referencing style that must be used in Tourism is that of the [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#).

Quotes, in other words, excerpts written by somebody else but that are included in the students' text, must be written in inverted commas, in the original language of the source text or translated into the language in which the document is written. After each quote, the bibliographical citation (basic data to identify where the excerpt comes from) must be included. The bibliographical citation is usually included in parentheses, through the system author-year (formed by the surname of the main author or authors and the year of publication, separated by a comma, and optionally the page number on which the original excerpt is found, can also be included).

Previous research on this topic shows that “la irrupció del turisme a la Costa Brava ha estat tan violenta i tan espectacular que pot arribar a emascarar els altres aspectes de l'evolució del paisatge i dels gèneres de vida en el transcurs dels darrers cinquanta anys” (Barbaza, 1988, 12).

All the bibliographical citations must include the complete **bibliographical reference** at the end of the document, in the *References* section, where the references of all the cited work must appear, ordered alphabetically and chronologically (when more than one work by the same author has been included).

Barbaza, Yvette (1988). *El paisatge humà de la Costa Brava*. 2 vol. Barcelona: Edicions 62.

Blasco Peris, Albert (2006). *Tipologías turísticas: un análisis de las distintas modalidades turísticas y de su impacto en el medio y en la sociedad de acogida*. Girona: Xarxa d'Escoles de Turisme.

In the *References* section, if the surname of the author appears in the text, only the year of publication and the page number, separated by a comma, must be included.

As Yvette Barbaza (1988, 12) claims, “el factor que primerament fa entrar en crisi l’equilibri harmoniós de les activitats de terra i de mar, produït al final del segle XIX, és l’acceleració dels progressos de les tècniques de circulació i de transport”.

If the number of authors of a given work is between three and five, the first time that they are cited all the surnames must be included; from the second citation, only the surname of the first author must be written, together with *et al.* (‘and others’) and the year of publication.

Wasserstein, Zappulla, Rosen, Gerstman and Rock (1994) found... [the first time]

Wasserstein et al. (1994) found... [from the second time on]

If there are more than six authors, only the surname of the first author must be included, followed by *et al.* and the year of publication.

Barrett *et al.* (1998)

If several studies are cited, they are separated by a semi-colon.

Jonsson, 1994; Peterson *et al.*, 1996, 285-286

If an author has more than one study in the same year, after each year the letters of the alphabet must be added; these letters should be in italics in order to disambiguate (these letters must also be added to the corresponding bibliographical reference).

(Blasco Peris, 2006a, 6)

(Blasco Peris, 2006b, 51)

If quotes are not used (and the text is paraphrased), the original excerpt in inverted commas must not be included in the paper, but the bibliographical citation must be added.

[paraphrase of the second example of this section]

The acceleration of the progress of traffic and transport techniques mainly causes a crisis in the balance of land and sea activities, produced at the end of the 19th century (Barbaza, 1988).

**Tables, graphs, charts, drawings or maps.** When inserting any of these elements into the text, the following considerations must be taken into account:

- Titles must be descriptive and brief.
- All the elements must be numbered so that they can be mentioned. The numbering can be consecutive for all the document, or it can start from scratch in each section. Each element is numbered separately from the rest. This numbering, together with the titles, is used to form the corresponding index.
- All the elements included in the document must be referenced in the text.
- Each element must include the source from where it comes. If they are created by the author this must be indicated by saying something like *Created by the author*.
- The legend and the scale or the units of measurement must be included when necessary.

**Specific terminology.** Jargon in tourism uses specific terminology that must be known and mastered to convey the concepts. Some examples of jargon are listed below, and in the Reference section you will find some resources that may be useful.

A *visitor* is a traveller taking a trip to a main destination outside his or her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited. A visitor (domestic, inbound or outbound) is classified as a *tourist* (or overnight visitor), if his or her trip includes an overnight stay, or as a same-day visitor (or *excursionist*) otherwise.

The *place of usual residence* is the geographical place where the enumerated person usually resides, and is defined by the location of his/her principal dwelling.

