

EUROPEAN STUDIES [Lake District & The Alps]

The Alps and the Lake District are both very well known tourist attractions. The beautiful and astounding landscape has fascinated people for over decades. It is a place of enjoyment for both adults and children.

The French Alps has great winter and summer resorts. It is an excellent place for people who enjoy skiing. Many of the newer ski-resorts, for instance Val d'isere and Les Deux Alpes, have been purpose built.

Places such as Annecy become congested in summer. This gives people the chance when they can take lake cruises and enjoy the scenery.

Ski resorts get tremendously busy during winter times and also due to the enormous lift systems, it gives the tourists an amazing view of the Alps and can reach to their destination more easily.

Furthermore due to the height of these ski resorts, it is very popular because many days are sunny and the air is clear even though the snowfall is heavy. The slopes are ideal for all levels of skiing, from the beginners to the experts.

During busy periods, between Christmas and Easter, the local sports shops remain open 12 hours a day hiring out ski equipment and then between June and September again the sports shops working long hours selling walking and climbing gear. So, therefore economically shop owners do benefit from tourists either buying or renting equipment.



Skiing has led to an increase in employment and improvements concerning transport and other services, raised the local standard of living and has reduced the number of young people having to leave the area. However other than the advantages there are disadvantages to both the environment and the local community.

The environmental impact is not very beneficial for the surrounding areas as deforestation of slopes for new and longer ski runs, expanding resorts and new access roads increases the risks of soil erosion and avalanches.

Skiing on this snow destroys vegetation and the ecosystem and furthermore less snow lower down makes skiers climb higher onto fragile environments at higher altitudes.

Huge increase in traffic and the congestion on local roads and problems of parking and coaches has been blamed for the acid rain killing vegetation in Alpine areas.

In addition to the environmental problems, there are community problems, such as farmers and forestry workers have lost jobs as skiing takes over the area. The traditional way of life has changed due to increase in traffic and people. In addition house prices rise and they become too expensive for local people.

As well as the ski resorts, Les Ecrins and La Vanoise have been designated National Parks. Their mountainous landscape and their wildlife, such as alpine flora were in need of protection against the rapid advance of tourism.

The aim of the park planners is to try to balance the protection of the environment with local Alpine traditions and the economic potential of tourism.

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The other well known tourist attraction, the Lake District is situated just below Scotland with a population of approximately 40,000. Each year 12 million people visit the Lake District. The National Park is very famous due to its extraordinary mountain, valley and lake scenery. What attracts tourists also attracts second home owners and retired people – it is a place for all ages.



The National Park has some special qualities, such as the diversity of landscapes – sandy coasts and clear rivers, rugged mountains and deep lakes, woodlands and wildlife. The wide range of ecosystems includes freshwater habitats, arctic-alpine communities and ancient broad-leaved woodland. Its most extravagant scenery results from glaciation. The work of frost and ice has formed landforms which include tarns, narrow ridges and U-shaped valleys with waterfalls and lakes.

Advantage of long footpaths and green lanes give access to large areas and create a sense of freedom and discovery.

The rural character of Lake District life with its dialect, sports and links with literature and artistic movements has created a strong local culture.

According to the statistics it shows that there are varieties of jobs in the National Park, for instance employment in manufacturing, construction, retailing, transport and service industries. And furthermore it shows that due to its magnificent scenery and landscape, it being one of the main reasons why people visit the National Park as well as other reasons.

Although 12 million people visiting the Park annually causes problems to the environment and for the local residents.

Nearly 90% of visitors arrive by car, which causes congestion often heavy on approach roads to the Park. Due to limited public transport within the park means that people have to rely upon their own transport. This creates parking problems, noise and air pollution.

Other than vehicle problems, there is the problem of footpath erosion. According to a survey, it was estimated that 4 million visitors a year now take walks of 6km or more. This has resulted in many of the more popular routes becoming severely eroded.

One in six properties in the Lake District are either second homes or holiday cottages. A holiday cottage is rented out on short-term lets on a commercial basis to many different people. Increase in this type of accommodation has forced house prices to rise beyond the reach of most local people.

Furthermore conflict between local residents and tourists can occur, for instance between farmers and visitors or people yearning for some peace and quiet while others wanting activities, such as speed boating, water skiing or car rallying.

Considering all of these problems, possible solutions have been discussed. One of the main aims is to balance the needs of local residents with those of visitors. Also two significant aspects are landscaping and traffic management.

Improving of landscaping includes repairing eroded footpaths and damaged stone walls. Planting trees to screen and wherever possible car parks and quarries.

The Lake District Traffic Management's initial main objectives were to reduce periodic traffic and parking congestion and to offer alternatives mode of transport to the car, mainly by improving public transport. Tailor traffic to the availability of the existing roads and allow the local community to proceed with its normal business.

A number of individual local schemes have been implemented based on the need, local support, cost and achievability. For instance restriction on-road car parking, speed limit, improved bus services and village schemes for parking, traffic management and environmental improvement.