

*Dream of
Travel Writing*

Mastering Style at a Sentence by Sentence Level

by Gabi Logan, founder of Dream of Travel Writing

A blurred background image of a coffee shop setting. In the foreground, there is a white cup of coffee on a saucer. To the left, a smartphone is visible. In the background, there is a vase of purple flowers and a white napkin. The text "Today, we're going to talk about..." is overlaid in the center.

Today, we're going to
talk about...

1. Why are we looking specifically at sentences?

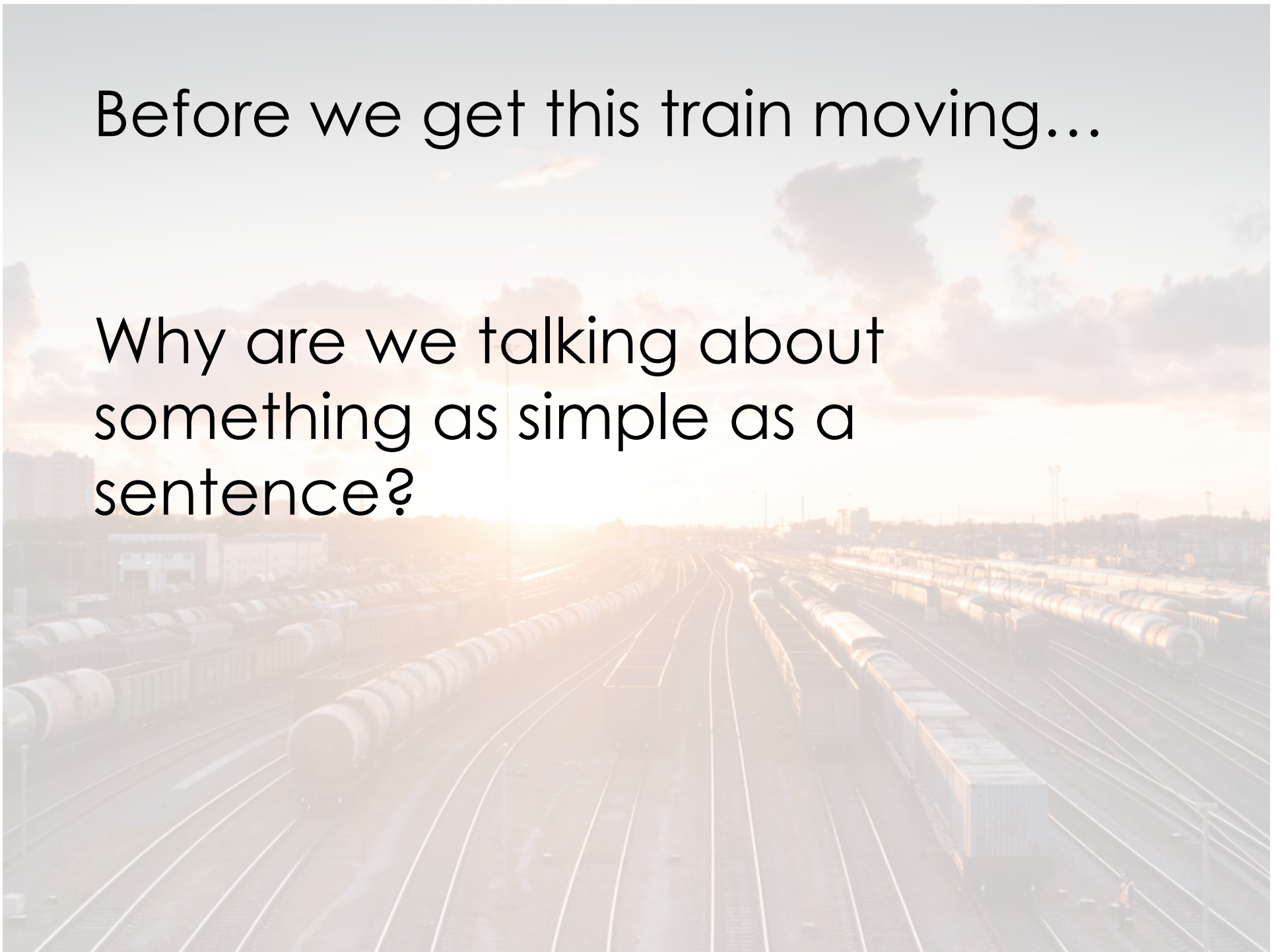
2. Oh, the places your sentences can go....

