



# Empower Youth, Explore stories - EYES



## Youth Investigation: Explore Your Heritage



Created by



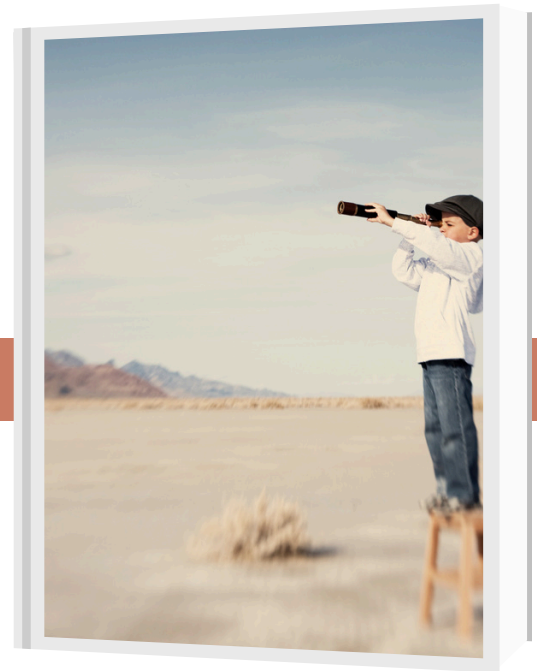
Co-funded by the European Union

Project No 2024-2-DE04-KA220-YOU-000293002

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION : WHY EXPLORING YOUR HERITAGE?</b>	p.3
<b>2</b>	<b>BECOMING A CULTURAL HERITAGE RESEARCHER</b>	p.6
	..... What is a Cultural Heritage Researcher?	
	..... The Research Starts with a Good Question: What Am I Interested In?	
<b>3</b>	<b>THE INVESTIGATION</b>	p.11
	..... Interviews and Oral History Interviews	
	..... Archival Research	
	..... Field Visits	
<b>4</b>	<b>FORMAT OF REPORTING &amp; TEMPLATES</b>	p.29
	..... Format of Reporting	
	..... Ready-to-use Templates	
<b>5</b>	<b>NATIONAL YOUTH HERITAGE INVESTIGATIONS</b>	p.32
	..... Youth Heritage Investigation in Belgium (ELAN)	
	..... Youth Heritage Investigation in Poland (FSLD)	
	..... Youth Heritage Investigation in Hungary (YBB)	
	..... Youth Heritage Investigation in Serbia (EDIT)	
	..... Youth Heritage Investigation in Germany (EUD)	
<b>6</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	p.34

# 1. Why Exploring your Heritage?



You might ask yourself why bothering with cultural heritage? Why should I care about my cultural heritage? Imagine you open your social media account and it is empty, no messages, no pictures, no shares, no likes, only the basic functionalities left. You would freak out wouldn't you? But why exactly? Why is it so important to display

pictures of you with your friends, on parties, on holidays, in concerts? Why is it so important to display which stars you follow, which music you listen to, which games you play? Why is it so important to show how good you looked with your new sneakers or that haircut?

It is important because these are all expressions of your personality, examples of what you like, what is important to you, and what you want. They are all signs of your belonging and your relations, they show that you are not alone but part of a community. They tell a story about you – about who you are. Your social media account is helping you remember your own stories, it is showing you around in your own past and brings up sweet (and sour) memories. But your social media account is also telling your story to the outside world, so that others can more easily relate to you.

Cultural heritage is our society's social media profile: it displays its common personality, what is important for our community, what is considered important, fun, nice, ugly, right and wrong. It shows everything that is connecting us to each other – stories and history, language, music, festivities, traditions. They are often taken for granted and even not entirely visible but they give us answers to deeply personal questions: Where do I come from? What makes me who I am? Why do I do things the way I do? It gives us orientation in a sometimes confusing world.





## Why heritage matters

Heritage can inspire a range of emotions, both positive and negative. It can help to have a toolkit for exploring and talking about such an important and sometimes challenging subject.

Heritage can matter to people for all sorts of reasons, such as:

- It is beautiful.
- It is what we think of when we picture home.
- It is part who we are.
- We can feel the spirits, our own history.
- It is where we walk our dog.
- It is our hometown and it reminds us of our family.
- It makes us feel uncomfortable and we want to understand it better.

Heritage can help us feel connected. It may connect us to a community, a place, or a shared past. It reflects different viewpoints across cultures and generations and it is key to local identity and distinctiveness. This can give us a strong sense of belonging, inspire our creativity, and contribute to our well-being.

All these elements of heritage define who we are, as individuals. They give us stability and security by making us feel part of a community where we like to be.



## Heritage makes us ask questions

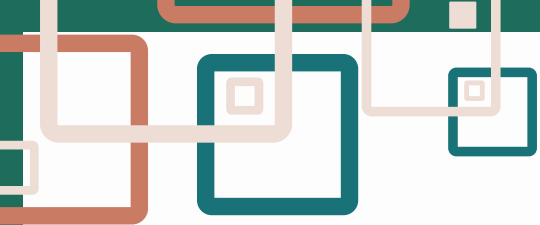


Our heritage can challenge us. Understanding our past can and should make us question things about our present. Although heritage can make us feel like we belong, it can also make us feel like we don't. Individuals and communities do not always see their identities being celebrated, and their stories being shared.

"There are parts of heritage that should not be celebrated". Even these aspects should be remembered and understood.

Talking about heritage can shed light on aspects of our past that have been hidden or were silenced. Sometimes this will make us uncomfortable – we might feel loss, anger or shame.

It is important that we understand these issues to help us shape our society today and in the future.



## How to use this guide?

If you have read until this paragraph, you might be interested in participating in our Cultural Heritage Investigation project. You might also be interested in creating your own Cultural Heritage Investigation project. If this is the case, this document will help you find a topic, do your research and document your results.

