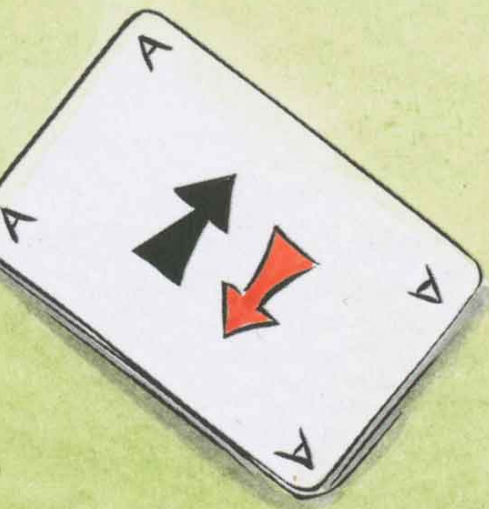


The Interpretive Guide

Sharing Heritage with People



Thorsten Ludwig



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The Interpretive Guide
Sharing Heritage with People

Bildungswerk
interpretation



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About HeriQ

HeriQ is an EU Leonardo project for the transfer of innovation. It is rooted in the earlier Leonardo project TOPAS (Training of Protected Area Staff) which aimed to define qualities and standards for heritage interpretation in Europe. Within TOPAS, in 2003, a pilot course 'Basic Interpretive Skills' was developed, and several courses to train and to certify heritage interpreters were run during the following years.

In Germany, three organisations joined in 2008 and agreed on criteria and competences based on TOPAS to connect heritage interpretation with learning for sustainability. This programme, called ParcInterp, has been recognised by UNESCO. In order to transfer the experiences of ParcInterp to other European countries, HeriQ was started in 2013.

HeriQ focuses on two aims:

- ⇒ to inspire interpreters to act as interpretive agents, setting up supportive networks for heritage interpretation for sustainability
- ⇒ to train and to certify interpretive guides who intend to share their heritage with participants.

This manual is intended to support the second aim.

HeriQ partner organisations are:

APARE – Association for Regional Action and Involvement, France
Bildungswerk interpretation, Germany
Heritage Interpretation Center, Bulgaria
Istituto Pangea Onlus, Italy
Mediterranean Centre of Environment, Greece
National Association for Small and Medium Business, Bulgaria

Introduction

Our European heritage is immense: from southern temples to northern fjords, and from the bird sanctuaries of the Danube to mysterious stone circles overlooking the Atlantic. This is our legacy. It assures us where we are coming from and it helps us to discover where we are heading.

Many Europeans, working as staff or as volunteers in protected areas, historic sites and museums or in zoos and botanical gardens, are dedicated to bringing our natural and cultural heritage to the fore and to look for better ways to manage our future. Heritage interpretation sets out to support them. As a worldwide approach, it empowers people to take ownership of their shared heritage, and to discover the 'sense of place' of the many precious sites on our European continent.

Heritage interpretation is deeply linked to the history of national parks. In 1957, the journalist Freeman Tilden wrote his seminal book *Interpreting Our Heritage* for the US National Park Service. In it he first defined heritage interpretation and laid down its principles. In Europe, since 2010, we have had our own organisation, the European Association for Heritage Interpretation, called Interpret Europe, in which professional interpreters share and develop their work.

Heritage interpretation uses a range of media but it is at its best when there is direct person-to-person contact. For that reason, interpretive guiding plays a prominent role. This manual is written for interpretive guides to use all over Europe. In tried and tested exercises to be completed by guides on their own, and with suggestions for self-evaluation and peer coaching, it supports interpretive guides in improving their skills in the four essential qualities of heritage interpretation.

Guides at natural and cultural heritage sites in different countries – in parks, zoos and botanical gardens, in castles, towns and museums – have helped to inspire the concepts that are distilled in this manual. We thank all of them and hope that these ideas will be appreciated and continuously improved.

*I'll interpret the rocks,
learn the language of flood,
storm and the avalanche.
I'll acquaint myself with the
glaciers and wild gardens and
get as near to the heart
of the world as I can.*

John Muir

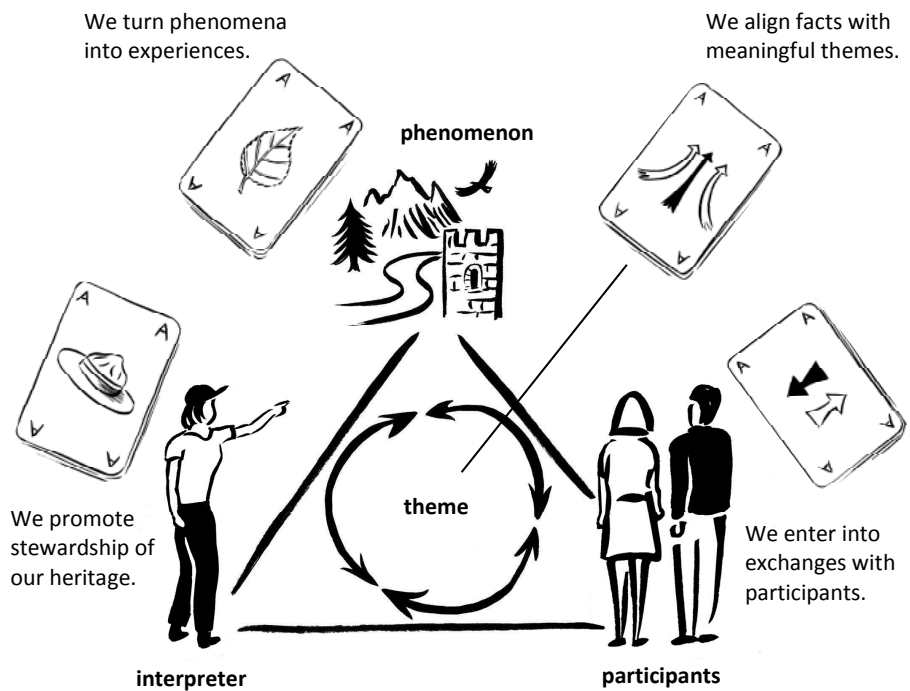
The four aces

There are lots of competences and quality criteria connected to heritage interpretation. But most of them are based on just four essential qualities.

These can be illustrated by the so-called interpretive triangle:

People don't change their lives based on data. They change it based on an experience, an intimate contact they have with somebody that they trust.

Alan AtKisson



The aim of any interpretive experience, e.g. an interpretive talk or walk, indoors or outdoors, is to bring life to the space between each of the corners of the triangle, while in the centre of the three corners a strong theme is located.

The four aces resulting from the four elements connected to the triangle – the interpreter, the phenomenon, the participants, and the theme – are:

- ⇒ to promote stewardship of our heritage
- ⇒ to turn phenomena into experiences
- ⇒ to enter into exchanges with participants
- ⇒ to align facts with meaningful themes

These four aces are basic qualities of any interpretive activity. Let's have a closer look at them.

Interpreters promote stewardship



*... protection through appreciation,
appreciation through understanding,
and understanding through
interpretation.*

Conrad Wirth

Becoming ambassadors

As interpretive guides, working in a protected landscape, a historic or cultural site, a museum or a zoo, or a botanical garden, we are stewards. The park ranger's hat on the playing card symbolises our care for all that we should appreciate and protect as our heritage, be it tangible as a Gothic cathedral or intangible as the Gregorian chant echoing in its vaults. To inspire participants by this global concern, and to let them experience its distinctive local expression, is an important aim of any interpretive activity.

