



My uncle, Ibn Battuta, sat by the window of his house in Tangier. It was the hot time of the day and his eyes were half-open. I went into the room.

‘Uncle?’ I said quietly. He looked up at me suddenly.

‘Ah, Ahmed, it’s you again,’ he smiled.

‘Yes, Uncle,’ I answered. ‘Can you tell me today about your journeys, please? I want to travel when I’m older, too,’ I said.

‘Is that right?’ he answered. Then he looked carefully at me. ‘How old are you now?’ He could remember things from long ago easily, but things from the day before not very well.

‘I’m eleven,’ I said.

‘Well, perhaps in four or five years you can begin to travel. But it’s not easy, you know. You can see wonderful towns and cities, meet interesting people, and do exciting things. But there are bad times, too. You can get ill, meet big, hungry animals, or lose all your money.’

‘No!’ I said. My eyes were big and open.

‘Yes, Ahmed,’ he answered. ‘But listen to my stories, and perhaps you too can learn to come home alive!’ he laughed. ‘Now, where shall I begin?’

I sat down, ready to listen to him. Every time my uncle told his stories they were different, new, and interesting.

‘I was born here in Tangier,’ he began. ‘But of course, you know that,’ he smiled. ‘My father, and his father before him, were judges. So I learnt to be a judge, too. When you’re a judge, it’s easy to travel. You’re important, you see.’

‘Yes,’ I said. ‘Perhaps I can be a judge too, one day.’

‘Perhaps,’ he smiled. ‘My first journey was a pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah. I got on a donkey and said “Goodbye” to my mother and father in Tangier when I was twenty-one. My mother cried.

‘After some days’ journey, I came to the town of Algiers.



Here I met more pilgrims, and we travelled to the city of Constantine. I met the rich ruler there. He looked at my dirty old coat, smiled, and gave a beautiful new coat to me!

‘Why?’ I asked.

‘Good men help people when they need it. After some days, I left Constantine with the other pilgrims. We never stopped moving because we were afraid. Perhaps people could take our money from us when we slept, we thought. I was soon ill, and I wanted to go to bed and die. But my friends put me on my old donkey, and hit the animal from behind to make it go quickly down the road.’

‘Did you want to come home then, Uncle?’

‘Of course,’ he smiled. ‘But I journeyed to Tunis. A good traveller doesn’t stop easily. I left Tunis in a caravan of pilgrims. They asked me, “Can you be the judge in our caravan?” Of course I said, “Yes.” A caravan judge! Not bad work for a young man!’



When our caravan arrived in Alexandria, I was excited. I wanted to see the famous Pharos there.’

‘I know,’ I said quickly. ‘That’s a big lighthouse from long ago. Did you go up it?’

‘No!’ he laughed. ‘The Pharos was in ruins. There wasn’t a lot to see. But not far from Alexandria I met a holy man – Burhan Al-Din. He could see into the future.

‘And what did he tell me? “You’re going to visit India and China! And on your travels you’re going to meet many old friends!” I was happy about this. “I’m going to go far!” I thought.’

‘And did you go to India and China in the end?’

‘Wait and see, Ahmed!’ smiled my uncle. ‘I arrived in Cairo eight months after I first left home. What a big city!

And what a lot of people! And they never stop running here and there, day and night! And near Cairo there are the pyramids – big, old buildings from the rulers of Egypt long ago.’

‘And were they in ruins?’ I asked.

‘No. Not the pyramids!’ he smiled. ‘Next, I journeyed up the river Nile. After this we travelled on camels through the hot desert. There were lots of hungry hyenas there, and at night we needed to be very careful.’

‘Of course,’ I cried excitedly.

‘One night a big hyena came and took everything from my bag!’ he said. ‘But we soon left the desert. Then I travelled to the holy city of Jerusalem and visited the famous buildings there. Next I went to Damascus. What a beautiful city! Then I travelled to Arabia and visited Medina, and in the end I arrived in Makkah.

‘After a year and a half, it was wonderful to arrive in the city of my pilgrimage! I learnt from holy men there and prayed for three weeks.’

‘And did you come back home then?’ I asked.

‘No. Every night I thought of the holy man, Burhan Al-Din, and of India and China. I was a true traveler now, and I didn’t want to stop!

‘So I left Makkah with the ruler of Persia’s caravan. When I was young, I heard many stories about the wonderful towns near there. But on my journey I saw something very different. Years before, the Mongols came to these towns. They killed a lot of people, and I saw many houses in ruins there.

‘Perhaps the most interesting town on that journey was Wasit. A number of men with no money lived there in a big house. In the evening, they prayed and ate their dinner.

Then they sat near a big fire and told stories. Suddenly some of them walked into the fire! Then they ate the fire. One man put a snake’s head in his mouth and ate it alive!’

‘And you saw all that?’ I cried.

‘Yes,’ he laughed. ‘I visited many interesting towns after that, but I never saw men eat fire and snakes again!

‘Then I went to Baghdad. What a wonderful city! But I was ill there. So I soon went back to Makkah. I learnt from holy men and prayed there for a year, and slowly I felt better.’

‘And what did you do next?’ I asked.

‘I travelled by sea for the first time. It was my worst journey!’ he said. ‘You can hear all about it some other day.’

**Janet Hardy - Gould**



## About the author

**Janet Hardy-Gould** has taught English as a foreign language in many countries. She also writes regularly for *The Guardian Weekly*, the Speaking English section. She has also authored many books for students all over the world. Her work *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* is an adapted travel account of Ibn Battuta who was a 14<sup>th</sup> century scholar. He travelled widely and wrote with his friend an account of all his adventures- *Rihla*. The present chapter is an extract from one of the chapters in this book.