Eventually, you will also learn how to transform your research results and your cultural heritage topic into an app-based cultural heritage guide. In other words, after completing your research, you will learn how to produce the material necessary to design a mobile app that will guide you — and anyone interested — through your community or region, to discover monuments, traditions, or personalities that are typical of your area, and that you wish to share with others because they are meaningful to you.

But first things first, let's start with your research on cultural heritage. In this guide, we will explain to you how you can discover your cultural heritage (spoiler alert: it's very easy!) and which steps you can take in order to investigate the cultural history topic that you have chosen. This is mostly done by talking to people and asking questions, by going to libraries or other archives to research old documents, and by visiting places and sites that are connected to something that is important to you.

In the third part of this guide, you will also find ready-to-use resources to help you record and organize your research results, including step-by-step guidelines and templates. Look out for toolboxes at the end of the different sections of this guide; they will show you which resources (templates/guidelines) you need and when to use them. It is not mandatory to use them, but they can really make things easier!



# 2. Becoming a Cultural Heritage Researcher

## 2.1. What is a Cultural Heritage Researcher?



So, what is your cultural heritage anyway? The answer to this question mainly depends on YOU! Your heritage may be places that you like to go to – the ancient church in the city center, the huge tree in the park that your parents have already climbed on. It might also be cultural events and festivities that you visit and participate – the city festival that is taking place every summer. It can also be activities that are very typical for your community like celebrating carnival at end of winter. It can also be crafts that is popular in your region like a specific pottery art.

But what does this all mean for you as a young heritage investigator? It means that you are not just a participant, student or silent observer. You become a researcher – you are asking where the cultural heritage is coming from, how it has developed over time, who the people are that carry this heritage, what the cultural heritage means for the people in your region, what impact it has on them personally and on the community as such. Which marks does the cultural heritage leave on people, buildings and the landscape? You are searching for the story behind the cultural heritage and tell this story to the world in your words.

Therefore, you:



- Explore your surroundings with new eyes, discover the hidden history behind streets, buildings, customs, or conversations you may have passed by every day.



- Ask questions that matter. Talk to elders, neighbors, and experts. Learn what they know. Discover what they remember.



- Visit places that carry the past into the present. Look closely at architecture, monuments, cemeteries, murals, community centers, libraries, and gathering places.



- Dig through archives to find forgotten documents, photos, or newspaper stories that shine light on who you are and where you live.

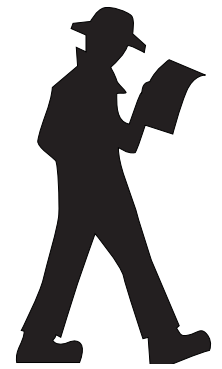


- Document everything you find and feel. Use notes, sketches, voice recordings, photos, and videos.



- Tell the story in your voice. Organize your work into a report that shows what you've learned and why it matters.

**Researching Local Heritage** is like being a detective of the past — looking for clues to understand what happened, what it meant, and how it shaped the identity of places and traditions around you. In this chapter, you'll learn about three key methods that can help with this: **oral history interviews**, **archival research**, and **field visits**. Each one has a different focus and different strengths. When combined they can help you get a deeper and more reflected understanding of your local heritage.



### Oral History Interviews

Oral History Interviews let you hear stories directly from the people who lived through a historical event or time period. You can find out what they remember, how they feel about a place, and what traditions mean to them. These are personal stories that are often not written down anywhere else and can offer alternative perspectives. But it is important to remember that people share memories, not exact facts. Memories are not only subjective, shaped by beliefs and emotions, but they also change over time.



### Archival Research

Archival research helps you dive into old documents such as newspapers, maps, photos, and books to learn about the recorded history and development of a place or a tradition. These sources are often seen as “official,” but they also reflect choices: what was written down, by whom, and why. They help you get an understanding of how places and stories were represented in the past and what was considered worth preserving.



### Field Visits

Field visits allow you to explore the place yourself — what it looks like now, how it's used, and what remains from the past. They give you a direct, visual sense of space and surroundings, and can reveal details that might not show up in interviews or documents, such as building styles, informal signs of use, or hidden landmarks.

Each method has its strengths but together, they help us look at the past from different angles. By combining personal memories, historical records, and what we can observe today, we don't get a single, complete story but a more differentiated and richer understanding of the complexity of the past, and how it continues to shape local life today.

## The Complementary Roles of the Three Research Methods

Method	Role in the Research Process	Link to the Other Methods
Interviews	Supplement historical sources with personal perspectives	Gives you a more personal and maybe alternative perspective on sources from archives and on the location of field visits
Archive Research	Provides historical context	Serves to prepare for interviews and field visits
Field Visits	Validated observations and visualized spaces and practices	Results from archives and interviews become spatially tangible



In this sense, doing your own local history project isn't just about uncovering the past, it's about building your own understanding of it by using different methods.



## 2.2. The Research Starts with a Good Question: What Am I Interested In?

But how do we start our own investigation project?

What do we need to pay attention to when we do explore our cultural heritage?

And how do we find a topic at all? So, let's get started!



### CONSIDER YOUR OWN INTERESTS / START WITH WHAT YOU LIKE

This is your project so you should focus on something you are curious about! The range of possibilities is very broad. You could find connections to local heritage in very different fields. If you are interested in a topic yourself, then it is easier to delve deeply into the research.

Maybe try answering these questions:

- What are your hobbies? What about your school or a club where you practice your hobby?
- What are your interests?
- What topics do you enjoy learning about?
- What are you often googling or talking to your friends with?
- Do you like music, sports, arts and crafts?