Being personal

Our own personality does play a critical role in interpretive guiding – especially for guides, who have grown up in the area and whose lives are interwoven with their natural or cultural surroundings. Personal experiences are often more exciting than factual information for participants. And the impression we as guides leave with our participants contributes significantly to the success of an interpretive talk or walk.

Inspiration rather than instruction

Contemporary learning approaches highlight that, as interpretive guides, our task is not to be an instructor, a provider of bare information. We are facilitators, providing explanations, offering our participants new perspectives, being ready to share experiences and to encourage them to discover more for themselves. In our conversations, we must also be ready to put our own perspectives in question.

Being familiar with different roles

In order to do so, we must be able to play different roles. Interpretive guides argue, listen and mediate, they explain, inspire and encourage, they can raise tension or encourage relaxation, and they always support their participants in their wonderment at new revelations. They create a little piece of theatre, a memorable drama that reinforces messages and memories.

Exercise: Playing different roles

We write one topic on each of ten facilitation cards; terms could be 'light', 'noise', 'start' etc. Then we prepare several paper hats by writing one role on each, e.g. 'teacher', 'mediator', 'narrator' etc. One of us draws a 'topic card', chooses a 'role hat' and presents the topic involving the others in the role relating to that hat. After a while, someone else takes another hat, playing a new role until all the hats have been used. There are several possibilities of playing with the hats.



Overcoming weaknesses

A hallmark and a necessary requirement for any successful work is to be aware of one's weaknesses, to deal openly with them, but also to understand them as challenges for learning. In every interpretive walk, we should seek to achieve a single objective – and to do a self-assessment, immediately after the walk, of how well we achieved this objective.

Interpreters turn phenomena into experiences



*Do not try to satisfy your vanity
by teaching a great many things.
Awaken people's curiosity.
It is enough to open minds;
do not overload them.*

*Put there just a spark.
If there is some good
inflammable stuff,
it will catch fire.*

Anatole France

Helping objects and incidents come to life

At the core of any interpretive activity are enjoyable first-hand experiences with authentic heritage elements. To underline their value, we call these elements phenomena. We can perceive all phenomena with our senses whether they are tangible objects such as trees, paintings or houses or intangible sensations such as dances, songs or sunrises. As interpretive guides, we try to raise topics only where and when they can be seen or perceived, and we point them out as individual items. For instance, we don't deal with Gothic churches in a generic way by looking at one of them just as a representative of a period of architecture, we always relate to a particular example that we can see, to its specific history and to its specific qualities.

Therefore the interpretation of a phenomenon in, for example, a nature reserve will be different in spring and in autumn, and it will differ in the sunshine and in the rain. Experiencing a site or object first-hand is the ace of spades in the pack of any interpretive activity. Even a ruined building or a damaged artefact which is found by chance during an interpretive walk is usually a more powerful experience than a perfect counterpart or image in your pocket. The more a guide is familiar with coming upon unexpected (but with experience perhaps predictable) objects or events, the better s/he will be.



Exercise: Highlighting the uniqueness of a phenomenon

We split into four groups, each approaching one of four phenomena that look quite similar at first glance, e.g. four trees by the roadside of similar age and growth. Each group investigates the characteristics of its chosen phenomenon in comparison with the others. At the end, each group presents its phenomenon, clearly expressing its own 'personality'.

Hidden excitements

A flash of lightning splits a pine tree and a fungus spreads along the crack on one side. The group which is led towards the other side of the tree is not able to describe its condition as important. However, they soon discover the damaged area with surprise. Such revelations can also be created using surprising sounds or odours. They make an interpretive walk very appealing.



Exercise: Revealing secrets

At a heritage site, e.g. in an open-air museum, each of us looks for phenomena that embrace 'secrets'. Then one of us guides the others to such a phenomenon, building up expectation and suddenly revealing the hidden feature as dramatically as possible.

Selecting from a variety of stepping stones

With the interpretive triangle in mind, we speak figuratively of stepping stones when it comes to communicative elements that help to give our participants access to the phenomena. Any explanation can be such a stepping stone, and on a field trip or a museum visit with experts, explanations may be sufficient. But for an activity that is aimed at a general audience, detailed explanations are generally not suitable. For that reason, interpretive guides equip themselves with a broad variety of stepping stones, each suited to the group as well as to the phenomenon.

Methodological stepping stones to the phenomena

- ⇒ explanation
- ⇒ description (observation)
- ⇒ narrative (adventure yarn, fairy tale, legend, joke)
- ⇒ expression in a performing art (poetry, rhyme, song, tune)
- ⇒ stimulating sensory perception
- ⇒ exciting imagination (e.g. from rock or tree shapes)
- ⇒ demonstration
- ⇒ illustration (photo, drawing, statistics)
- ⇒ investigation (experiment)
- ⇒ game (also role play)



At this point, it becomes clear that different stepping stones appeal more to some participants than to others. This important factor, which we will underpin later, is also influenced by the choice of words.

Anchoring phenomena in our participants' world

Rhetorical stepping stones to phenomena

comparison	This pottery is as thin as parchment.
example	On this trading route e.g. limestone has been transported.
word picture	These ancient pots have big ears.
shift in perspective	If we were the charcoal-burners ...
humanisation	... and then the bark beetle thinks ...
contrast	Some worked at home, others spent all day in this factory.
apparent contradiction	Dead wood is alive!
quotation	Poverty is the parent of crime, as Aristotle supposedly said.

Exercise: Approaching a phenomenon via stepping stones

We write the stepping stones listed in the previous two boxes on single facilitation cards, look for an attractive heritage object and set up the cards between us and this object. After a while, everyone chooses one card and, as soon as all cards have been taken, each in turn explains the example of a stepping stone s/he chose; e.g. gully in the rock ⇒ quotation ⇒ Constantly dripping water wears away the stone (Chinese proverb).



Looking at the whole picture

Experiencing original objects or sites as unique doesn't mean failing to put them in a wider context. Sometimes even global references make sense (pp. 20-21). And using these as an example of stewardship of our heritage is acceptable as long as the interpretation stays focused on the phenomenon.



Talks and walks

When we reveal some of the secrets of a phenomenon, staying at the same spot for five to ten minutes, e.g. at the entrance to an old fortress, we call this an interpretive talk. Interpretive talks are at the core of guiding. Well-attended exhibitions and popular sites where new visitors continuously arrive provide good chances to become familiar with this approach; e.g. by giving a similar interpretive talk at the same place at each hour. Interpretive walks (p. 22) consist of several interpretive talks. All approaches to personal interpretation should never be a monologue; they should always involve the participants.

Interpreters enter into an exchange



*As long as I am speaking,
I will not experience anything new.*

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach

Being aware of the advantages of guiding

The first principle of interpretation says that we need to relate phenomena to the personality of our participants. For this purpose, it is helpful to know something about them and their background and previous experiences. To be able to find this out and respond to it is one of the great advantages a guide has over an interpretive panel or a multimedia installation.

Reaching participants

To achieve dialogue, we first need to get in touch with our participants. Remembering the interpretive triangle, we can use the idea of the stepping stones again – but now we are talking about stepping stones between guides and participants.

Stepping stones from guides to participants

- ⇒ comprehensibility (language and content)
- ⇒ eye contact (also examining reactions)
- ⇒ facing participants and using appropriate body language
- ⇒ humour
- ⇒ open-mindedness (e.g. willingness to deviate from personal ideas)
- ⇒ introducing each other and using the names of participants
- ⇒ listening to learn more (So – you're here quite often?)
- ⇒ detecting and picking up similar interests and views
- ⇒ making reference to friends or groups linked to participants
- ⇒ making reference to the participants' own world (work, family, hobbies etc.)

