

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

Level 2: Intermediate

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. spark
 - b. scenery
 - c. landscape
2. a person, place or thing that is very good, pleasing or useful
 - a. transformative
 - b. roaring
 - c. gem
3. ancient myths from a particular society or culture
 - a. kickstart
 - b. mythology
 - c. glorious
4. feeling both happiness and sadness when thinking about past memories
 - a. eccentric
 - b. scenery
 - c. nostalgic
5. very beautiful and impressive
 - a. roaring
 - b. tranquil
 - c. glorious
6. carefully took care of somebody or something
 - a. insights
 - b. tended
 - c. gem
7. strange or unusual, often in a humorous way
 - a. eccentric
 - b. transformative
 - c. nostalgic

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8. burning with a lot of bright flames and heat
 - a. glorious
 - b. roaring
 - c. tranquil
9. the features and appearance of natural places, especially beautiful natural places
 - a. scenery
 - b. landscape
 - c. mythology
10. completely involved in or surrounded by something
 - a. kickstart
 - b. tend
 - c. immersed
11. quiet, calm and peaceful
 - a. spark
 - b. tranquil
 - c. roaring
12. everything you can see when you look across a large area of land
 - a. tend
 - b. scenery
 - c. landscape
13. to make something start to happen or happen more quickly
 - a. kickstart
 - b. nostalgic
 - c. roaring
14. causing a major change or improvement in something or someone
 - a. tranquil
 - b. transformative
 - c. mythology

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

1. I was _____ in the Spanish language when I lived in Mexico.
2. My neighbours _____ to their flower garden every weekend.
3. Many people feel _____ when they look at old family photos.
4. My dad is a little _____. He's different, but he makes me laugh.
5. The children sat by the _____ fire and drank delicious hot chocolate.
6. I don't like to hike, but I enjoy the beautiful _____ in the mountains.
7. Gio loves the beach at night. It's relaxing and very _____.
8. Going to college is often a(n) _____ experience. It changes your worldview.

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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. It's dedicated to helping young attendees (18 to 30 years old) feel a creative spark through workshops, music, ceremony and movement. On the glorious July afternoon I arrived, a gentle breeze moved the tall grass, and I found myself surrounded by a group of eccentric, outgoing young adults. An important element of the weekend is transformation: Forest Play turned boredom into childlike wonder, and poetry workshops used the surrounding woodlands as inspiration. My phone was 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 discounts available into June.

Jade Serna

2 **Immersed in mythology in Eryri**

Trigonos is a beautiful and unique, environmentally friendly retreat centre in Eryri (Snowdonia). Its seven hectares (18 acres) include a tranquil lake. The setting is an important landscape in ancient Welsh mythology. Storytellers Cath Little and Claire Mace led a weekend workshop for women here, exploring the story of Arianrhod, a significant female figure in mythology. My connections with the story and the mythological landscape were deepened by this experience; I learned new ideas, improved 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 spend hours reading and writing in a nostalgic book-filled space, before going 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 perfect 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 formal 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 grave with my new writer friend. We stayed at Ted Hughes's old house up the road on top of a leafy West Yorkshire valley. We learned the joys of creative nonfiction on an Arvon retreat. Over a transformative week, we shared writing and cooking skills 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 or False. Correct the false statements.

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Wider Horizons is a special event for people in their 40s, 50s and 60s. | True / False |
| 2. The author experienced personal growth and change when she attended Wider Horizons. | True / False |
| 3. Trigonos offers activities related to sport, art and storytelling. | True / False |
| 4. Gladstone's Library is one of dozens of residential libraries in the UK. | True / False |
| 5. Gladstone's Library has reading rooms and themed bedrooms. | True / False |
| 6. Creative Escapes takes people on international holidays, but only in Europe. | True / False |
| 7. The author learned new things from other travellers on her Creative Escapes holidays. | True / False |
| 8. Arvon retreats are for people who want to learn more about photography and painting. | True / False |

4 Key language

a. Complete the table with the correct forms of the words.

Noun	Verb	Adjective
gathering	1. _____	---
2. _____	3. _____	creative
4. _____	arrive	---
transformation	5. _____	6. _____
7. _____	8. _____	inspirational
silence	9. _____	10. _____

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b. Choose the correct form of the words from task a to complete the sentences.

1. My friends always _____ together to celebrate my birthday.
2. _____ is an important skill for writers, artists and musicians.
3. The flight's _____ was delayed by two hours.
4. The toy can _____ from a car into a superhero.
5. What was the _____ for this story?
6. The library was busy, but it was _____.

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?

6 In your own words

- a. Research online to find out about a retreat or a tour company that offers educational experiences in your area. Write a short description like in the article to encourage others to try out this holiday. Explain what people can learn and why they would enjoy it.**
- b. Share your writing with your classmates.**