TAKE A LOOK AT  
YOURSELF

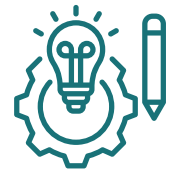


LOOK  
AROUND YOU

- Who is close to you?
- Think about your family, your own heritage
- What do you know about your family's local heritage? Are you curious about finding out more?
- Maybe think of another person with interesting stories?
- Think about your school, local issues in your community, games and leisure, local food and drinks, clothing, homes and housing
- What kind of traditions are practiced in your village?
- Are you interested in how it changed over time?
- Is your area famous for anything (industries, professions, food, crafts, etc.)
- Are there any interesting monuments or historic buildings?
- Is there a historic time period or event you find interesting?
- What do you know about this period or event in your local area? Are you interested in how the people experienced it?
- Are you curious how people experienced it differently? Or could it be interesting to find out more about the experiences of a specific group (women, workers, people with a migration background, queer people, etc.)



- Will it be possible to find research materials about your topic?
- Are there people alive and willing to talk to you about it?
- Can you get access to the places?
- Do you have the resources? You should consider:
- How much time do you have for your project?
- Are you working alone or in a group?
- Are there other people supporting you like family members or teachers?

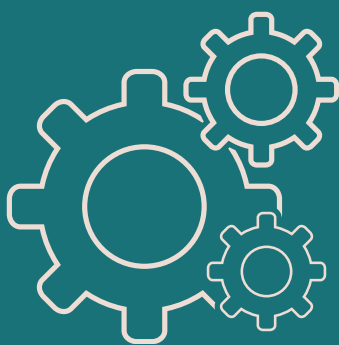


**PRACTICABILITY**

If you are asking yourself these questions and think : “Wait a minute, I would like to know more about this”, it is the right start. You can start thinking about how to gather all the information necessary to explore the story behind your interest – your local cultural heritage. The following pages will present three research methods that will help you answer all your questions.



Sometimes your investigation might not go exactly as planned—some parts might take longer, and a few things might not work the way you thought they would. Don't worry about it. Stay flexible, and aim for goals you can really achieve.



## Toolbox 1 : Let's start!

### **TOOL 1 : Identify a Topic - Template**

This template will help you choose a meaningful topic for your cultural heritage investigation. It will guide you to reflect on your interests, the people around you, and your local environment so you can find a topic that connects your curiosity with your community's heritage.

### **TOOL 2 : Project Planning Sheet**

This document will help you structure and organize your investigation on cultural heritage. It will support you in breaking down your main goal into smaller tasks, setting clear timelines, and tracking the progress of your work, while keeping in mind the objectives you aim to achieve at each step.

# 3. The investigation

## 3.1 Interviews and oral history interviews



### WHAT IS ORAL HISTORY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Oral History means sharing stories, traditions, and memories by talking to each other. It's something we often do in our daily lives – in conversations with friends or family, when remembering and sharing past experiences.

But oral history is also a method used in historical research. Instead of just reading about the past in books, you can learn about it directly from people who experienced it. It stands out because it captures emotional, personal, and community-based perspectives that are often missing from traditional history books. These people are called contemporary witnesses. By interviewing them, you can capture personal perspectives on historic events and past times and share them with others.

Most of what we know about history comes from books and written documents, but :

- **Not everything gets written down.**

History books often focus on big names or big events, not on everyday people or local stories. So a lot of things are not documented (for example - the way local festivals were celebrated in your town 50 years ago might not be found in any book, etc. )

- **Not everyone gets to tell their story.**

People have different levels of power and visibility — in the past and today.

Oral History can help to:

- **Create spaces for voices that are often overlooked** – like those of women, people with a migration background, working-class people or members of smaller communities.
- **Bring attention to experiences** that haven't been recorded or valued as much in written history.
- **Include personal, emotional, and everyday stories** which can open new ways of understanding the past.
- **Represent more people and perspectives**, and shows that history is complex and diverse – there is never just one version of the past.
- **Give us a broader understanding of what history can be** – not just political events or famous people, but also daily life, feelings, and memories.
- **Research your local heritage and learn more about regional history.**

On the following pages you will find tips and tricks how to do interviews – beginning with choosing interview partners, doing the interview and process your results.



## How to choose an interview partner?

Who you interview depends a lot on your topic. If you're focusing on something that happened a long time ago, there might not be many people still around who remember it. In that case, age is probably the most important thing to look for when choosing someone.

Also, think about how broad or specific your topic is. Do you want to learn more about your family's history? Or maybe something about your neighborhood? Before choosing someone to interview, it can help to ask: who was involved in or affected by my topic?

Make a list of different groups or people connected to it. This could include:

- **People who experienced the event or situation** directly and their descendants.
- **People who were affected by it** (even if they weren't involved themselves) and their descendants.
- **People who deal professionally with the topic** that you are interested in (like teachers, activists, community leaders, etc.).

### Example

If your topic is about how a local school changed over time, you might consider:

- Former students
- Teachers or staff who worked there
- Parents of students
- School board members or local politicians
- Experts on the schooling system



Also ask yourself:



- Do I want different perspectives on the same event or time period?
- Or do I want to focus on one group, like women, immigrants, or people in a certain job — like teachers or farmers?

## How to find someone to interview?



If you do not already know someone who fits your topic, here are a few ways to find a good interview partner. The best option is often a mix of these methods.

- **Snowball method:** Tell your friends and family about your project — and ask them to spread the word to their friends and family and so on. With a bit of luck, someone will know the right person for you.
- **Gatekeeper method:** Talk to someone who has access to a group of people you're interested in. For example, a school principal might help you connect with retired teachers. Or the chairwoman/chairmen of a cultural organization or sports club can refer you to other members.
- **Direct search:** You can also look in local newspapers, phone books, or online. You could create a flyer with info about your project and who you're looking for and hang it up in your neighborhood. Posting an ad in a local paper is another option. You might also meet potential interview partners at places linked to your topic — like churches, mosques, synagogues, grocery stores, or local events like festivals.

## Reaching out to a potential interview partner



When you first contact someone, be ready to explain what your project is all about.