Interpretive guides have an impact through what they say and how they say it. Guiding is about communication and speaking in public. Both can be trained in general public-speaking courses in some countries, e.g. at a community college. Two such exercises are shown as examples.



Exercise: Expressing one's mood

We take a neutral statement (e.g. In autumn many birds go south) and prepare small cards, each with one adjective describing a mood (e.g. depressed, shy, arrogant etc.). Then, each participant draws a card and speaks that same statement expressing the respective mood, while all others try to work out which term is meant.

Exercise: Portraying a scene with words

We develop a simple story (e.g. walking through a landscape) by actions (e.g. packing a backpack, looking for directions etc.) and write the single scenes on numbered cards. All participants will receive one of these cards. In turns, they present their scene by body language; no sounds are allowed. In the end, the story is reconstructed and the group considers which scene had been expressed best and how.



Starting a conversation

Even if some attention has now been paid to how a presentation can be made more appealing, if one ace in the pack of a guided walk is conversation, the guide needs to get quickly from 'giving a lecture' to a real exchange with participants. A group that has settled into the role of being only receivers is difficult to 'bring back to life'.

Immersing in the world of our participants

An exchange can result from common experiences that raise issues or from questions posed by the guide. Open-ended questions are particularly helpful. Open-ended questions are those that provoke different answers depending on the participants' own experience, rather than just yes or no, e.g. Of which other regions of Europe does this landscape remind you? The various answers often provide good opportunities for a conversation.

Exercise: Asking open-ended questions

We form four groups, each choosing a phenomenon and preparing to address this phenomenon:

- ⇒ one focus question (answer requires direct contact with the phenomenon); e.g. What does the shard of this pot sound like if you tap it?
- ⇒ one transfer question (which asks for connections into the participants' world); e.g. Where did you see such pottery before?
- ⇒ one process question (seeking to find out how something could happen); e.g. Under what conditions can such pots endure for a long time?
- ⇒ one evaluation question (which needs to elicit an opinion); e.g. Should buried pottery be dug up, or should it stay where it is?

After that, one of each group starts a dialogue with everyone, discreetly incorporating the four questions. After this has been done, we compare what we found out.



Closed questions have only one determined answer (e.g. What is the name of this architectural style? Does anyone know?). They should be used only rarely because they tend to result in formal teaching but, of course, the answers could be used to provide explanation.

Involving the whole person

Interpretive guides always address head, heart and hand. What people can empathise with, and what they say and do by themselves, helps them to absorb the experience more deeply than when they just hear or see.

The first stage of activation can be a demonstration where individual participants are involved (Could you please grab this branch?). To be needed is something appealing to most people. Another incentive is to search for something, e.g. an endangered plant or an architectural style element.

The second stage, real participation, is going one step further. It provides the opportunity to determine the progress of an activity. This notion of participation, which plays a very important role in contemporary learning, has been emphasised as essential for heritage interpretation for more than 50 years. If people participate, they are more wholly involved. For instance: Visitors to the ruins of a Roman villa show their interest in a particular aspect of the life of a family, and the guide immediately introduces them to the facilities related to it.

One challenge of participation can be that the course of an interpretive activity cannot be predicted in detail. On the next page we explain how to deal with this uncertainty.

*It is only with the heart
that you can see rightly;
what is essential
is invisible to the eye.*

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Interpreters align facts to meaningful themes



Scientific facts need delightful stories to win people's affection.

In this case, the myth is not there to compete with the truth but to make connections with what matters to people and what makes them dream.

Denis Guedj

The interpretive theme

If we watch experienced interpreters doing their job, we are impressed by the ease and the conciseness of their interpretive talks and walks. The secret lies in the skill of condensing long stories into compelling themes. Themes are one of the most important elements of interpretation. They connect the three cornerstones of the interpretive triangle, they arouse inner images and they give the event a clear direction in a stimulating way. But they also turn upside down some traditional processes known from formal education.

Searching for meaningful theme statements

When preparing a walk, some guides tend to focus on topics and facts. In interpretation, this focus is shifted to themes and meanings. This doesn't mean that facts are not important – they are. But they are organised in a different way: i.e. around a theme. That way they can be remembered much better. A theme represents a larger truth that relates to the nature of the phenomenon as well as to the background and experience of the participants.

Examples for theme statements

- ⇒ This tiny seed contains a huge tree. (Pine seed)
- ⇒ The farmer's wife never hung this dress in a wardrobe. (Tattered dress)
- ⇒ This basket needed little material – but a lot of skill. (Old woven basket)
- ⇒ Here we are standing at the bottom of an ancient sea. (Sandstone slab)
- ⇒ This marginal land makes survival a challenge. (Barren wasteland)

Themes are one-sentence stories that can resonate with the experiences of our participants. As in the examples above, they relate directly to the phenomena (if they don't form the basis of an interpretive walk as a main theme; see p. 22).

How themes work

Let us take the tiny seed – which contains what will be a huge tree – as an example. A tree is a phenomenon: we can see, hear, touch, smell and taste it. What we can't experience is the process of growth; we assume that this is a fact. However, to know that a tree might grow doesn't affect us very deeply. But as soon as we realise that something inconspicuous grows to something impressive, this can have a deeper meaning for us. We are familiar with this pattern from our own lives, and it triggers emotions and values – in this case perhaps admiration and the idea of self-development. As a result, that simple seed suddenly becomes meaningful to us, and we feel connected to it.

Phenomen	Fact	Meaning
This pine seed	will grow	from something inconspicuous to something impressive.



Exercise: Distinguish facts from meanings

We spread out in an area, each of us looking for a small object which arouses some reaction in us. We collect our objects on a piece of cloth and look at them, considering the question: What is that? Then one after another passes her/his object around, explaining its meaning to herself/himself (e.g. a chewed feather from a bird which aroused compassion). Together we point out the difference between the fact (What is that?) and the meaning (What does it arouse in me?).

Detecting universals

Meanings are individual in the first place, but some of them are shared by almost all people. Those are called universal concepts – like birth and death, or like freedom and captivity. Themes including deep frames that are universals almost always work. They trigger something in everybody, even if it might not be the same meaning for each person. But universals are also somehow interchangeable and therefore tend to be superficial, especially if we use the same universals too often, and if we don't make sure that their significance, their specific meaning for the original site or object, is obvious.

Animating the inanimate

For many of our participants, plants (especially flowering plants) are more attractive than stones, and animals (especially the young) are more attractive than plants – while people (especially children) are most attractive to the majority of us. Less attractive phenomena get more attention if they are connected to something more attractive. For example, a pottery shard tends to become much more attractive if there is an exciting story about how it has been discovered or what the pot represented in an ancient culture.

Exercise: Connecting objects with stories

In one bag, we collect as many everyday objects as our group has members. We sit down in a circle, and someone takes the bag. S/he takes out one of the objects at random, telling a story that makes it appealing to the group. In this way, the bag is passed from one to the other. If someone can't come up with a story s/he puts the object in the centre and takes another one. The objects in the centre will be animated last. Attention: In interpretation we never invent stories that aren't supported by facts unless we explicitly emphasize that.