3. The three biggest sentence-level offences out there today



Before we get this train moving...

Why are we talking about something as simple as a sentence?



Subject + Verb (at a minimum)

I go.

I went.

I am going.

I was going.

I was going to go.



From there, however, it
gets complicated.

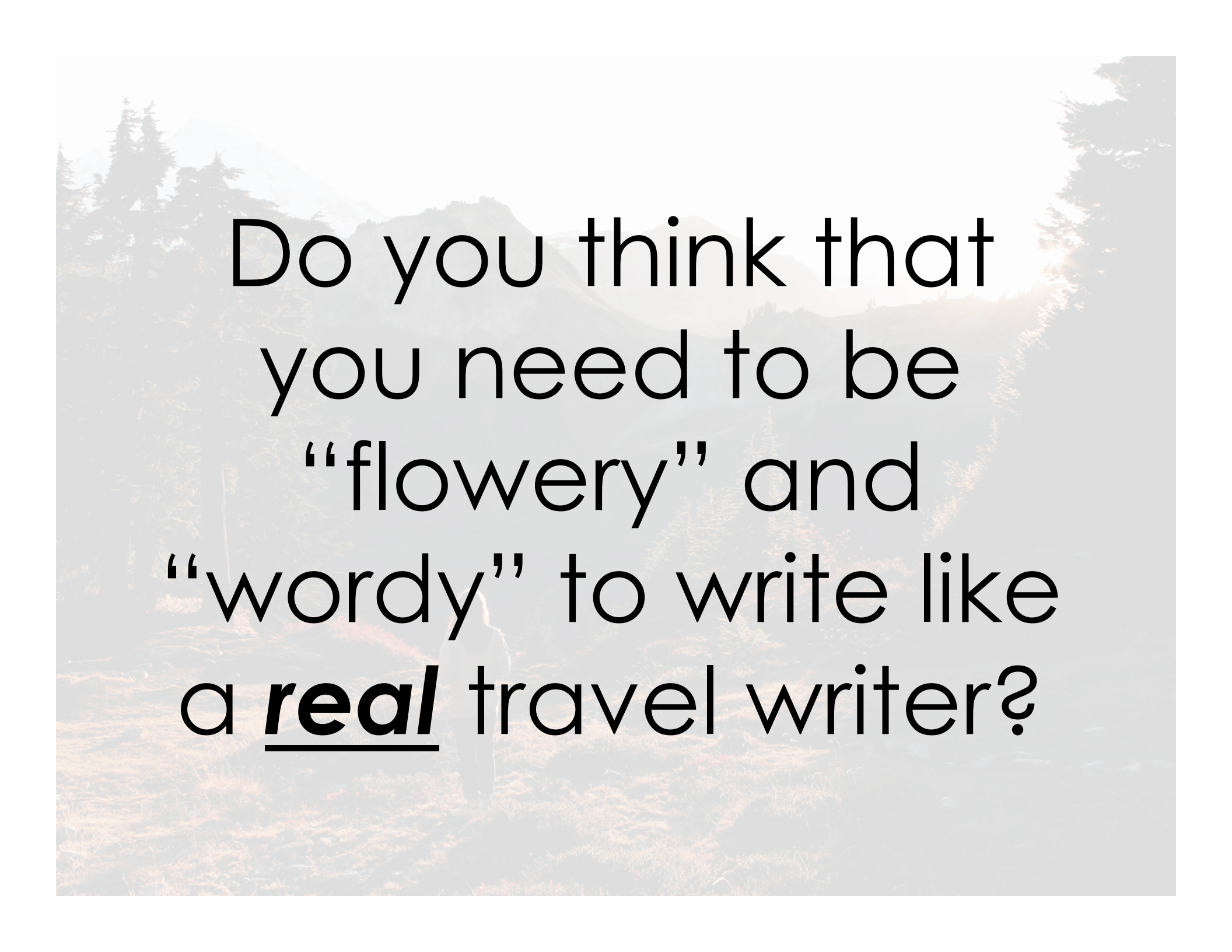
From: “I went to the
café” to...