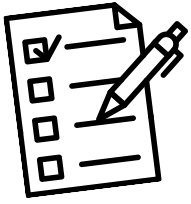
They might want to know:

- **What your project is about and why you are doing it.**  
→ Share your topic and the idea behind the project. Let them know if it's for school, a group project, etc.
- **Why you chose them specifically.**  
→ Explain what makes their perspective interesting or important for your project.
- **What the interview will be like.**  
→ Let them know how long the interview take place (for example, 15–20 minutes or 30–45 minutes).  
→ Ask if they agree to being recorded (video or audio). If not, you can just take notes.
- **What will happen with the interview.**  
→ Tell them where and how you will use their stories — in a school paper, an article, a booklet, an exhibition, etc. Will it be published on a website, shown at a community event, or printed in a local newspaper?



Some people might not want their name to be used. If it works with your project, you can offer to keep them anonymous. For example, instead of naming them, you can say something like "a woman born in 1947" or use a code name. You just have to make sure to explain it in your final project.

## Preparing for the interview



If you have found interview partners and agreed on a time and place for the interview, take some time to prepare for it. Remember that it is a sign of respect if you show the interviewees that you are genuinely interested in their stories and have invested time and effort to investigate their story.



### ✦ Do some background research

It is helpful to collect some information about the time period / event / topic you want to ask about, for example via the method of archival research. This will help you:

- Better understand what your interview partner is talking about
- Ask more informed and respectful questions.

### ✦ Prepare your questions

In oral history, the goal is to let the person speak freely about their memories.

Still, preparing some questions in advance is useful to guide the conversation and to help if there are pauses or the person needs encouragement. Tips for asking good questions:

Try to avoid ❌	Try to use ✅
<p><b>Leading questions</b></p> <p>For example: "How bad did you feel when X happened?"</p>	<p><b>Open questions</b></p> <p>For example: "How did you feel when X happened?"</p>
<p><b>Yes/No questions</b></p> <p>For example: "Did you think that was a good change?"</p>	<p><b>Open questions</b></p> <p>For example: "What did you think about that change?"</p>
<p><b>More than one question at the time</b></p> <p>For example: "What happened and what did you think about it?"</p>	<p><b>Questions focusing on one thing at the time</b></p> <p>For example: "Can you tell me about what happened?" "What did you think about it?"</p>

You can prepare some topic-related questions such as:

- "Can you tell me about your childhood?"
- "How were festivals celebrated in the past?"
- "What did tradition mean in your family?"

And a few follow-up questions to keep the conversation flowing such as:

- "Can you tell me more about that?"
- "What did this mean to you?"

## Carrying out the interview



The following tips can help you carry out an interview that's pleasant for both you and your interviewee, and that brings you closer to your goal of learning more about your cultural heritage topic.



### ★ Thank the interviewee

Before you start asking questions, thank the interviewee for taking the time and being open to share their memories with you.

### ★ Ask (again) for permission to record

- Even if you already agreed to have an audio or video recording of the interview, ask the interviewee if they still agree.
- You can start recording only and only after you receive the explicit permission of the interviewee.
- If the interviewee does not agree to be recorded, only take notes.

### ★ Listen actively and empathetically

- Show that you are listening by nodding, smiling, or saying things like “mhmm” or “I see.”
- Try to understand your interviewee's experience and how they feel about it. To make sure you understand their point of view, you can gently ask for confirmation:  
“Just to check if I understood correctly, [REPHRASE THEIR COMMENT], or did I misunderstand?”

### ★ Stay calm and patient

- Let the person take their time.
- Don't interrupt.
- Don't talk too much – give them space to speak.
- Focus on their story – not your own opinion.

### ★ Be sensitive and respectful

- Some memories might be painful, emotional, or deeply personal. For this reason, there might be topics that the interviewee do not want to talk about. Do not push them in this case.
- Even things that seem small to you might be very meaningful to the other person.
- Let them lead the way and decide how much they want to share.

## ✦ Use personal objects if they want

Some people like to bring photos, items, or documents that help them remember or talk about their past. These can make the interview more vivid and meaningful.



### After the interview

Once the interview has ended and you have left the venue, take a moment to reflect about it and write down your thoughts:

- What impression did you get from the interviewee?  
Were they tense or relaxed? What was the reason for that?
- How did you feel during and after the interview ?  
Were you tense or relaxed? What was the reason for that?  
How do you feel now?  
How was your relationship with the interviewee?  
Did you get on well? Was it tense? If so, why?
- What were the highlights of the interview? Why were these highlights?
- How fruitful was the interview? Did you learn something? A lot? Only a little?
- How do you evaluate the interview?  
Was it worth the work?  
What could you improve, e.g. in the preparation of the next interview?
- Where do the interview results take you?  
How does the interview influence your research?





## Toolbox 2 : Interviews

### **TOOL 3: Interview Checklist**

This checklist will guide you through each stage of planning and conducting interviews related to cultural heritage. It ensures the process is meaningful, respectful, and well-documented.

### **TOOL 4: Interview Report (from preparation to analysis)**

This tool will help you organize everything needed for an interview, from preparation to documentation, including note-taking. It keeps all relevant information about one interviewee in a single place, making your work more efficient and organized.

### **TOOL 5: Interview Question Guide**

This tool will help you prepare and conduct interviews as part of your oral history research. It will help you collect personal stories and knowledge about local culture and heritage directly from community members.

### **TOOL 6: Consent Form Interview**

Ask your interviewees to sign this form before you start the interview. It confirms that they agree to take part in your project and share their story. It will help you get their permission and show respect for their rights.

## 3.2 Archival Research



### WHAT DOES "ARCHIVES" MEAN?

Archives are important institutions of memory and provide source material that is indispensable for reconstructing and preserving the history, identity and development of a particular place or community.

In addition to people's memories (as in oral history), there are also many written traces of the past: letters, photos, newspapers, documents, school records or association documents. These are often stored in archives - special places where such documents are kept and protected. Archival research is important because it adds an objective perspective to personal experiences and individual viewpoints. It may turn out that people's memories are not supported by objective (or more objective) artifacts found in archives. This, in turn, provides an interesting starting point for critically examining one's own history.