## Meanings in context

journey	: to go to different places
pilgrimage	: a journey to a holy place
caravan	: a group of people travelling
pyramid	: a structure whose outer surfaces are triangular and converge to a single point at the top
Pharos	: the title of a king of ancient Egypt
in ruins	: in old and broken condition or state
hyena	: a wild animal, like a dog that eats things which it finds



**Here is a list of places (along with their modern names) that were visited by Ibn Battuta in 14<sup>th</sup> century.**

Tangier	a major city in Morocco, now called Tangiers
Tunis	the capital of the Tunisia
Alexandria	a major city in the Egypt
Cairo	the capital of the Egypt
Nile	a major river in Egypt
Baghdad	the capital of the Iraq
Wasit	a place in eastern Iraq
Algiers	the capital city of Algeria
Constantine	a city in the North east of Algeria
Arabia	now called Saudi Arabia
Makkah, Medina	also written as Mecca in English, two most sacred Islamic cities in the Saudi Arabia
Jerusalem	the capital of Palestine
Damascus	the capital of Syria
Persia	now called Iran

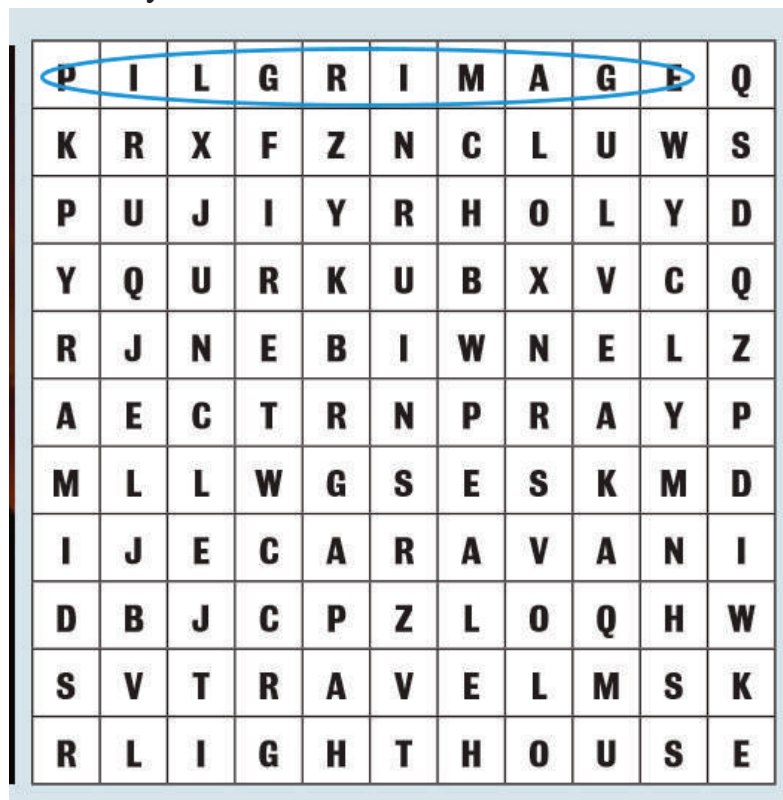
## Comprehension

Answer the following questions.

1. Who was Ibn Battuta?
2. What was the first journey of Ibn Battuta?
3. To whom is Ibn Battuta narrating his journeys?
4. What does one learn by traveling around the world, according to Ibn Battuta?
5. Did Ibn Battuta discontinue his journey when he fell ill in Constantine? What did his friends do for him?
6. Were the travels of Ibn Battuta adventurous? Give reason(s) for your answer.
7. Ibn Battuta travelled around the world for various reasons. What would be your reasons to travel?

## Vocabulary

Circle in the wordsearch the words that you may have come across in the lesson, and then use these words in your own sentences. One word has been circled.



## Grammar



### Sentence and Fragments

A sentence is a group of words in order that expresses a complete meaning.

A fragment too is a group of words but it can neither stand by itself nor express a complete meaning.

Fragment : The mail in the box

Sentence : The mail in the box is for you.

Fragment : Visited Bihar during vacation

Sentence : Mr. Prakash visited Bihar during vacation.

Fragment : All day

Sentence : All day he worked hard.

Identify which groups of words are sentences and which ones are fragments. Write S for a sentence and F for a fragment. Use appropriate punctuation marks (e.g. a fullstop a question mark, or an exclamation mark) if it is a sentence. Two have been done.

1. After school on Friday \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_
2. We put food in the cat's dish. \_\_\_\_\_ S \_\_\_\_\_
3. The noise in the library \_\_\_\_\_
4. From the post office to the mall \_\_\_\_\_
5. Everyone worked hard on the project \_\_\_\_\_
6. We always order sweets on Saturday night \_\_\_\_\_
7. An advertisement on TV \_\_\_\_\_
8. During the land acquisition in Chhattisgarh \_\_\_\_\_
9. Whose bicycle is on the pavement \_\_\_\_\_
10. Due to the heavy rain and flooding \_\_\_\_\_
11. Why is everyone so late \_\_\_\_\_
12. Happy day \_\_\_\_\_
13. Working on the project \_\_\_\_\_
14. Shut up \_\_\_\_\_
15. In the forest \_\_\_\_\_

A fragment occurs whenever you do these three things:

- You begin a group of words with a capital letter.
- You conclude this group of words with an end mark—either a period [ . ], question mark [ ? ], or exclamation point [ ! ].