

Devan Zimmerman
Advanced Composition
Philip Benoit
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Personal Narrative

"Look at how cool these pictures are." Melisa said from the seat to my right as she slid her iTouch onto my desk. We were sitting in our usual spots; the last row in the very back of the auditorium. I scrolled through the Facebook album, admiring the photos of beautiful sunsets and crystal clear waters.

"Wow, this place is gorgeous. Where is this?" I asked her.

"Australia! This girl I know is there right now, she's studying abroad. The university is on a reserve, so there are kangaroos that actually live on campus. I'm really thinking about going."

"No way, that's really cool. Amanda, look at these." I slid the iTouch once more to the left, where my roommate and best friend, occupied the desk opposite me.

"Whoa, look how pretty that is," admired Amanda.

"What are you guys looking at?" Our friends, Alex and Kenny, had arrived. Amanda showed him the photos.

"My friend is studying abroad in Australia, those are some of her pictures," Melisa explained. "I'm looking into going. Thing is, registration is due in three days and I'm not quite sure how much the fee is. I'm going later to make an appointment with Global Ed."

"That's awesome. I wanna go," I said excitedly. I had always thought about studying abroad, but never as a serious option. "Scuba diving in the Great Barrier Reef is on my bucket list. How cool would that be for all of us to go?"

"Yeah, that would be a lot of fun," Amanda said, "I'll go along and make an appointment. It doesn't hurt to check it out."

"What about you Kenny? Alex?" I looked at them both. They were both into environmental science; they'd be silly not to take this opportunity.

“Yeah, I’ll go check it out,” Kenny replied.

“Sure, why not, let’s see if it’s worth it” Alex shrugged.

We spent the rest of class weighing the pros and cons, and the actual likelihood of being able to go. I was already getting a lot of help to attend school in the US, would it even be possible for me to afford to go to a country twice as expensive as this one? It didn’t hurt to try.

“Thanks, Melisa. What a cool thing to look forward to.” I said as I smiled to myself. Who knew that day would be a start to a great adventure.

Four months later, Amanda, Alex, Kenny, and I stepped off a Qantas A380, the most luxuriously, gigantic plane I’ve ever been on. After a surprisingly easy customs transaction, we walked out of the airport doors to the most beautiful country that I have ever seen; one that is full of incredibly friendly people, and also most likely to kill you. A college friend of mine sent me a picture before I left that explained the country perfectly:



(fetchmevegemite.blogspot.com)

The weather was hot and there was very little moisture in the air; my favorite type of weather. I was in an amazing country with three of my best friends. It was fascinating driving in a vehicle with the driver on the right side, and I admit I’m sorry I didn’t get a chance to try it out. Our living quarters were

located in UniCentral, a small gated area with eight sets of three-story, townhouse-style apartments. Each contained four bedrooms with private bathrooms, and a communal kitchen and living room. Roommates were selected at random and each was guaranteed to house an Australian student. My selected roommates were fortunately really cool and since it wasn't a huge complex, my friends all lived relatively close. I was living the life.

We had made arrangements with students from previous semesters for necessary housing items and once the four of us had unloaded our stuff, we arranged to meet at Amanda's. I changed out of my 14-hour flight outfit, longingly glancing at my shower, wishing I had packed a towel. Instead, I threw on clean shorts and a t-shirt and made the short trip around the tennis court, towards the apartments to the right of mine. I was fortunate enough to have the bottom floor, so I didn't have to lug my suitcases up any flights of stairs; Amanda was located on the second floor.

One by one, we appeared at Amanda's place, hers the nearest to our destination. Alex lived on the far left side, the area jokingly deemed as "the ghetto." Kenny and I both lived in the middle, Amanda in between. We arrived at the apartment in which our fellow colleagues left the belongings they were passing onto us, and it was at that time that I met some of my soon to be closest friends.

After settling into our respective apartments and taking about a day to recover from jetlag, each of us started getting to know our fellow mates and preparing for Orientation Week, better known as O-Week. It was a crazy, incredible week full of clubbing, cooking on the Barbie, swimming in the community pool, and soaking up the sun down under.

In the following months, I ticked off a bullet on my bucket list. I swam in the Pacific Ocean and dived in the Great Barrier Reef; I toured a rum factory and ate the most amazing homemade fish and chips; I went on Spring Break with my best friend and rode on a giant sailboat; I went camping and can't remember a minute of it; I met some of the most incredible people and formed lifelong friendships; I tried things I only dreamt of doing; and most importantly, I found myself. My friends and I decided we

were going to Australia, applied, and submitted our study abroad applications within three days. I'm thankful for the people in my life that helped support me on this journey and I can truly say I've come a long way from the girl I was my freshman year of college. I took a chance, and it changed my life.