### Where can I find historical documents?

There are many different places for your research and many different types of archives. Depending on your topic, you can visit local archives, libraries, church archives, or take a look at online archives. Each type of archive holds different kind of sources, so it helps to know where what is.



#### Town or municipal archives

There you can find old population registers, building plans, school records, newspapers, etc. They are perfect if you want to learn about the history of your town, a specific neighborhood, or a local event.



#### Church archives

Church Archives are a great place for learning about people and families from the past. There you will find baptism, marriage and death or burial records. These archives are especially helpful if you are researching family history or local traditions.



#### Association archives / local history societies

Often these are smaller but very helpful archives, mostly run by local clubs or historians. This is the ideal place to find photos, minutes or commemorative publications from the town / district / region you are in. If you are looking into how a sports club, school, or a local group developed over time, this is a great place to start.



### Libraries with a regional focus

Most libraries have more than just books. Here you can find old newspapers or special collections on local history - and, of course, books. Even if you are not sure what exactly it is you are looking for, librarians can help you.



### Online platforms

A lot of archives are now available online, which makes research much easier, especially if you can not visit in person. Some useful websites include:

Belgium	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State Archives of Belgium: <a href="https://www.arch.be/index.php?l=en">https://www.arch.be/index.php?l=en</a></li> <li>• The KBR, Royal Library of Belgium: <a href="https://www.kbr.be/en/">https://www.kbr.be/en/</a></li> <li>• Online Archives of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium: <a href="https://historicalarchives.fine-arts-museum.be/index.php/?sf_culture=en">https://historicalarchives.fine-arts-museum.be/index.php/?sf_culture=en</a></li> <li>• Archiefpunt, private archives and collections in Flanders and Brussels: <a href="https://archiefpunt.be/">https://archiefpunt.be/</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.archivportal-d.de">www.archivportal-d.de</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de">www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de</a></li> </ul>
Hungary	Poland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.hungaricana.hu">www.hungaricana.hu</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.adt.arcanum.com">www.adt.arcanum.com</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.fortepan.hu">www.fortepan.hu</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.mapire.eu">www.mapire.eu</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.nac.gov.pl/">https://www.nac.gov.pl/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://archiwa.gov.pl/poznaj/projekty/zosia-2/">https://archiwa.gov.pl/poznaj/projekty/zosia-2/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/">https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.wroclaw.ap.gov.pl/sezam">https://www.wroclaw.ap.gov.pl/sezam</a></li> </ul>
Serbia	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State Archives of Serbia: <a href="https://arhivsrbijske.rs/en">https://arhivsrbijske.rs/en</a></li> <li>• The National Library of Serbia: <a href="https://nb.rs/en/digital-services/">https://nb.rs/en/digital-services/</a></li> </ul>	

## What can you find in the archives?

The archives contain a wide variety of sources on events, memories or people. These sources are like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle - together with interviews and your observations, they provide a more complete picture of the local cultural heritage. The documents that you find in archives include for example

- Photos of former neighborhoods, events, streets or festivals
- Personal writings - such as diaries, letters or memoirs from people who lived during a certain time
- Articles and reports about events, issues, or achievements
- Plans or documents relating to buildings or properties - great if you are researching a specific house, street, or structure
- Stories about daily life, important events, or changes over the years e.g. in school chronicles or club histories

Primary Source	Secondary Source
<p>Material that contains firsthand accounts of events and that was created by someone who was there when the event happened. Primary sources give direct evidence about the past – like a window into history.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A letter or diary</li> <li>• Photos or videos</li> <li>• A newspaper from that day</li> <li>• Official records</li> <li>• An interview with someone who experienced it</li> </ul>	<p>A secondary source is something that was made later by someone who did not necessarily experience the event directly. It talks about or explains primary sources or historical events.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A history book</li> <li>• A documentary</li> <li>• A biography</li> </ul>



## Doing archival research



### ✦ 1. Preparation : Define Your Focus

- What do I want to know? Formulate a clear research question
- What do I want to find out specifically? Narrow down your topic
- List keywords: Names, places, dates, themes, or events to guide your search

### ✦ 2. Start the Research

- Which collections come into question?
- Have a look online: Are there any digital collections?
- Write to the archive: a detailed and precise request will help you further

### ✦ 3. Visit the Archive / Inspect the Holdings

- With digital archives, the effort is much less, you can usually find what you are looking for after a short search, view it directly and write down everything important or make direct copies if necessary.
- If you go to an archive on site, you have to pay attention to a few things:
  - Make an appointment with the archive in question
  - Take writing materials, cell phone or laptop with you (always ask beforehand what is allowed!)
  - Pay attention to the rules on site: no bags in the reading room, no eating/drinking
  - Remember to take your ID with you

### ✦ 4. Evaluate the documents

- Check what is allowed: take notes or scans/photos
- Write down keywords
- Where does the document come from? Always make sure to write down the source
- The documents are often in old language or spelling - feel free to ask for help, that's what the staff on site are there for & will certainly be happy to help

So, if you have a relevant question and have found a document in an archive that could help you answer it, what should you do next?

### 1. Write down basic information

Who wrote the document and when and where was it written?

What type of document is it (e.g. speech, letter, law, etc) and could it be linked to a local event or topic?

### 2. Summarize the content

Write down briefly and objectively what the document is about. Focus on the main points to have a good summary to continue to work with. It is important that you use your own words and do not copy the executive summary or the abstract. This will make you better remember the document and its content and use it for your research.

### 3. Explain the (local) historical context

Take a look at what was happening at the time the text was written? What historical or local events, traditions, changes or topics play a role and influenced this document?

### 4. Recognize the Intention, Purpose and Audience

Why was the document created and what was the author trying to achieve with it?

