# Young people convey history

## Or how young citizens take the initiative

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## Introduction

Getting children and young people interested in archaeology and history is not very difficult but keeping them interested is not always an easy task. Who is to blame? History lessons consist mainly of data, facts about wars and conquests. Terms such as pharaoh, pyramids, Gauls, Romans or even treasures magically attract our younger fellows, but this enthusiasm evaporates very quickly, if they have to learn kings and ruler's reigns by heart during their school years.

## The project

This project starts precisely here, in order to keep children and young people interested in archaeology and history and to make history lessons livelier. It is also about bringing the everyday life of individual epochs closer. A further aim was to show that interested teenagers can take part in the mediation of historical topics themselves without a lot of instructions and accordingly be a part of citizen participation in archaeology.

The project was carried out in a class of the 3rd secondary school level of the Lycee Francais de Vienne in history lessons. The aim was to create a digital and analogue scavenger hunt for young people of the same age to tell the history of Vienna from different perspectives and topics. The class was given an introduction by an archaeologist and their history teacher professor on the general conditions, such as which epochs in Vienna are better excavated and which are less well known, or how to set up a fascinating and exciting puzzle rally, how to write short and concise texts. In addition, playing a puzzle rally on the app "Actionbounds" was a good way to get to know the hardware works, since it was also used for the project. This app specializes in scavenger hunts. The professor and the archaeologist were available during the whole project period. However, the students had to take care of the topics and contents themselves. The result was a scavenger hunt through ancient Vienna, which was designed by 13-year-olds and meant to be for other teenagers. There were new insights and unknown knowledge about Vienna's history far away from the usual tourist attractions. This aspect made it thrilling for the pupils to take part actively in the history class.

The students were divided into small groups that worked on the individual stations. For this, they chose thought of an epoch and a place in Vienna where there is something to see or discover about

this epoch. Then they had to work out background information, descriptions, tasks and/or questions and their answers as well as their answer types (photo with location, multiple choice or free text) and the number of points the user would get. The epochs were influenced by their history program for this school year. It ranged from prehistory to the 1st World War with an emphasis on Roman times and beginning of the Middle Ages in and around Vienna.

## Conclusion

In the end, the students had a finished historical treasure hunt, which they proudly presented to their classmates, families and friends and got a deeper insight into the history of Vienna. The project was part of the school evaluation, which means that their invested time and strength paid off their grades. Apart from this, the teenagers learned how to transmit historical information in an easy but still accurate way and that the language used was as important as the content. At the beginning, not all students were excited about the project, but they soon realised that learning and mediating history was not as boring as expected.

For the archaeologist, it was a very captivating insight to how youngsters see and perceive their historical surroundings. The epochs and places to visit during this scavenger hunt chosen by the pupils were interesting and enabled a view from a non-archaeological professional perspective. Of course, some typical and well-known places to see in Vienna have been integrated but the pupils made a lot of research about antique sites and / or finds from Vienna.

This project showed that even youngsters are able to create themselves a game about the Viennese history for same aged. They were channelled by an archaeologist, but it was their merit. This is also a way of citizen participation.

## References

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