

4. The language of holiday programmes

What is a travelogue?

A travelogue is the description of someone's travel experiences, often told while the person is on the journey. On the radio, you can often hear two different types of travelogue. Some are descriptions of difficult journeys told by news reporters or correspondents. Others, however, are descriptions of holidays by presenters, designed to encourage the listener to visit the place being described.

- ① Read the extracts below. Which one is not taken from a holiday programme?
- a) *Every morning you go to the local market with your hostess and teacher Kum Pip. So these are the **infamous** Durians. These are meant to be really, really **disgusting** and **smelly**, aren't they? Mmm, very **tasty**. Now, I know it's a bit of a travel **cliché** to advise you to come and see a **lively** and **bustling** street market, but this is a **fantastic** example of why food is so central to the whole Thai culture.*
 - b) *A two-hour drive from Minneapolis is Minnesota's north shore, 150 miles of cliff drops and views over **vast** Lake Superior. What an adventure. I'm heading up Highway 61 along the north shore to the wilderness of the boundary waters, an area where Minnesota's great lakes meet the Canadian border. So, for the **ultimate wilderness** experience, you need a canoe.*
 - c) *We have many example of **highly-concentrated** beach developments on the Mediterranean coast and in some parts of the Caribbean or South-East Asia where very intensive developments have destroyed the very basis of tourism which was the beach. And today you have **crowding** problems, and **pollution** concerning **waste** water particularly.*
 - d) *Truly a land of contrasts, Sri Lanka has much to offer the more **intrepid** traveller. From the **teeming** city streets of Colombo to the **stunning** mountain scenery of the interior, Sri Lanka really is a paradise isle. At this moment in time the north and east of the island are largely **out of bounds** to travellers but there is still plenty to see and do.*
- ② Look at the **adjectives** highlighted in the text. Try to identify which usually describe **negative** ideas or experiences and which describe **positive** ones. Which can describe positive **or** negative ideas or things?
- ③ Extracts **a)**, **c)** and **d)** all describe places which are filled with many people. However, they use three different adjectives. Which adjectives do they use?

The vocabulary of holiday programmes

The descriptions of places and journeys in holiday programmes are intended to make us want to visit the place being described. Therefore, the presenter will often use adjectives and phrases which give a positive view, even of things which are not very pleasant.

Choice of adjectives

Travelogues **a)** and **d)** describe very busy places as **bustling** and **teeming** but extract **c)** refers to **crowding** problems. Bustling, teeming and crowded all mean 'filled with people'. The first two words give us a feeling of a place which is exciting and full of life. They give us a positive idea or **connotation**. **Crowded**, however, simply means 'too many people' – a very negative connotation. When learning adjectives, it is particularly important to notice if they have positive or negative connotations.

Holiday programmes often give us the impression that the place which the presenter is visiting is not just good – it's wonderful! To help give this impression, they use **extreme adjectives**. For example, Lake Superior is described as **vast** – an adjective which means very, very big – and Durian fruit as **disgusting**, or very, very unpleasant.

Language task

Below is a description of a place in Scotland. Try to replace the adjectives in **bold** with an extreme adjective or one which has a more positive connotation. Take care not to change the facts – just make it sound more attractive!
*Edinburgh is a **very pretty** city on the east coast of Scotland. Every year, the city holds an arts festival when the normally **quiet** streets are **busy** with artists and musicians. Be careful, however. Even in summer, the weather in the capital of Scotland can be **very cold**. Don't worry, though – the traditional Scottish food and drink is both warming and **very tasty**.*