Was this source meant to inform, remind, warn, or preserve something?

Try to figure out who the intended audience of this source was and why it was created for this place.

### 5. Interpretation and significance

What does this document reveal about the time or place? Are any people, places, or traditions mentioned and what insights does it offer into community values, memory, or identity? How does the document help you with your research question?

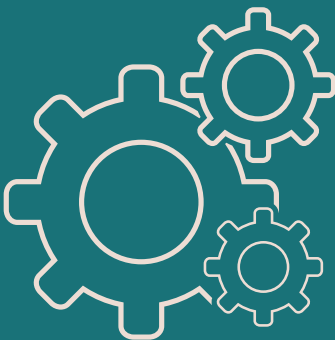




### Tips

- It is always a good advice to **talk to the staff**. They know the collection best, can guide your search and help navigate collections. People in libraries are always very helpful, so do not be shy asking them for their advice!
- Try to **collect more than one resource** on a given subject. If you are investigating an article with references to other works or quotations, take a look at them as well. If there are secondary sources that refer to a primary source, check those as well.
- If you are working with a scientific paper **check the reference list** for other sources that may help your research. You can usually find these references in the same archive.
- **Take good notes** so you can accurately cite documents and make sure to include document names, call numbers, and page references for citations.
- **Be careful with the pieces**, many of them are fragile or unique.
- **Call ahead or email before visiting**, sometimes some materials require special access or preparation.
- **Plan ahead** and manage your time. Archive work can be very time-consuming and is labor intensive.

## Toolbox 3 : Archival Research



### TOOL 7: Archive Visit Log

This tool will help you keep track of the documents you will consult during your archival research. It records key information to ensure your investigation stays organized, traceable, and focused on your goal. It will also help you properly cite your sources.

### TOOL 8: Archival Research Checklist

This tool will help you explore and analyze local cultural heritage by investigating historical records, documents, photographs, newspapers, maps, and other archival materials. It provides a checklist of key steps to follow before, during, and after your archival investigation, ensuring your research is well-organized and effective.

### TOOL 9: Archival Document Analysis

This tool will help you analyze and reflect on individual archival documents. It is designed to be used together with the Archive Visit Log. It will guide you through key questions on content, context, and interpretation to develop a critical understanding of each document's relevance to your cultural heritage research.

### 3.3. Field visits



Next to interviews and archival research, field visits are a good method to research your cultural heritage. A field visit is nothing more than a visit to a place that is important to the cultural heritage issue that you would like to investigate.



It allows you to observe and experience heritage directly. It can be visiting a historical site, a monument, a church, a public square, a museum or even participating in some traditions. A field visit is like being a detective, an artist, a storyteller, and a historian... all at once! You go out into your local community to discover, observe, listen, and feel the spirit of a place.

A field visit helps you to:

- Explore your surroundings with a new perspective.
- Connect with real-world places that represent history, memory, and identity.
- Ask questions and document what you see, hear, and feel.
- Compare what you see on site with other sources of information like books, articles or interviews.
- Take photos, videos, or notes that you can use later in your presentations or reports.



#### EXAMPLES OF TOPICS THAT CAN BE BETTER UNDERSTOOD THROUGH FIELD RESEARCH

Theme	Possible Field Visit
Democracy	Protest sites, voting centers, murals on rights
Multiculturalism	Ethnic neighborhoods, interfaith sites
Migration	Train stations, border crossings, reception areas
Women's Heritage	Homes or statues of female leaders, feminist murals
Youth & Activism	Former youth centers, 90s rave or punk sites



## EXAMPLES OF FIELD VISIT SITES BY CATEGORY AND PURPOSE

Category	Examples of Sites	What to Explore / Questions to Ask	Linked Themes
<b>Historical Sites</b>	Old town square, castle ruins, medieval towers, old railway station	What is the story of this place? When was it built? How has it changed?	Identity, History, Urban Memory
<b>Religious Spaces</b>	Church, mosque, synagogue, monastery, prayer sites, etc.	What role did this place play in local life? What traditions are practiced?	Faith, Coexistence, Tradition
<b>Multicultural Neighborhoods</b>	Minority settlement, minority district, minority quarter	What cultures live(d) here? Are there traces of different languages or customs?	Multiculturalism, Inclusion
<b>Everyday Community Spaces</b>	Market, youth center, fountain, sports ground, community hall	How do people use this place today? Has it changed meaning over time?	Belonging, Daily Life, Generations
<b>Monuments &amp; Memory Sites</b>	War memorials, resistance plaques, statues, reconciliation monuments	Who is remembered here? What story does the monument tell or omit?	Democracy, Peacebuilding, Memory
<b>Industrial Heritage</b>	Abandoned factory, mine, power plant, workers' blocks	What work was done here? How did it shape the community?	Labor, Economy, Migration
<b>Cultural Institutions</b>	Library, theater, museum, cultural house, music school	What cultural expression was nurtured here? Who had access?	Art, Education, Cultural Rights
<b>Natural/Rural Sites</b>	Vineyard, shepherd hut, old mill, sacred tree or spring	What traditions or stories are tied to this landscape? How is it used now?	Nature, Rural Life, Beliefs
<b>Urban Expressions</b>	Graffiti walls, street art, protest murals, community garden	What messages are shared? Who are the artists? What is hidden or erased?	Youth Voice, Freedom, Resistance



## WHAT DO YOU DO AS A FIELD RESEARCHER?

But field research is much more than walking around at a given place. It is an investigation into your specific question related to your cultural heritage. You are visiting a spot or a site for a precise purpose. Here is some advice to help you know what to do before, during, and after your field research

“  
Places tell stories.  
Field visits help you  
hear them.”