Understanding themes as lighthouses

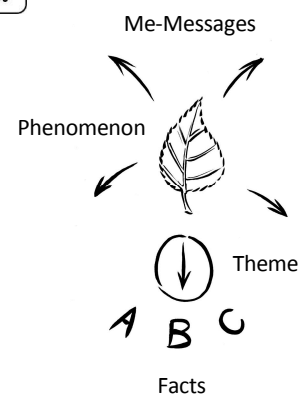
The theme doesn't only support us by facilitating the relationship between our participants and our phenomena, it is also an organisation tool. Like a lighthouse that guides a ship's course, the theme is the only element which is not open to change during an interpretive talk. This allows participants to experience the phenomenon, expressing its meaning to them without the risk of losing the focus. Using the metaphor of the lighthouse again: Due to winds and currents we rarely approach a lighthouse in a direct line, but we always keep it in sight.

Exercise: Meanings in a nutshell

In our surroundings, each of us looks for a phenomenon which particularly impresses her/him and takes about ten minutes to draw it on a facilitation card. After that, two participants join, exchange their cards, visit each other at their phenomena and describe what it was that they have been impressed by. Then they separate for another ten minutes, sitting down and summing up what they have heard in one single short and snappy sentence. After that, all of us meet again, guiding each other from phenomenon to phenomenon without talking, just saying these single sentences. Finally we consider which sentence could be best used as a theme for an interpretive talk.

Exercise: Discovering themes through me-messages

All of us face one phenomenon and consider what it might tell us about itself. We write these 'me-messages' (e.g. from a huge rock: A glacier brought me here) on slips of paper and place them at the appropriate site around the phenomenon. Then we consider what me-message is most suitable to be turned into a theme, which compelling story could be told by that means and which facts could support that story.



Changing formations

Forming the triangle on site

In interpretation, the arrangement of the group at authentic sites and objects is called 'formation', and there are about half-a-dozen such formations. The most important principle is: The interpreter should not stand between the phenomenon and the participants – unless s/he deliberately conceals the phenomenon in order to reveal it later. In most cases, it is best if phenomenon, interpreter and participants form the interpretive triangle which is explained on p. 8.

Offering an appropriate formation to the group

Participants need time and space to arrive at the respective phenomenon and to find their place. On the walk, the interpreter usually walks a few steps ahead, waits until the group has taken up its position and then searches for the best location for herself/himself. This is a process the group would usually not notice. Just rarely – if the group is at risk or if the formation is not achieved, although it is very important for the interpretation – the interpreter needs to direct her/his participants, e. g. to step back, to line up or to form a circle. An appropriate formation is an important criterion for the selection of a phenomenon.

Using different formations

All formations have advantages and disadvantages. The linear formation (Fig. 1) has a lot of disadvantages, but it may be inevitable – for example on a path crossing a hillside with a stunning view, on a balcony looking over a town, on a jetty from which crabs can be seen below the water surface, or at the foot of a cliff where fossils in a rock wall can be detected. If possible, in such cases the group should be briefed in advance at a more suitable location.

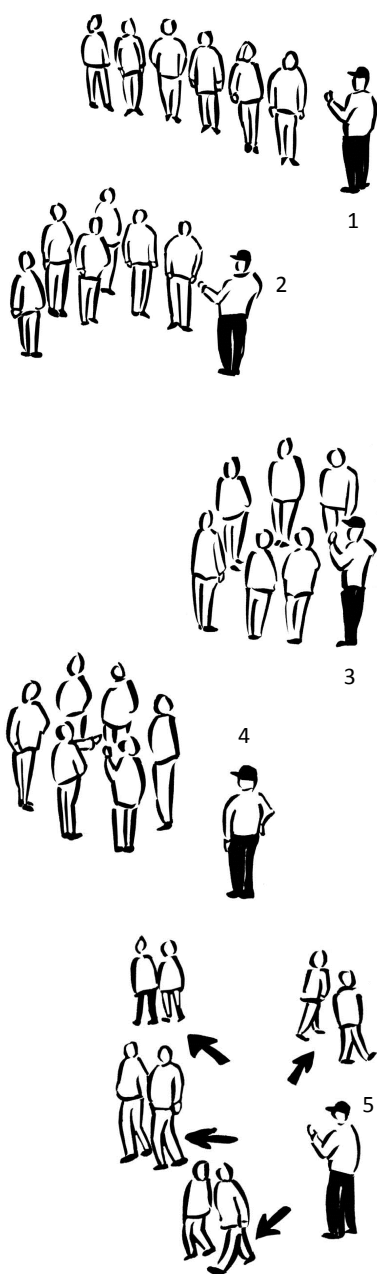
No formation should dominate an interpretive walk. However, the so-called didactic formation (Fig. 2) often does. Here, the group is focused on the interpreter which simply results from the fact that the interpreter is talking. If s/he steps beside the clearly seen phenomenon, the group will form the third corner of the triangle by itself.

One way of changing the focus from the interpreter to other group members is to use the conference formation (Fig. 3). This results from a conversation in which the phenomenon is part of or, where possible, is the focus. This formation will automatically evolve from bringing a small object, e. g. a prehistoric arrowhead, to the front.

If the interpreter is pulling back from the circle, facilitating a conversation from the back, the tutorial formation (Fig. 4) will be the result.

Finally, it is possible to divide the group by giving the participants different tasks (e.g. searching or monitoring), asking them to report afterwards: the individual task formation (Fig. 5).

Formations are influenced by the space available and by the situation on site (stream, clearing etc.). The larger the group, the fewer opportunities the interpreter has. As we said, during each talk, it is good to change the formation at least once. With the exercise Revealing secrets (p. 10) this can be achieved.



Using props sparingly

Consciously selecting props

There are countless ways to 'conjure' required objects from bags and backpacks during an interpretive walk. The most important selection criterion is that they support the phenomenon and its theme – and not just come to the fore for their own sake.

Because props are more reliable than the phenomenon on site, this is a constant hazard. For instance, holding on to panels set up in front of sites or objects can give an orientation (if panels contain maps), but it can also distract from the immediate encounter with places and their phenomena.

Props can create nice effects, but they should be used with caution. Not everything that is packed in case of an emergency needs to be pulled out, and not every entertaining effect on the group really supports the phenomenon.



Props

- ⇒ make something more visible (e.g. binoculars, magnifying glasses)
- ⇒ frame the field of view (e.g. small photo frames)
- ⇒ focus the view (e.g. pipes to look through)
- ⇒ enable new perspectives (e.g. mirrors)
- ⇒ confuse the senses (e.g. blindfolds, ear plugs)
- ⇒ mark or connect (e.g. flags, strings)
- ⇒ offer insights (e.g. knives for cutting or lifting bark)
- ⇒ explain features (e.g. functional model charts)
- ⇒ make processes more noticeable (e.g. models, historical images)
- ⇒ expand experiences (e.g. products such as resin, cider, flour)
- ⇒ stimulate the imagination (e.g. watercolours on panels)

Digression: Live interpretation as a special form of guiding

Of particular importance are props in costumed live interpretation which is often used on historical walks. By playing characters dressed in a period costume, participants see things through the eyes of these characters, immerse themselves in another era and establish deeper connections.

We distinguish live interpretation in the first person (where the actor IS the character) from that in the third person which is descriptive and more usual on an interpretive walk, where the interpreter is wearing a costume for effect. The character is not really played, but merely explained by the use of the props.

In live interpretation – in the first person – the interpreter behaves consistently as the character would have in her/his time period. This means that s/he needs to construct that character in advance; either by studying the biographies of a well-known person to be the character or by setting up a fictitious character from that time; thinking about where this person might have lived, how many children s/he might have had, what were her/his main concerns, friends and enemies etc. To respond to questions from participants means involving them in the drama and requires theatrical and improvisational skills. For that reason, first-person live interpretation is often used only briefly during a conventional interpretive walk, e.g. if a medieval charcoal burner is demonstrating his work during a walk through an open-air museum.

