

Dos

- Bring a notebook and pen wherever you go. It might seem tempting to just make notes on your phone/laptop for note-taking and pictures, but many of the places I visited in Berlin banned cameras so there was no way to just take photos of art installations. Even where phones were technically 'allowed', it looked rude to sit in a bar or speech taking notes on your phone, or to take photos of people you saw. Much more polite to take notes by hand in a notebook, and usually means you pay more attention to your surroundings!
- Having said this, where you can, take pics of everything project related where you can. The finished product looks so much better with your original photos, and it also helps with the writing process to have visual memory aids.
- Follow your interests when carrying out your project. If you pick an area you're genuinely interested in, you'll find it much easier to find the motivation to go to relevant events, exhibitions, do the research. The project shouldn't be homework, rather a supplement to the activities you usually do in your free time!
- Plan a realistic timeline based on your work and study commitments in advance. I didn't realise that working full-time would eat into my project so much. I'd suggest looking at your study/work contract and allocating a sensible amount of time per week/fortnight based on this.

Don'ts

- Feel guilty for postponing project-related things, living and working abroad is hard enough as it is - just ensure you've got the work-life balance correct.
- Restrict yourself in terms of the research you carry out. Some projects will be very hands-on, others will involve more library-based research. Everything that seems tenuously related to your project is worth pursuing, whether it's a museum, leaflet, article, or night club.
- Be shy of talking to locals. Without doubt, the most rewarding leads I got for my project came from native German colleagues, or people who've lived in Berlin for 10+ years. They know what they're talking about! Whenever you meet a new German person, try to ask for advice for places to visit which would be useful for the project. In Berlin, at least, Googling only gets you so far - word of mouth is definitely the way to go.