### Before you visit a site

First, make sure you have a clear research question, otherwise you will not know what to pay attention to. Afterwards and before visiting your chosen site, take time to consider the following questions:

- Why is this site important for knowing more about your research question?
- What do you already know about this place? Have you done enough background research? (ask elders, check archives, find online stories or records...)
- Are there any local stories or traditions connected to this site?
- What are you curious to learn during the visit? Which aspects of the site are you interested in?
- Can you visit the entire site? Do you need specific access to some parts of the site? Are there people to call for asking permission?

### During your visit of a site

It was mentioned before: your field visit is part of your research process, so you have to make sure to record your experiences and insights. It helps a lot if you think of the most important questions before your visit so you can have them in mind when you visit the site.

- Observe and “feel” the site
  - Your first job is to open your eyes wide and look closely at everything around you.
  - Feel the atmosphere: is there something that immediately comes to your mind?
- Document your experiences so that you can remember later what you see, hear, smell and feel now.
  - Take pictures or sketch what you see. This is your chance to be a creative researcher! Don’t just record facts, express how the place made you feel.
  - Record sounds (bells, music, conversations) if relevant.
  - Do you notice something that stands out or surprises you?
  - Does your experience match your previous findings e.g. from interviews or archival research?
  - Take short notes that help you remember what you experience.
  - If possible, collect material that can help you remember – a leaf, a pebble, a berry...



- Speak with People – Locals, Guides, Elders
  - Politely ask local people questions. Be curious and respectful.
  - Talk to someone who works at the site (e.g., guide, cleaner, historian).
  - Ask open-ended questions: “What do you know about this place? Do you have a personal memory here? What makes this site important to you?”
  - Record the conversations if the people give their permission. If not, take notes.
  - Leave a comment or some other words of respect if there is a visitor’s book.



### After you have visited a site

- Reflect upon your experience: what surprised you? Which questions do you have?
- If relevant, discuss your observations in your team. Did other have the same experience?
- Compare your experiences and notes with existing research results. Do stories match or differ? What could be the reasons for it?
- What could you learn from the visit?
- How does the visit bring you closer to answering your research question?
- Are there still aspects that you need to find out?
- Select materials for the documentation, report and presentation: three to five of the best photos, key quotes and reflections.
- Prepare a short summary of what you have discovered and why it matters. Add your reflections, pictures, quotes from people that you have talked to, and a conclusion about what you have learned from your visit. Add how it contributes to answering your research question.

Field visits make cultural heritage real, relatable, and alive. As a youth researcher, you are not just learning about the past, you are helping shape how it will be understood in the future. The places you visit become evidence of memory, symbols of change, and voices of your community.

# Toolbox 4 : Field Visits



## **TOOL 10: Field Visit Planning Template**

This table will help you keep an overview of the field visits you plan and complete as part of your cultural heritage investigation. It will support you in organizing your visits, linking each one to your research goals, and reflecting on how your observations and experiences contribute to understanding your heritage topic as a whole.

## **TOOL 11: Field Visit Checklist**

This checklist will help you plan and carry out your field visits with confidence. It ensures you are well-prepared and don't forget anything before, during, or after the visit. Use it each time you visit a site in order to make sure you stay organized in your investigation.

## **TOOL 12: Field Observation Sheet**

This tool will help you observe and record what you will see, hear, smell and feel during a cultural heritage visit. It will guide you step by step to capture details, impressions, and conversations so your research reflects both the facts and the atmosphere that make the place special.

## **TOOL 13: Field Visit Reflection Template**

This reflection sheet will help you think about what you saw, felt, and learned during your field visit. It will guide you to connect your experience to your research question and choose the best photos, quotes, and ideas to include in your report or presentation.



# 4. Format of Reporting & Templates

## 4.1. Format of reporting



These guidelines are designed to support you in documenting your local cultural heritage in a clear, reflective, and impactful way. Each investigation will result in a report that will contribute to a broader understanding of cultural identity and community memory. The reports will be collected and compiled into National Reports.

Below you can find the suggested structure for your report:

1. **Introduction** (why this topic was chosen)
2. **Research Methods Used**
3. **Main Findings** (quotes, photos, maps)
4. **Reflections** (what they learned)
5. **References** (people, archives, documents)

### INTRODUCTION – WHY THIS TOPIC WAS CHOSEN

This section sets the context for your research.

- Explain why you or your group chose this specific cultural site, story, or practice.
- Share what you already knew about the topic and what made you curious to explore it more.
- Mention any personal, family, or community connection to the site or theme.

### RESEARCH METHODS USED

In this section, describe how you collected your information and what tools you used.

- What types of research did you do (interviews, field visits, archival research)?
- Who did you speak to or where did you go?
- Did you work alone or in a team?
- Include any challenges you encountered during the research.

Use short paragraphs to summarize the methods.



## MAIN FINDINGS - WHAT I DISCOVERED

This is the heart of your report, where you present your findings.

- Include stories, facts, and quotes from people you interviewed.
- Share any interesting images, sketches, or photos that support your findings.
- Describe what the heritage site or story means to the local people today.
- Organize by themes if needed (e.g., memory, tradition, identity).
- Add visuals and other material when possible.



## REFLECTIONS – WHAT I LEARNED

This section helps you think about how the research changed your perspective.

- What did you learn about your community or yourself?
- Was anything surprising or emotional?
- How can this heritage be preserved or better known?
- Which advice would you give to someone who wants to explore similar stories?



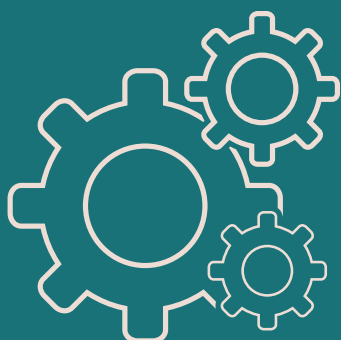
## REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In this section, you show who helped you and where your information came from.

- List the names of people interviewed and their roles.
- Mention institutions where you found photos or documents.
- Include websites, books, or archives consulted, journalist press releases, press clippings, etc.
- Thank anyone who supported you (e.g., teacher, librarian, parent, etc.).