To allow different perspectives (and because it makes live interpretation much easier), sometimes several interpreters are involved in one event. They then enter the scene unexpectedly, represent different characters and inspire and involve the participants through themselves and their themes.

Because live interpretation can be much more demanding than an interpretive walk, it is not examined in our basic training course on interpretive guiding.

Accepting interferences

Disturbances take precedence.

Ruth Cohn

Comprehending incidents as opportunities

The attention of participants is often at its greatest when something happens that was obviously not planned. Such surprises remain permanently in the memory and are therefore an effective way of learning – if opportunities are seized. It is, therefore, important to understand intrusions as challenges for deeper involvement. Of course, this doesn't mean that there is no need for planning an interpretive walk. While participants appreciate it, if an interpreter is able to deal with incidents, the mood changes quickly if it becomes apparent that these incidents resulted from lack of preparation.

Involving the unexpected

Interferences often arise from the phenomena; either something is not in place (e.g. an object has been removed from an exhibition), or something is added (e.g. a rare bird suddenly appears during a walk). The weather is also always good for surprises. Here again, themes can expand their effect: the challenge is to combine the unforeseen event with the prevailing theme which, with some practice, can be achieved more often than expected.

However, it is critical to remember that our ace of spades in the pack is the immediate experience of the heritage element. If something has been removed, the interpretive guide should not talk about it as if it would be there but recall her/his theme and either interpret the new situation or switch to another phenomena to be supported by that theme.



Exercise: Responding to surprises

All except three of the group leave the meeting place. Two of those who remain start role-playing with words and gestures appropriate to a chosen scene (e.g. cutting a tree trunk with a huge crosscut saw). The third acts as the stage director, clapping hands as soon as the scene looks exciting. At this moment the actors 'freeze'. Another group member enters the scene, replacing one of the two players by taking exactly her/his position while this player becomes the audience. The 'director' claps hands again and the new pair starts playing their part. The most important rule is that the one who joins takes the initiative, while the one who was already there reacts. If the new player understands the scene in another way (e.g. pumping up a bicycle tyre instead of cutting a tree), the play takes a completely different course. When all participants had taken part, we recall all the scenes.

Accepting interferences from the group

Interferences can result from debates with participants who are (or pretend to be) more knowledgeable than the interpreter or who disagree with what was said. While we should generally invite participants to contribute for the reasons mentioned above, it starts to become difficult if the same people need to add to or to contradict almost everything we say. One way to deal with that is by giving them some space, welcoming them as partners without losing the guiding role. If this doesn't help, the group could be asked whether they intend to get deeper into the debate or to continue the walk.

Dealing with conflicts is not part of the course but, again, in some countries conflict management is taught e.g. at community colleges and this opportunity should be taken if possible.

Recognising obstacles

In the most familiar use of the word, interpretation means translating the language of the phenomenon, the sender, into the language of the listener, the receiver. This can be complicated by several factors:

- ⇒ inner barriers:
negative attitude, lack of information, intellectual limitation
- ⇒ outer barriers:
unsuitable or missing aids or devices
- ⇒ communication barriers:
language problems, misunderstandings

According to this understanding, the idea of looking for barrier-free access between participants, phenomena and interpreters and of overcoming existing barriers is not limited to people commonly described as those with impairments. For instance, the most obvious example of limited access is shared by people using wheelchairs as well as by people pushing buggies /strollers. In Central Europe, an estimated 40% of all visitors of heritage sites are impaired physically in one way or another (e.g. seeing, hearing, walking challenges), and with the increasing average age of our society, this number is growing. In the countryside, elderly people often cannot walk comfortably at all because there is no seating or no toilet other than some distance away. People who are new citizens to a country can have linguistic and cultural difficulties. Although many people are obviously visually impaired, people with hearing impairment form an even larger group – and often remain unnoticed.

Exercise: Making unusual sensory experiences

We split into two groups. Both groups prepare an interpretive talk about the same phenomenon. In one case, participants wear blindfolds; in the other case, ear plugs. Each group acts in turn as a visitor group for the other. This exercise works better if the visitor group doesn't know the phenomenon at all. It's at its best if the members of this group are really impaired. Associations for people with impairments are good and often cooperative partners in that concern.



Providing accessibility

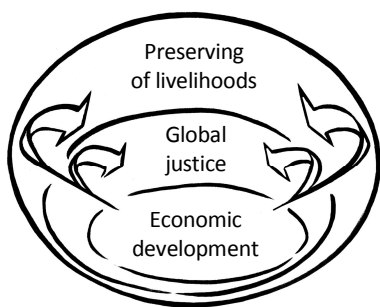
Accessibility means that the circumstances allow all people to do things without help from someone else (other than pushing a wheel-chair or lightly guiding a blind person). Planning an accessible all-abilities interpretive walk could include providing opportunities for taking a rest and creating an obstacle-free trail instead of offering a special route for disabled people. The same applies to participants with impaired hearing (e.g. speaking slowly and clearly) or with visual impairments (e.g. paying attention to distance and contrast). It is helpful always to describe more rather than less, to ask for feedback and to encourage the use of at least two senses when planning any activity (e.g. looking at and touching an artefact).

It should be an aim of every interpreter to ensure frequent exchanges with people with impairments so that s/he can deal with them as with all others.

Broadening the horizon

Our biggest challenge in this new century is to take an idea that seems abstract – sustainable development – and turn it into a reality for all the world's people.

Kofi Annan



Understanding sustainability

Since the United Nations' Earth Summit took place in 1992 in Rio, sustainability has become a world-wide principle. Sustainable development means, especially for the industrialised nations, to retrench into the limits set by our natural environment. This is essential to ensure future generations can live their lives in dignity. But sustainable development also means to take action where global justice is an issue within our present generation – e.g. by not exploiting cheap labour in other parts of the world. Learning for sustainability is a precondition for meeting the challenges of transition into a society respecting both of these crucial aims. As stewards of our heritage, we should intend to contribute to that.

Recognising patterns of unsustainable development

One way to integrate the principles of sustainable development into an interpretive walk is – in addition to positive examples – to identify phenomena that represent patterns of unsustainable development which are globally valid and which have a high recognition value. The German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU) has defined 16 such patterns.

Three patterns of unsustainable development

Over-exploitation Syndrome

A landscape's natural ecosystems are over-exploited.

- ⇒ example in South America: deforestation of the Amazon rainforest
- ⇒ example in Europe: deforestation and erosion in the Pelion area (Greece)

Katanga Syndrome

A landscape is depleted from rich resources to a barren expanse.

- ⇒ example in Africa: copper, cobalt and uranium mining in the Congo
- ⇒ example in Europe: lignite mining in Brandenburg (Germany)


Mass Tourism Syndrome

A landscape is destroyed for recreational purposes.

- ⇒ example in South America: foreign species are introduced to the Galapagos Islands
- ⇒ examples in Europe: heritage in danger at Nessebar and at Mont Saint Michel

The patterns always connect nature and culture as well as the ecological, social and economic dimensions. Through images, stories and parables, cross-linked structures become memorable. Strong images are e.g. the ships lying in the desert that were, until 1960, on the Aral Sea which used to be one of the four largest lakes on Earth (Aral Sea Syndrome). Strong images are also the countless skeletons around dried-up wells in the Sahel zone where people had been encouraged to raise bigger herds by digging deeper wells which turned huge areas to dust through overgrazing and at the same time dwindling the supply of ground water (Sahel Syndrome).

