

'Beautiful locations to learn in': readers' favourite creative breaks

Level 3: Advanced

1 Warmer

- a. There are many different ways to enjoy a holiday. Brainstorm different types of activities people can do. Think of at least one idea for each category.

Creative	Athletic	Cultural	Educational

2 Key words

- a. Choose the correct word to match each definition. Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

1. sudden feelings of anger or excitement between people

- a. scenery b. spark c. landscape

2. making something that was disappearing grow stronger

- a. reigniting b. tending c. stirring

3. lively, enthusiastic, attractive and energetic

- a. vivacious b. sacred c. nostalgic

4. a person, place, or thing that is very good, pleasing or useful

- a. landscape b. enigmatic c. gem

5. ancient myths from a particular society or culture

- a. insights b. mythology c. spark

6. feeling both happiness and sadness when thinking about past memories

- a. eccentric b. pad c. nostalgic

7. very beautiful and impressive

- a. roaring b. tranquil c. glorious

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8. a feeling of being bored because there is nothing interesting to do
- a. sacred b. ennui c. insights
9. an informal word for a home, house or apartment
- a. pad b. mythology c. gem
10. carefully took care of somebody or something
- a. stirred b. tended c. reignited
11. very important and treated with great respect
- a. tranquil b. glorious c. sacred
12. strange or unusual, often in a humorous way
- a. eccentric b. vivacious c. nostalgic
13. burning with a lot of bright flames and heat
- a. glorious b. roaring c. tranquil
14. the features and appearance of natural places, especially beautiful natural places
- a. scenery b. insights c. mythology
15. completely involved in or surrounded by something
- a. reignite b. tend c. immersed
16. quiet, calm and peaceful
- a. enigmatic b. tranquil c. roaring
17. thoughts that show clear, deep understanding of a person, thing or idea
- a. insights b. scenery c. ennui
18. mysterious and difficult to understand
- a. nostalgic b. enigmatic c. sacred

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19. moved or caused something to move slightly

- a. tended b. reignited c. stirred

20. everything you can see when you look across a large area of land

- a. pad b. scenery c. landscape

b. Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words from the previous activity.

1. Sia studied Greek and Roman _____ at the university.
2. I was _____ in the Spanish language when I lived in Mexico.
3. My neighbours _____ to their flower garden every weekend.
4. Many people feel _____ when they look at old family photos.
5. My dad is a little _____. He's different, but he makes me laugh.
6. Teenagers often experience feelings of _____ when they are alone.
7. The children sat by the _____ fire and drank delicious hot chocolate.
8. I don't like to hike, but I enjoy the beautiful _____ in the mountains.
9. Gio loves the beach at night. It's relaxing and very _____.
10. The book provides new _____ into the history and culture of the region.

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Photography, writing, painting and music learning holidays have all ignited our readers' creative spark, at retreats from Snowdonia to Sicily

Guardian readers

30 May, 2025

1 Go wild in the country, Berkshire

Wider Horizons is an outdoor gathering in Berkshire dedicated to reigniting young attendees' (18 to 30 years old) creative spark through workshops, music, ceremony and movement. On the glorious July afternoon I arrived, oak trees cast elongated shadows on the soft earth, a gentle breeze stirred the tall grass, and I found myself surrounded by a group of eccentric, vivacious young adults. A key element of the weekend is transformation: Wild Woman circles channelled sacred rage into empowerment, Forest Play turned ennui into childlike wonder, and poetry workshops used the surrounding woodlands as inspiration. My phone lay untouched, my mind grew quiet, and from that place of silence, the words poured out of me like rainfall. The 2025 event is from 22-28 July. The full price is 250 pounds with early-bird discounts available into June.

Jade Serna

2 Immersed in mythology in Eryri

Trigonos is a beautiful and unique environmentally conscious retreat centre in the heart of Eryri (Snowdonia). Its seven hectares (18 acres) include a tranquil lake. The setting is a key landscape in the ancient Fourth Branch of The Mabinogion. Storytellers Cath Little and Claire Mace led a weekend workshop for women here, exploring the enigmatic figure of Arianrhod, a key female figure in mythology. My connections with the story and the mythological landscape were deepened by this experience; I gained new insights, enriched my own storytelling, and made wise new friends. Activities such as yoga, weaving, cycling, and forest bathing are also offered at Trigonos.