# Toolbox 5 : Final Report



## **TOOL 14: Data Summary Sheet**

This tool will help you bring together everything collected during your field visits, interviews, and archive researches in one place. Use this sheet to summarize your key findings, identify main themes, and choose quotes or images that support your research question before writing your final report. Don't go too much into the details in this document.

## **TOOL 15: Final Report Template**

This report template will help you organize and present the results of your cultural heritage investigation. It will guide you step by step to explain why you chose your topic, how you carried out your research, what you discovered, and what you learned. It will also help you prepare your tour afterwards.

## 4.2. Templates

List of templates (see the “Youth Investigation: Explore Your Heritage - Templates” document)

<b>TOOL 1: Identify a Topic - Template</b> (Toolbox 1) .....	Appendix 1
<b>TOOL 2: Project Planning Sheet</b> (Toolbox 1) .....	Appendix 2
<b>TOOL 3: Interview Checklist</b> (Toolbox 2) .....	Appendix 3
<b>TOOL 4: Interview Report (from preparation to analysis)</b> (Toolbox 2) .....	Appendix 4
<b>TOOL 5: Interview Question Guide</b> (Toolbox 2) .....	Appendix 5
<b>TOOL 6: Consent Form Interview</b> (Toolbox 2) .....	Appendix 6
<b>TOOL 7: Archive Visit Log</b> (Toolbox 3) .....	Appendix 7
<b>TOOL 8: Archival Research Checklist</b> (Toolbox 3) .....	Appendix 8
<b>TOOL 9: Archival Document Analysis</b> (Toolbox 3) .....	Appendix 9
<b>TOOL 10: Field Visit Planning Template</b> (Toolbox 4) .....	Appendix 10
<b>TOOL 11: Field Visit Checklist</b> (Toolbox 4) .....	Appendix 11
<b>TOOL 12: Field Observation Sheet</b> (Toolbox 4) .....	Appendix 12
<b>TOOL 13: Field Visit Reflection Template</b> (Toolbox 4) .....	Appendix 13
<b>TOOL 14: Data Summary Sheet</b> (Toolbox 5) .....	Appendix 14
<b>TOOL 15: Final Report Template</b> (Toolbox 5) .....	Appendix 15

# 5. National Youth Heritage Investigations

## Overview

The Youth Heritage Investigations across partner countries highlight common patterns in how young people engage with cultural heritage. Despite different contexts and topics, heritage was consistently understood as a living and dynamic process connected to everyday life and community experiences.

The number of youth researchers involved varied across partner countries, reflecting different national approaches and capacities. In total, a minimum of 50 young researchers from five European countries were actively engaged in the investigation process, contributing to diverse perspectives and a rich understanding of cultural heritage across contexts.

The findings show that participatory and experiential methods, such as fieldwork, interviews, and storytelling, are highly effective in making heritage meaningful for young people, while also strengthening their critical thinking, engagement, and sense of ownership.

### Belgium

In Belgium, the investigation showed that cultural heritage can be explored through diverse perspectives, especially when participants come from different backgrounds and levels of prior knowledge. By focusing on villages and less visible aspects of heritage, young people discovered the value of local traditions, everyday objects, and community identity. The process highlighted the importance of gradual guidance, interactive methods, and teamwork in building confidence and engagement. Overall, the investigation confirmed that heritage becomes meaningful for young people when it is accessible, relatable, and connected to their immediate surroundings.



### Poland

In Poland, the investigation showed that heritage becomes most meaningful when it is rooted in local contexts, aligned with young people's personal interests, and supported by a structured research process. The diverse case studies confirmed that cultural heritage can be understood as a social resource encompassing architecture, everyday life, arts, and collective memory. The combination of youth autonomy and mentoring proved essential for achieving high-quality outcomes and offers a strong model for future project phases.





## Hungary

In Hungary, the investigation highlighted the importance of everyday cultural practices, such as music and dance, as key elements of heritage shaping community life and public spaces. The process enabled young people to rediscover familiar places and develop a stronger connection with their local environment. Although additional support is needed in the analytical phase, the flexible and experiential approach proved effective in engaging participants and deepening their understanding of heritage.



## Serbia

In Serbia, the investigation demonstrated that cultural heritage is best understood as a living and participatory process, closely connected to everyday life, urban space, and civic engagement. Through methods such as thematic tours, interviews, and storytelling, young people took an active role in interpreting heritage, developing a critical understanding of their city and identity. This approach confirms that the value of heritage lies in its ability to connect people, experiences, and contemporary social issues.



## Germany

In Germany, the investigation confirmed that young people can successfully engage in heritage research when provided with clear structure, guidance, and appropriate tools. The diversity of topics allowed participants to explore heritage from multiple perspectives, including historical, ecological, and social dimensions. The findings emphasize the importance of stronger support in topic selection and research methodology, while maintaining a balance between guidance and independence to ensure meaningful learning outcomes.



These investigations invite you to see heritage not as something locked in the past, but as a living story, one that breathes through your questions, grows with your curiosity, and takes new shape through the way you choose to explore and share it.



## 6. Conclusion

This guide is an invitation for you to see your world differently. Cultural heritage is not just something from the past, it is something you live every day, in your surroundings, your memories, and the people around you. By exploring it, you are not just learning, you are discovering your own story and your place in your community.

By talking to people, exploring archives, and visiting meaningful places, you start to see how different pieces come together to form a bigger picture. Remember there is no single truth. There are only perspectives, experiences, and stories that you can bring to life through your work.



Start with what excites you. Follow your curiosity. Ask questions, even difficult ones.

The more personal your journey is, the more meaningful your results will be.

In the end, this is not just about understanding heritage, it's about giving it a voice. Your voice. And through it, you have the power to share stories, connect people, and shape how your community is seen and remembered in the future.



*"Youth is not just the future, it is the driving force of change today." — Kofi Annan*