When I was in London, which was pretty often during this time, because my friend—my old roommate from Boston actually—had landed a flat in a very posh Central London neighborhood that allowed you to walk anywhere you'd want to go, we often went to this café, at first, because it had amazing dishes from all over the world, like perfect Swedish cardamom buns and full Japanese breakfasts, but later because we found out it was connected to a very witty, intellectual magazine and was regularly frequented by the magazines' editors, so we continued going hoping to run into one of them and get an in with the magazine.

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Let's Unpack a Few Things Here

- There are no commas around the and's here
 - “a very witty, intellectual magazine and was regularly frequented by the magazine's editor”
 - “so we continued going hoping to run into one of them and get an in with the magazine”
- Connectors, dependent clause markets, and extenders
 - because, which, so, but
 - when
 - like, that
 - we'll look at more in a minute


A person is seen from behind, standing on a mountain trail and looking out over a valley. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of a sunset or sunrise, with the sun low on the horizon to the right, creating a lens flare effect. The background features rolling hills and mountains under a hazy sky. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Do you think that
you need to be
“flowery” and
“wordy” to write like
a **real** travel writer?

“I notice that you use plain, simple language, short words and brief sentences. That is the way to write English—it is the modern way and the best way. Stick to it; don't let fluff and flowers and verbosity creep in. When you catch an adjective, kill it. No, I don't mean utterly, but kill most of them—then the rest will be valuable. They weaken when they are close together. They give strength when they are wide apart. An adjective habit, or a wordy, diffuse, flowery habit, once fastened upon a person, is as hard to get rid of as any other vice.”

- Mark Twain

Let's Look at Three Important Sentence-Level Grammar Issues I See Again and Again

- Correct use of commas
 - Dangling modifiers
 - Agreement in lists
- 
- A faint, artistic background image showing the silhouettes of several people standing on a rocky shoreline. The scene is misty or foggy, with the figures and rocks reflected in the calm water in the foreground. The overall tone is soft and atmospheric.

Conjunction Connectors

- Bring together two fully independent clauses (or sentences!)
- The comma is only involved when they clauses are independent, but you can also use these words when they aren't (see example text)
- for
- and
- nor
- but
- or
- yet
- so

Subordinate Connectors

- Add a dependent clause to an independent clause
- Use a comma when the dependent clause comes first, but not when it follows the independent clause.
- after, although, as, as if, as long as, as much as, as soon as, as though, because, before, by the time, even if, even though, if, in order that, in case, in the event that, lest, now that, once, only, only if, provided that, since, so, supposing, that, than, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, where, whereas, wherever, whether or not, while



The Oxford Comma Conundrum

Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

- Why are they dangling?
- Different types, pre- and post-independent clause:
 - RIGHT: I had to go to the event on Wednesday, which was the day it poured, and that sucked, because I had not packed an umbrella.
 - WRONG: Wednesday was the day of the event, which was the day it poured, and that sucked, because I had not packed an umbrella.

Dangling Modifiers

- RIGHT: I was so excited to take our anniversary trip in Greece, which was where my husband had proposed.
- WRONG: Greece was the perfect place for our anniversary trip, which was where my husband had proposed.
- RIGHT: After reading the original study, I find the article unconvincing.
- WRONG: After reading the original study, the article remains unconvincing.
- WRONG: Since traveling to Greece, octopus never tastes the same anywhere else.
- RIGHT: Since traveling to Greece, I find octopus never tastes the same anywhere else.
- WRONG: After turning in the assignment, the editor still hasn't responded to any of my emails.
- RIGHT: After I turned in the assignment, the editor still hasn't responded to any of my emails.
- ALSO RIGHT: After turning in the assignment, I've emailed the editor several times and still not received a single response.

Agreement in Lists

- NO: I work quickly and am careful.
- YES: I work quickly and carefully.

- Let's look at these together:
- The destination has the highest concentration of theme parks in the world, you can visit a variety of different beaches, and it's easily accessible from many airports.
- Upon stepping onto the main street, I was immediately hypnotized by the steady beat of car and bicycle horns, the stark colors of the flashing signs atop each miniscule shop, and pushed to the side by steady stream of foot traffic.

Thanks so much
for joining us today!

It was a pleasure chatting
travel writing with you 😊

Have a follow up question on this webinar? Email questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com and we'll cover it in an upcoming webinar or in our Monday reader mailbag post on the Six-Figure Travel Writer blog.