The *usual environment* of an individual, a key concept in tourism, is defined as the geographical area within which an individual conducts his or her regular life routines. *Tourism expenditure* refers to the amount paid for the acquisition of consumer goods and services, as well as valuables, for own use or to give away, for and during tourism trips.

As for types of tourism, we use *domestic tourism* when the residents of a country travel within the country of reference; if these residents travel to other countries (outside the country of reference), this is *outbound tourism*, and *inbound tourism* comprises the activities of a non-resident visitor within the country of reference on an inbound tourism

trip. From these definitions, *internal tourism* comprises domestic tourism and inbound tourism; *national tourism* comprises domestic tourism and outbound tourism, and *international tourism* comprises inbound and outbound tourism.

As for the jargon for accommodation, *pax* refers to the place occupied by a passenger or, in general, any client of a company from the tourism industry. The paperwork that is handled at the reception of an accommodation facility so that the guest can occupy a bedroom is called *check-in*. The verb is to check in. When we talk about the paperwork handled when finishing our stay, we use the term *check-out*. Bedrooms can be of different types: single bed (SB), double bed (DB; if it has two individual beds it is called TWIN), double use single bedroom (DUSB), triple bedroom, quadruple room, etc. or suite, formed by a bedroom and a living room.

Finally, *overbooking* is when a tourism industry company accepts more bookings (either for accommodation, a trip or an activity) than there are places available, with the objective of covering possible cancellations and no-shows and ensuring full occupancy.

**IATA codes.** In order to unify internationally the denominations to refer to airports, countries, currencies or languages (among others), the codes of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) are used. Here are some of the most common examples in the field of Tourism:

- Airports: MAD (International airport of Barajas), PEK (airport of Beijing)
- Countries: FRA (France), United States of America (USA)
- Currencies: CNY (Yuan), USD (dollar)

## 5 Selected works and websites

### 1. International Air Transport Association (IATA). [<https://www.iata.org/>]

Website of the International Association of Air Transport (international commercial organization of companies dedicated to air transport). Its mission is to represent, promote and serve the airline industry.

### 2. *Diccionari d'hoteleria i turisme* (2001). Barcelona: Edicions 62; TERMCAT, Centre de Terminologia. 2021 p.

Dictionary containing almost 1,200 widespread terms in the tourism and catering sector. It includes terms in Catalan, Spanish, French, English and German.

### 3. World Tourism Organization. [<https://www.unwto.org/>]

Website of the World Tourism Organization, a United Nations specialized agency which seeks to develop responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.

4. [Glossary of tourism terms](#). World Tourism Organization. [https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms]

Glossary of terms in the field of tourism developed by the World Tourism Organization.

5. [UNWTO Tourism Definitions](#). World Tourism Organization (2019). Madrid. [https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284420858]

Website to download the publication UNWTO Tourism Definitions, which contains definitions in English, French and Spanish of concepts in the field of tourism.

6. [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#). Purdue University. [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/]

Website of OWL (Online Writing Lab) at Purdue University. It provides free writing resources and instructional material to assist university students with their written papers (for example, book reviews or reports).

7. [TERMCAT, Centre de Terminologia](#). [https://www.termcat.cat/en]

TERMCAT, the Catalan language terminology centre, offers a website that is essential to understand the terminology of many fields of knowledge. The [lexicon on tourist transportation](#) and other dictionaries of disciplines related to Tourism as [cartography](#), [photogrammetry](#), [GIS](#), [remote sensing](#); [physical geography](#) or [migrations](#) can be found online.

8. [Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper](#). University of Southern California. [https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide]

Website of the University of Southern California. It offers detailed guidance on how to develop, organize and write a research paper in the social and behavioural sciences.

Servei de Llengües (UAB), Serveis Lingüístics (UB), Servei de Llengües Modernes (UdG), Institut de Llengües (UdL), Servei Lingüístic i de Publicacions (URV)

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This project has received an Interlingua grant from the Generalitat de Catalunya.

Publishing date: March 2020

Second Edition (adapted to accessibility criteria): October 2023



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Accessibility assessed by the Adaptabit Group and Mireia Ribera.