

VIEWPR Attractions Writing Guide

What are attractions?

Travel attractions are:

“A physical or cultural feature of a particular place that individual travelers or tourists perceive as capable of meeting one or more of their specific leisure- related needs. Such features may be ambient in nature (eg. climate, culture, vegetation or scenery), or they may be specific to a location, such as a theatre performance, a museum or a waterfall.”

Dictionary of Travel & Tourism Hospitality Terms (Robert Harris & Joy Howard, Melbourne, Hospitality Press, 1996)

There are two types of attractions we can write about:

1. Built attractions: These attractions are human-made, and may include buildings, statues, boardwalks, bridges, and such.

2. Natural attractions: These attractions have occurred naturally and are not man-made.

These may include forests, beaches, waterfalls, caves, etc.

(Click here <https://bit.ly/2Oa0zp8> to learn more about travel attractions)

How should I write about attractions?

1. Research

In order to write successfully about an attraction, you should first do a quick research on the internet and answer the following questions:

a. Is there an official webpage with updated information about the attraction?

Check for:

- ✓ Business status: Are they open?
- ✓ Address
- ✓ Phone number
- ✓ Business hours
- ✓ A description of the attraction (it may be brief, but it must specify what is it that you'll see of experience there)
 - If it's a historical site, do some research about its past.
 - Are there any anecdotes, stories or legends related to this attraction?
 - Is there any particular culture, religion, or group associated with this place? (i.e., Franciscan monks and the San Francisco Church in Old San Juan)
- ✓ Pricing
- ✓ Amenities

b. Do they have a strong presence in social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)?

- If there are photos, what is it that people do there?
- What kind of clothes do they have on? (this point is especially important when you're researching a natural attraction: you may need a bathing suit for swimming, long-sleeved shirts to avoid insect bites, etc.)
- What should you pack for this attraction? (i.e., sunblock, insect repellent, hat, handheld fan, flashlight, a reusable water bottle, etc.)

c. If you cannot find enough information online about the experience, you can always call them during business hours.

- Ask about the experience in general
- Ask for the best hours to go, how to get there, and what to bring
- Ask for tours and guided experiences

2. Visit the attraction

Before you visit the attraction, make sure to prepare a bag with the things you'll need. Try to do a checklist like the one below:

- ✓ Camera
- ✓ Cell phone
- ✓ Notepad
- ✓ Pen
- ✓ Voice recorder
- ✓ Wallet
- ✓ Sunscreen
- ✓ Keys
- ✓ Raincoat

Once you've arrived at the attraction try to think about the following:

- ◆ What do you see? Visually, how can you describe the attraction? Is it a place full of light, or is it dark? Is the place colorful, or is it monochromatic? What is the most arresting visual feature?
- ◆ What sounds are you able to hear? Do you hear the constant hum of machines, or do you hear a bird happily chirping away?
- ◆ How does it smell? Does it smell like cotton candy? Does it smell like fresh lavender or more like musky tree bark? What does this smell remind you of?
- ◆ How is the ambiance? How are people interacting with each other and the attraction?
- ◆ What else does this experience teach you?

Perhaps the best advice I can give you is to remain as present as possible in the moment. Try to feel out the place using your five senses. Try to analyze the situation intuitively.

If this is a historical site, try to imagine its past. (i.e., How was life in the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico before it was turned into a museum?) Although it may sound like a lot, it's really not. You already do this with every new place you visit.

Pro tip: Try to experience the attraction as a newcomer would, and keep in mind the things you'd like to know before visiting the attraction. This will help you immensely when writing about the experience.

If you still think you're missing information, I wholeheartedly suggest that you ask the guides, keepers, owners or guards for a short interview.

Tips for a short interview:

- Identify yourself and explain a bit about what is that we do at VIEWPR.
- Establish the fact that you know very little about this attraction. Let them give you general details about the attraction and then progress to more specific questions.
- Be grateful for any information they give you.

3. Write about the experience

With short descriptions, we're probably looking at 100-250 words per description. That's enough space to highlight the interesting aspects of the attraction, the ambiance, and how did the experience leave you feeling like afterwards. Try to stick to your own experience, but veer away from leaving a bad review. After all, we're writing these descriptions so that visitors can experience the attraction for themselves.

What's our goal?

To inspire the visitor to experience our attractions.

How can we achieve this?

By writing a description that highlights the attraction's assets, that incorporates the information you received during the interview, and that conjures an enticing experience. If you feel like you can't wait to go back to the attraction after you've read your own description, then you've done a marvelous job!

Make use of your wonderful creative power to narrate a brief "story", and have fun writing!



Here's an example of a short description of Butterfly People located at Calle Dr La Cruz in Viejo San Juan:

“If you are an avid collector of framed butterflies, or if you are looking for the most unique and beautiful gift, I suggest you walk into the dreamy Butterfly People. This gallery, which has been around since 1970, features a gorgeously curated framed butterfly collection. Hundreds of shiny, colorful butterflies appear to move in waves, as if frozen in that last flutter. From their acrylic cases, they hang still in a masterfully recreated choreography.

Moreover, this art gallery is a great spot to take a break from walking under the scalding Puerto Rican sun. The high ceilings and interior courtyard make it refreshingly cool inside the shop, and you can sit on one of their chairs and even start a conversation with the owners of The Butterfly People.

One of the greatest things about this gallery is that it chooses butterflies that have completed their life cycle, and they also adhere to the strict regulations of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. So, you can shop away knowing that your purchase does not harm any living creature.”