However, if our participants are to be inspired to engage with these topics and widen their horizons from local to global concerns, it is an important requirement that there is a strong connection between such patterns and the selected phenomena on site.

 German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU)

**World in Transition:
The Research Challenge**
Berlin (1996)

Download for free at:
www.wbgu.de

Elaborating key phenomena of sustainability

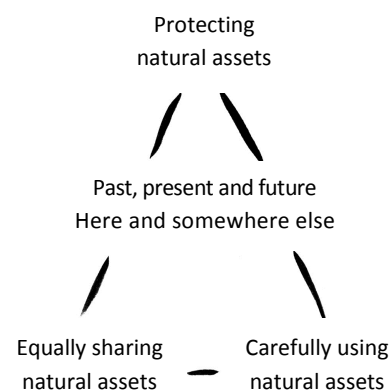
In order to make sustainability available on an interpretive walk, it is important to find at least one phenomenon along the planned route that includes all different aspects of sustainability.

Exercise: Detecting a key phenomenon of sustainability

1. How significant is the phenomenon as a key phenomenon?

To what extent does it cover	0	+	++	+++
the protection of natural assets?				
the equal sharing of natural assets?				
the careful use of natural assets?				
future action?				
the situation in other countries?				

2. Does it reveal surprising insights into hidden relationships?
 3. Can it be supported by universal values and memorable images?
 4. Is there a theme which makes the complexity of the image memorable?
 5. Is this theme meaningful to the participants in their own world?
 6. Is this theme exciting for the participants, even if it is related to other continents?
 7. Does this theme challenge the participants to rethink their own behaviour?



Examples of key phenomena for sustainability (see also p. 29)

Sustainability: A medieval granary in a village

The granary represents the idea of storing and sharing a basic foodstuff, and for saving the seeds for sowing the next year, which still can be observed in many countries.

Theme: For centuries this granary represented the spirit of sustainability.

Non-sustainability: The site of a historical charcoal kiln in the forest

Charcoal burners, working in atrocious conditions, often exhausted the timber of the forest while the profits from the sale of charcoal were achieved in places far away. Today, many people in Africa and Asia work in similar situations.

Theme: At that site, people suffered for the benefit of distant markets.

There is also a sustainable way of learning

Because learning for sustainability is much about values, the way of dealing with participants and phenomena plays a major role. Heritage interpretation supports this value-oriented way of learning. The following aspects have already been explained in this manual:

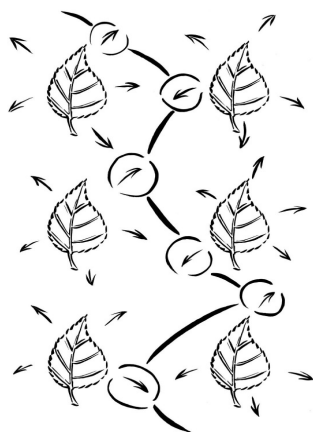
- ⇒ to accompany participants instead of instructing them (p. 9)
- ⇒ to delve into the participant's own world (p. 13)
- ⇒ to involve the whole person (p. 13)
- ⇒ to give phenomena a meaning from the participant's perspective (p. 14)
- ⇒ to build up on universal concepts (p. 14)
- ⇒ to understand incidents as opportunities (p. 20)
- ⇒ to pick up interferences from the group (p. 20)
- ⇒ to empower participants to find their own access (p. 21).

Although sustainability is a serious topic, please keep in mind that any interpretation is at its best if it is an enjoyable process.

Connecting phenomena

... a red thread runs through which cannot be extracted without undoing the whole.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



Interpretive talk

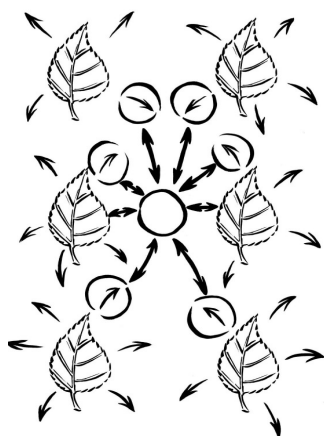
takes place at one single site
is dealing with just one phenomenon
is using just one theme

Interpretive walk

is connecting several phenomena
has one main theme and at each
phenomenon one theme
is following one theme line

Roving interpretation

has several phenomena/themes in store
is leaving the choice to the participants
is evolving under one main theme
within a theme circle



Introducing the main theme

Until now, this manual was about interpretive talks: the connection of one single phenomenon and its theme to the participants' world. To plan an interpretive walk means to link several phenomena to each other; and this requires a main theme. While a theme always refers to a phenomenon that can be experienced at one specific site, the main theme is more general. A main theme related to the topic Spring in the floodplain could be e.g.: After a long rest, life in the floodplain pushes back into the light – if this can really be experienced by significant phenomena on site.

Creating a theme line

A theme line represents a linear structure. It lists all themes related to single phenomena in a fixed order under the heading of one main theme:

Main theme: For centuries, cherry production shaped the face of this valley.

1. The lifeline of the village was this avenue of cherry trees.
 2. This orchard has created its own climate.
 3. Without a rough surface there could be no noble fruits.
 4. Under the cherry trees, the bees start new production lines.
 5. The fruit barn includes everything that will bring the harvest safe through the winter.
 6. Time left this cherry tree behind.
-

All themes attached to the underlined phenomena are underpinned by few facts which are supported e.g. by stepping stones or open-ended questions. An example for the systematic elaboration of theme 6 can be found on page 29.

Within the theme line, the single themes build up on each other and the highlights are arranged in a dramaturgical way. Because nature doesn't always behave as desired, this is often easier in cultural settings. In natural surroundings, sometimes attractive phenomena need to be skipped if they distract from the theme line.

Creating a theme circle

One way to get away from the linear structure of a theme line is to stay with one's participants in a very limited area, surrounded by numerous phenomena supporting the main theme. This is called a theme circle. Within a theme circle there is no set order in which the phenomena have to be visited. The order arises from the conversation with the participants. To prepare for such a scattered experience, the interpreter acquaints her/himself with all the phenomena around and bears the appropriate themes in mind.

Moving within a theme circle is also called roving interpretation. It is considered to be the high art of interpretive guiding. It cannot be taught within one single course but results mainly from the knowledge and experience of the interpreter. It is used at outstanding sites with a constantly changing audience rather than on regular interpretive walks.

It is alluring to avoid the challenge of following a linear structure, preferring the more liberal approach of roving interpretation. We nevertheless encourage all interpretive guides to go through the linear and constructed process first to get used to all the tools of personal interpretation.

Planning and remembering sequences

Creating theme-card scripts

A good way to develop and to rearrange interpretive walks appropriately is to create a flashcard for each phenomenon; e.g. a flashcard to theme 6 (p. 22) might look like this:

Threatened fruit tree	
Topic:	Changing land use
Fact 1:	Once upon a time, the orchard reached far up the hill. <ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ respect for the work of others⇒ description, historic photograph⇒ Where does the orchard end? How easy was it to get the fruit?⇒ didactic formation, using photograph
Fact 2:	The maple tree is wiping out the cherry tree. <ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ regret for the cherry tree, awe of nature⇒ change of perspectives, analysis⇒ In what way do the trees differ from each other?⇒ individual task formation
Fact 3:	Fruit that grew here, was also used here. <ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ understanding of context⇒ narration (childhood memory)⇒ Where does our fruit come from? What are the (dis)advantages?⇒ conference formation
Time left this cherry tree behind.	

