To: qassim_n@space.net Subject: School trip to Al-Ula Hi Qassim, I'm writing this email from our hotel in Al-Ula.The site was included in UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2008 because of its cultural and architectural importance.There are over -100 rock-carved monuments that are spread over an area of 13.4 kilometers, and due to the dry climate, they are in an excellent state of preservation.Hundreds of curious shapes were carved by the wind into the soft sandstone, one of which resembles a giant elephant!Some of the stones were taken from the ruins of a Lihyanite settlement and still carry the ancient inscriptions.There is also a unique sundial that the inhabitants used to determine the start of Ramadan.It's quite busy here in town, with tourists from all over the world who have come to visit Mada'in Saleh.It's also known as Al-Hijr because of the spectacular rock formations in the area.We're going to learn so much about the historical sites that we can't learn in books.We're also going to visit the museum, Al-Ula oasis, and the old abandoned city.The archaeological site lies about 20 km north of the town.The desert around the oasis is covered by natural rock formations.We arrived this evening after a long bus journey from Madinah.It's really too bad you couldn't join us on our school trip.As you know, the site was settled by the Nabataeans in the first century.The old city of Al-Deerah is going to be very interesting.It has over 500 houses from the 13th century, with stone foundations and mud-brick walls.I'll take lots of amazing pictures to show you!Tomorrow a guide is going to show us around the site.Don't worry.Best wishes, Adel

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