

Global Citizenship Pre-Travel Activities

This set of 15–20 minute student activities is designed for pre-travel meetings. Each lesson explores what it means to be a **global citizen** rather than simply a **tourist**. While tourists visit places to see things, global citizens travel to understand, connect, and grow. These lessons help students prepare to travel with empathy, curiosity, and respect. The activities are country-neutral so they can be used for any destination.

Framing Question:

What's the difference between being a tourist and being a global citizen?

Use this question at the start and end of each activity to anchor discussion. Encourage students to notice how a global citizen approaches travel differently — with curiosity, respect, flexibility, and gratitude.

1. The Curiosity Lens

Tourist vs. Global Citizen: Tourists judge what's unfamiliar; global citizens observe and wonder.

Goal: Help students practice curiosity instead of judgment when encountering new ideas or images.

Materials Needed:

- 5–6 images showing aspects of daily life from different cultures (markets, food, clothing, homes, celebrations).
- Projector or printed slides.
- Optional: Small cards labeled 'Curiosity Lens' with prompts like 'I notice...', 'I wonder...', and 'I imagine...'.

Facilitator Instructions:

- Begin by asking: “What might a tourist do when they see something different? What might a global citizen do instead?”
- Show an image and ask students, “What’s the first thing you notice?” Record their responses.
- Model reframing a statement: 'That looks strange' → 'I wonder why they do that.'
- Show several more images, letting students practice using 'I notice...' and 'I wonder...' statements.
- Discuss: How did curiosity change your reaction? What does curiosity show about global citizenship?
- Reflection question: “On your trip, how can you respond like a global citizen when you see something new?”

2. Words Beyond Words

****Tourist vs. Global Citizen:**** Tourists expect others to understand them; global citizens work to connect respectfully.

****Goal:**** Help students see that communication involves patience, empathy, and nonverbal cues.

****Materials Needed:****

- 10–12 simple travel phrases in various languages (e.g., 'Where is the bathroom?', 'Thank you', 'Excuse me').
- Examples of gestures that mean different things globally (thumbs-up, nodding, pointing).
- Optional props: map, hat, play money, water bottle.

****Facilitator Instructions:****

7. • Ask: "How might a tourist act if no one understands them? What might a global citizen do instead?"
8. • In pairs, give students a phrase card. They must act it out silently using gestures only.
9. • The rest of the group guesses what the phrase means.
10. • Discuss: What worked best without words? How did it feel to rely on gestures?
11. • Explain that gestures vary worldwide and emphasize patience and kindness.
12. • Reflection question: "How does a global citizen communicate when language barriers appear?"

3. What's Normal Anyway?

****Tourist vs. Global Citizen:**** Tourists see 'different' as 'wrong'; global citizens see 'different' as 'interesting.'

****Goal:**** Encourage students to question assumptions about what's 'normal' in daily life.

****Materials Needed:****

- 10–12 scenario cards describing cultural practices (meal times, greetings, tipping, transportation).
- Chart paper or whiteboard for group notes.

****Facilitator Instructions:****

13. • Start by asking: "When you travel, what might surprise a tourist? How could a global citizen respond differently?"
14. • Give each group a scenario card and have them discuss: What's different? Why might this make sense in another culture?
15. • Groups share their ideas and connect differences to values such as family, time, or community.

16. • Conclude by discussing how noticing without judging helps us grow.
17. • Reflection question: “When you see something unfamiliar abroad, how can you think like a global citizen instead of a tourist?”

4. The Traveler’s Compass

****Tourist vs. Global Citizen:**** Tourists follow an itinerary; global citizens follow values — respect, curiosity, flexibility, gratitude.

****Goal:**** Guide students to identify core values that shape ethical travel behavior.

****Materials Needed:****

- • Four posters labeled: Respect, Curiosity, Flexibility, Gratitude.
- • Markers and sticky notes.

****Facilitator Instructions:****

18. • Introduce the metaphor: ‘Tourists use maps. Global citizens use a compass made of values.’
19. • Divide students into four groups — one per compass value.
20. • Each group writes examples of how to show that value during travel.
21. • Rotate groups so each adds ideas to another poster.
22. • Discuss: Which values might be hardest to live out on a trip? Why do they matter?
23. • Reflection question: “How can your traveler’s compass guide you to act like a global citizen?”

5. Global Citizen Bingo

****Tourist vs. Global Citizen:**** Tourists think global citizenship begins abroad; global citizens practice it everywhere.

****Goal:**** Show that global citizenship starts before the trip through curiosity and connection.

****Materials Needed:****

- • Bingo cards with prompts like: Tried food from another country, Talked to someone who speaks another language, Watched a foreign movie, Helped a visitor find their way.
- • Pens or markers.

****Facilitator Instructions:****

24. • Tell students: ‘Before you can be a global citizen abroad, you can practice it right here at home.’
25. • Distribute Bingo cards and have students find classmates who match the squares (one signature per person).
26. • After 5–7 minutes, discuss: Which squares were easiest or hardest to fill?
27. • Emphasize that these small actions build curiosity and empathy before travel.

28. • Reflection question: “Which habits on your Bingo card will help you act like a global citizen instead of a tourist?”

6. The Story You’ll Tell

****Tourist vs. Global Citizen:**** Tourists tell stories about what they saw; global citizens tell stories about what they learned and who they met.

****Goal:**** Encourage students to set intentions for meaningful reflection during travel.

****Materials Needed:****

- Index cards or small slips of paper, markers.
- Optional: Background music or slideshow of travel photos.

****Facilitator Instructions:****

29. • Begin with the question: “When you come home, how do you want to describe your experience — as a tourist or a global citizen?”
30. • Have students write a short, three-sentence preview of the story they hope to tell — one of connection, discovery, or growth.
31. • Invite volunteers to share their 'preview stories.'
32. • Collect cards in an envelope labeled 'Open After the Trip.'
33. • After returning, revisit their stories and discuss what changed or deepened.
34. • Reflection question: “What kind of story will show you were a global citizen?”