Genius is the ability to reduce the complicated to the simple.

Curt Wilhelm Ceram

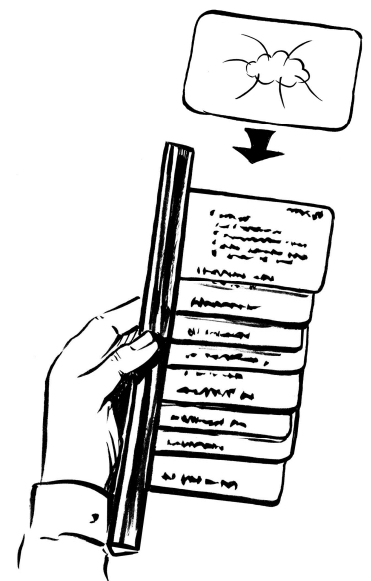
In the lines beyond each of the facts in the central part of the flashcard, possible meanings, stepping stones, questions and formations are listed. The phenomenon is mentioned at the head, the theme at the bottom.

To the left a broader margin remains. If we now put the theme-cards which we selected for our interpretive walk in a clip in a way that only the theme at the bottom stays visible, one can recognise and follow the theme line at a glance.

Remembering activities connected to single phenomena

During an interpretive walk, of course, no interpreter would look at notes in a script. And as mentioned before, within the single interpretive talks it is a top priority not to follow a fixed order of activities. So how can we remember all these different points?

Most of us usually remember images and colours much better than words and numbers. It therefore helps to draw all elements into a mind map (see below). A miniature of that map can serve as the front cover for the script.



Exercise: Developing a mind map

We write the main theme into a cloud in the centre of a large sheet of paper. The single themes are arranged so that they can go in any direction from the cloud. Nothing else is written on the paper. We start to draw the phenomena and everything we like to use or do related to them in bright colours around the corresponding themes (e.g. smelling herbs, using a tool, characters of a legend we like to tell). A few days before our interpretive walk, we put this sheet somewhere where we can look at it in quiet moments but quite frequently. Through doing so, the images and their relationship to each other come more easily into our mind during our walk and we are not urged to follow them in a fixed order – which gives us the possibility to get into conversation with our participants.



Evaluating an interpretive walk



Inspiring colleagues for critiquing

To improve the methodology of interpretive walks even if there are no training structures, we recommend a way of peer coaching, including subsequent evaluative talks. Interpretive critiquing, where colleagues accompany each other, offers an excellent win-win situation because both parties learn from the interpretive as well as from the evaluative process. A coach can also act as the interpreter's ears, listening to participants' comments during the walk. However, to be successful, interpreter and coach need to be familiar with the criteria of evaluation (see p. 30).

Announcing the monitoring

Even if only one interpretive talk is to be evaluated, it makes sense to join the entire walk. One reason is to understand the context better, the other is that participants usually are more distracted by an observer at the beginning. Therefore the first part of the walk is often not really representative. Your joining the walk should be announced at the beginning because professional feedback is hardly possible without taking notes. Apart from this, a coach should behave as if s/he were a participant. Interpreter and coach should not talk to each other during the walk.

Using cameras wisely

In training, camcorders can be helpful – even if video evaluation takes some time. For evaluating an interpretive walk, however, they should generally not be used because many participants find it hard to ignore them. High-quality voice recorders might enhance the perception and help to remember scenes afterwards. In all cases, participants have to agree to all recordings in advance.

Documenting evaluation results

An evaluation session after the walk aims to agree upon just one slight improvement the interpreter should fulfil during the next interpretive walk. For reasons of liability, this agreement might be written down and signed by both parties on the back of the evaluation sheet which stays with the interpreter. Otherwise, if this is not agreed, the evaluative talk is confidential. It should take place in a quiet space, where the guide will be asked first for her/his own perceptions. Feedback should be given mainly in the I-form (avoiding You did...), describing rather than assessing and pointing out some positive aspects first. Criticism should always be made appreciative and constructive, empowering the interpreter to improve her/his skills. Because interpretation is a kind of art, things can often be seen differently.

Phases of interpretive critiquing

1. How did you perceive your interpretation?
What do you think went really well?
Where do you see opportunities to improve something?
2. I thought it was good that ...
I still see the possibility to improve ...
3. Which clear objective do you have for your next walk?

These guidelines focus on the methodology of interpretive guiding and the practical exam of this course or module is limited to one interpretive talk. But all learning aspects also have an organisational context and some of this context will at least be touched on in this chapter.

Extent and duration should be chosen in a way that the walk doesn't become a guided hike. This is usually no problem in an indoor exhibition, but it can become a problem at outdoor sites. An outdoor circuit should take no more than two hours to complete, and the distance to be covered from one phenomenon to the next should be less than ten minutes to hold participants' attention. Larger groups, in particular, also need to assemble the participants at frequent intervals in order to check that everybody is still there.

A group size of up to about 15 participants (depending on the facility) is best for personal interpretation, because personal connections based on dialogue can then be established. The larger the group the less participation will be possible.

The announcement of the interpretive walk (press, leaflets etc.) should use an appealing headline or slogan and a brief, inspiring description with some remarks about the site. It should explain the assembly point as well as the date, and the times for start and finish. Out of doors, the assembly point is usually a parking lot near public transport, dates and times should be coordinated with the latter, and additional hints relating to the level of difficulty and any necessary clothing or equipment should be given. Where a walk is always guided by the same person, her/his name and a phone number might well be added.

Before the start, the interpreter should be visible at the starting point. This is especially important at crowded places as in towns or in some museums. It allows a gentle warm up of proceedings and gives the participants a feeling of security. The same applies to an overview of the tour and to the agreement of a simple-to-find meeting point (or end point) in case someone loses the group. In addition to any emergency equipment (especially out of doors), a cell phone should be carried if network access is available during the walk.

At the start, the number and – when walking in demanding terrain – the equipment that participants need should be checked. If necessary, rules need to be pointed out; e.g. where things might be touched and where not. A brief round of introductions can provide an overview of the participants and their interests. In that way, expectations can be recorded and later references can be made.

During the walk, the pace should be adapted to that of the slower group members. The single interpretive talks should not take more than ten minutes and the time frame should not be extended unless agreed with the group.

The end of the walk should provide a special experience with a clear conclusion in terms of the main theme. This should be done in a relatively quiet place where all participants can focus on the guide and before the group begins to disperse.

How to proceed?



The training course or module for interpretive guides provides a good basis for strengthening the connection between a general non-formal audience and a heritage site, or a collection of heritage objects including a zoo or a museum. However, a 40-hour course or module is too short to allow a complete experience, and many issues can only be touched upon. We therefore recommend attending additional training sessions. In different countries there are different providers and different directions in which such training sessions take place. This chapter will give some hints about what you might look for.

Interpretation

- ⇒ roving interpretation
- ⇒ live interpretation
- ⇒ monitoring and evaluation

Communication

- ⇒ rhetoric and communication skills
- ⇒ resolving conflicts
- ⇒ improvised theatre

Target groups

- ⇒ children
- ⇒ young people
- ⇒ local people
- ⇒ people with impairments

Depending on the field of work, there are other target groups which can be significant in your country. In addition, special attention needs to be given to the demands of learning for sustainability. Appropriate courses are offered by community colleges or several non-governmental organisations. You need to find out what supports the four qualities mentioned at the beginning of this manual.

