

Beat Boredom

Student Preparation Activity

As you prepare for your trip, you're probably learning about the places you'll visit and the sites you'll see, you're probably ramping up your language skills so you can use them in the destination and you're probably learning cultural tips and tricks. In this whirlwind of excitement and anticipation, perhaps the last thing on your mind is "What will I do if I'm bored?" However, it's a good idea to prepare for this emotion if it comes up, so that it doesn't catch you off-guard.

The objective of this activity is to help you realize that boredom might come up during your trip, to help you have an open mind about boredom and to help you turn it into something positive and productive so you can make the best out of your trip.

Step 1: Look at the scenarios below and mark whether or not you would be bored in that situation:

	I would be bored	I wouldn't be bored
If my video player on the flight is broken		
If I have to take a long bus ride or train ride		
If I have to wait a long time for the next metro		
If I have to walk a lot		
If I have to visit 4+ different art museums		
If I have to visit 4+ different churches		
If I have to listen to lectures on historical facts		
If I have to hike all day		
If all the group wants to do is go shopping		
If all my host family does is watch TV		
If my host mom spends a lot of time in the kitchen		
If my host sibling only plays video games		
If there are no other families in the area		
If my host sibling is 3 years younger than I am		
If my host family takes me to a grocery store		

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Step 2:

The first set of “ifs” refer to boredom that arises during transit. Brainstorm some ideas of how you would pass the time while in transit, such as:

- Reading a book
- Journaling about the differences that you have experienced so far or what you are excited about
- Practicing speaking the target language with a friend or teacher
- Looking around! Where are you? What is different about what you see? How are the other people in the bus or train passing the time? Soak it all in!

Can you think of other ideas? _____

The second set of “ifs” are the result of traveling as part of a group. You might not always enjoy the activity at hand, but it might be someone else’s favorite activity. Trust that your teachers will provide a variety of activities and think of ways that you could enjoy the ones that aren’t your favorite:

- Try to find a way that the activity at hand relates to your interests.
 - o if you’re at ANOTHER church, try to notice the architecture or the art; how is it different from the other churches you’ve seen?
 - o if you’re at ANOTHER museum, check out the gift shop;
 - o if you’re shopping AGAIN, see if there are places of historical or cultural interest nearby. Observe what the other pedestrians are doing.

Can you think of other ideas? _____

The third set of “ifs” refer to the family stay. After a jam-packed couple of days touring around a new country, your family stay might seem boring simply because the pace is different. Take a breath, enjoy the slower pace and allow yourself to soak in and reflect on the cultural differences.

Remember that Xperitas host families are volunteers and are not required to take you on excursions. That said, all our families have a genuine interest in sharing their daily lifestyle with you and learning about yours!

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There are lots of things to do and enjoy and learn, even if most of your time is spent at the house:

- Offer to show your family how to cook a meal that you often eat in the U.S. Bring brownie or pancake mix or boxed macaroni and cheese as part of your gift to the host family.
- Play a board game or card game. Again, you can make these games a part of your gift.
- Have a conversation! Use downtime to really get to know your host family. If you're not sure where to start, come prepared with a list of conversation starters and some useful vocab words.
- Offer to help clean or do other household chores – notice the differences in how these tasks are done.

If your family watches TV, don't let it be a passive activity – ask questions! Notice differences!

- What kind of TV shows are popular in this country? Series? Reality? Talk shows? Politics? (What do you think it says about the culture there?)
- What is different about the commercials? The products advertised? The length? When they are played?
- Are there a lot of athletic events being aired? What kind of sports? Are they the same ones that are popular in the U.S.? Are there cheerleaders? Mascots? Team colors?

Can you think of other ways to engage with your host family while at the house?

If you're thinking that playing games on your phone or spending time on social media or texting your friends or family would be a good way to beat the boredom, THINK AGAIN!

Spending time engrossed in your phone is a good way to *disengage* with your environment (the environment that you paid a lot of money to visit). The answer to beating the boredom while in the destination is to engage MORE and discover ways to become interested in your surroundings and the situation at hand, even if it's not your first idea of a fun time.