Fiona Collins

3 A luxury library to stay in, near Chester

The best place to refill your creative cup is at Gladstone's Library. It truly is a bookish fantasy; you while away the hours reading and writing in a wood-panelled, nostalgic book-filled space, before heading upstairs to dream in the book-themed bedrooms. Rooms start at 96 pounds a night at this gem at Hawarden near Chester, founded by

William Gladstone, which includes a delicious on-site breakfast, access to reading rooms, and use of a common-room style lounge, complete with roaring fires and sofas. The UK's only residential library is the perfect getaway for creatives in any field looking to rest, write, read and be.

Rosie Blincow

4 Where artists can be inspired by the Solway Firth

The Solway Firth landscape painting weeks at Auchencairn House combine the inspirational scenery of the coast and the wonderful walled garden with excellent and supportive tutors and warm and friendly hosts. Breathe the calm by day, relax with stately home dining, and just paint. The next course starts on 15 June.

Anne

5 Photography skills in beautiful locations

I have been on two photography holidays with Creative Escapes. I visited Sicily and Japan and the holidays were wonderful. The company only takes small groups and its tutors are experienced photographers. They give individual help and advice, so not only did my skills improve, but I also developed my own style. There were complete beginners and experienced photographers on the trips but we all supported each other in the projects and feedback sessions. Beautiful locations for learning, accommodation and special memories.

Sharon

6 Winning tip: Ted Hughes's writing retreat in West Yorkshire

On hands and knees, I tended to Sylvia Plath's overgrown grave with my new writer friend. We were staying at Ted Hughes's old pad up the road, Lumb Bank, atop a leafy West Yorkshire valley – learning the joys and craft of creative nonfiction, on an Arvon retreat. Over a transformative week, we shared writing and cooking skills, and bottles of red wine while dining at Ted's table every evening. That holiday kickstarted my love of creative writing. Arvon has three "writing houses" – in Yorkshire, Shropshire and Devon. Five-day courses start at 895 pounds.

Kate

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3 Comprehension check

a. Decide if the statements are True, False or Not mentioned according to the information in the article. Correct the false statements.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. Wider Horizons is a special event for people in their 40s, 50s and 60s. | True / False / Not mentioned |
| 2. The author experience personal growth and change when she attended Wider Horizons. | True / False / Not mentioned |
| 3. All visitors to Trigonos must study mythology before they start the retreat. | True / False / Not mentioned |
| 4. Trigonos offers activities related to sport, art and storytelling. | True / False / Not mentioned |
| 5. Gladstone's Library is one of dozens of residential libraries in the UK. | True / False / Not mentioned |
| 6. Gladstone's Library has reading rooms and themed bedrooms. | True / False / Not mentioned |
| 7. The Solway Firth lets visitors swim and surf on the coast. | True / False / Not mentioned |
| 8. Creative Escapes takes people on international holidays, but only in Europe. | True / False / Not mentioned |
| 9. The author learned new things from other travellers on her Creative Escapes holidays. | True / False / Not mentioned |
| 10. Arvon retreats are for people who want to learn more about photography and painting. | True / False / Not mentioned |

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4 Key language

a. Some of the vocabulary words in this lesson have more than one meaning. Read the sentences and choose the correct meaning for the underlined words.

1. I choose a beautiful pink gem for my new ring.
 - a. person, place or thing that is very good, pleasing or useful
 - b. a valuable stone that is cut and used for jewellery
2. She felt a spark the first time she met her boyfriend.
 - a. sudden feelings of anger or excitement between people
 - b. a small flash of light caused by electricity
3. The class reignited their interest in marine biology.
 - a. made something that was disappearing grow stronger
 - b. made something start burning again
4. The wind was roaring all night during the storm.
 - a. burning with a lot of bright flames and heat
 - b. making a continuous, loud and powerful noise
5. Churches, mosques and synagogues are sacred places.
 - a. very important and treated with great respect
 - b. connected to religion or religious beliefs and practices

b. Use the words from the previous activity. Make your own sentences using one of the definitions.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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4. _____

5. _____

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these questions.

- How often should people go on holiday?
- Which things should people spend the most money on during their holiday?
- Is it better to go on holiday alone or with friends or family?
- Is it better to go on holiday in your own country or to travel to a different country?
- What's more important on holiday – relaxing, trying new experiences or creating special memories? Why?

6 In your own words

- a. Research online to find out about a retreat or a tour company that offers educational experiences. Write a persuasive essay to encourage others to try out this holiday. Explain what people can learn, how they can grow as a person and why they would benefit from the trip.**
- b. Share your essay with your classmates.**