Although the areas in which interpretive guides work are generally teachable, a large part of our success is based on the question of how open we are to meeting our participants, and how familiar we are with the site or facility for which we act as ambassadors. Becoming more familiar doesn't mean just knowing more facts but also continuously experiencing the place. We don't feel at home in our living room only because we know a lot about the material our furniture is made of. 'Home' is an idea that cannot be described solely by facts. To make our site or facility our 'home', we must 'live' there. In terms of interpretive guiding, this is why exercises are the best key to success.

For several decades, the concept of heritage interpretation has proven itself many times. However, even in the great outdoors, in towns, cultural landscapes or the last European wilderness areas, there is no guarantee of success. As with fishing, hunting or gathering mushrooms, the unpredictable makes an essential part of the appeal.

In the end, it is the result of all small successes and failures that comprise what we call experience. This is what makes us rich.

Developing and improving an interpretive talk

On the following pages you can find

- ⇒ a work sheet
- ⇒ an example sheet
- ⇒ an evaluation sheet

for an interpretive talk of about ten minutes.

The completion of the work sheet can be done in the steps listed below; the numbers in brackets indicate on which page in the manual each underlined term is explained:

1. Search for an appealing phenomenon (pp. 10 and 11) to a particular topic (p. 22).
2. Develop an appropriate theme for this phenomenon (pp. 14 and 15).
3. Select three facts (p. 14) related to the phenomenon that support the theme and are meaningful to your participants (p. 14).
4. Consider which stepping stones (pp. 10 to 12) could be used to bring the facts to life.
5. Consider how participants can be involved through open-ended questions (p. 13) and props (p. 17).
6. Think about appropriate formations (p. 16) and where the phenomenon offers an exciting revelation (p.13).

If the interpretive talk is part of a guided tour, the evaluation sheet can be used in conjunction with peer coaching as basis for the evaluation session. You will find information about that on p. 24.

The exam is based on the evaluation sheet. Filling up the work sheet can be very useful for exploring the different elements and for coming up with ideas. However, the dialogue with participants is essential, the list of facts on the sheet doesn't matter, and as long as the theme is obvious, not all ideas need to be put in place.

Many interpreters have found it very useful to develop the worksheet for practising. But do not stick too much to it. Your interpretive talk is a piece of art. Adding too many bits might spoil it.

Work sheet interpretive talk

The order of facts is not fixed, and the stepping stones and open-ended questions need not all to be used in the end. But it is important that the theme remains in view.

phenomenon	topic	theme (a complete sentence, which in this case contains a universal)		

The theme is the 'lighthouse' you are heading for. Your facts must support your theme and should be experienced on site.

1. fact (as one sentence)	meaning (it arouses ...)	stepping stones	open-ended questions	formation / props

2. fact (as one sentence)	meaning (it arouses ...)	stepping stones	open-ended questions	formation / props

3. fact (as one sentence)	meaning (it arouses ...)	stepping stones	open-ended questions	formation / props

The phenomenon in this example sheet is an old cherry tree that is undermined by a tall sycamore, because a former orchard is being overwhelmed by a self-seeded forest.

Example sheet interpretive talk

phenomenon	topic	theme (a complete sentence, which in this case contains a universal)
<i>threatened fruit tree</i>	<i>changing land use</i>	<i>Time left this cherry tree behind. (universals: change, isolation)</i>

The theme is the 'lighthouse' you are heading for. Your facts support your theme and can be experienced on site.

1. fact (as one sentence)	meaning (It arouses ...)	stepping stones	open-ended questions	formation / props
<i>At one time, the orchard reached far up the hill.</i>	<i>respect for the work of others</i>	<i>description, historic photograph</i>	<i>Where does the orchard end? How easy was it to gather the fruit?</i>	<i>didactic formation, using photograph</i>

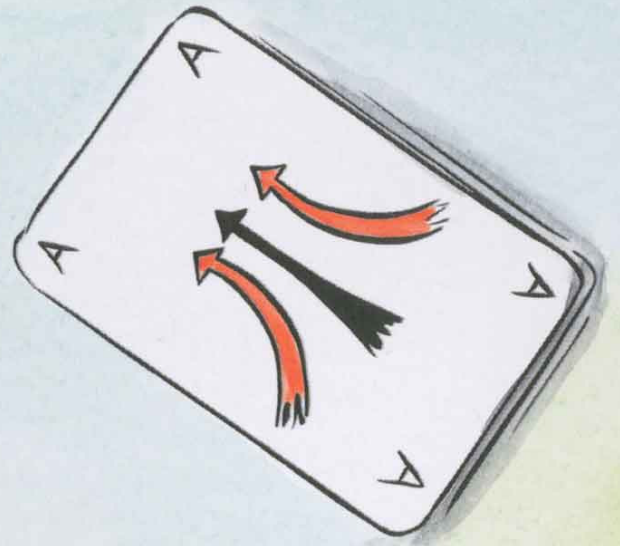
2. fact (as one sentence)	meaning (It arouses ...)	stepping stones	open-ended questions	formation / props
<i>The maple tree is wiping out the cherry tree.</i>	<i>regret for the cherry tree, awe of nature</i>	<i>change of perspectives, analysis</i>	<i>In what way do the trees differ from each other?</i>	<i>individual task formation</i>

3. fact (as one sentence)	meaning (It arouses ...)	stepping stones	open-ended questions	formation / props
<i>Fruit that grew here was also used here.</i>	<i>understanding of context</i>	<i>narration (childhood memory)</i>	<i>Where does our fruit come from? What are the (dis)advantages?</i>	<i>conference formation</i>

Evaluation sheet interpretive talk

The evaluation sheet is intended to support the peer coaching process. It is not about marking. The proposals for rating should be transparent; the comments should be thoughtful and unambiguous.

	0	+	++	+++	Comments
1. Performance of the interpreter					
Did the interpreter show enthusiasm?					
Were all her/his remarks understandable?					
Was the interpreter credible and was all her/his information correct?					
Did the interpreter get her/his messages across convincingly?					
Did the interpreter consistently use appropriate spoken and body language?					
2. Appreciation of the phenomenon					
Was the interpretive talk generally focused on the phenomenon?					
Were unique qualities of the phenomenon emphasised?					
Could all the facts be verified on site?					
Was the group formed up well in relation to the phenomenon?					
Was there an interesting revelation?					
3. Integration of the participants					
Were all participants focused on the action all the time?					
Did the talk include first-hand experiences with the phenomenon?					
Were participants' reactions encouraged, for example by open-ended questions?					
Did participants have the chance to tell about something from their daily lives?					
Was the interpreter able to pick up contributions coming from the group?					
4. Tracing the theme					
Was there a clear theme? If 'yes', say so, and how it might have been worded.					
Did it get to the heart of the matter?					
Were facts and meanings considered in a similar way?					
Were different stepping stones used?					



Guides work at different heritage sites: in protected areas and historic buildings, in museums, zoos and botanical gardens. They are dedicated to bringing our heritage to the fore and to looking for better ways to manage our future.

This manual is based on the experience of guides from many countries. It contains preparation material for exams leading to becoming certified interpretive guides. The 40 hours of training can be delivered either within a self-contained seminar or as one module of a larger training course. Within the HeriQ project, we are currently auditing the training in different countries across Europe. To ensure the quality of the interpretation of our European heritage, we encourage staff of all natural and cultural heritage sites to try out the material and to come back to us with suggestions for improvement.

