

Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego  
im. Eugeniusza Piaseckiego  
w Poznaniu



ERASMUS

# HERITAGE INTERPRETATION

MAREK NOWACKI

**ANF**

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w Poznaniu

# **HERITAGE INTERPRETATION**

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## INTRODUCTION

Visiting tourist attractions is an important motive behind tourist trips. It provides an opportunity for a wide range of activities, such as watching exhibits, listening to guides' talks, reading descriptions on interpretive boards and panels, asking questions to the personnel, and answering questions asked by a guide. Such visits also promote social interaction between the attraction personnel and visitors, as well as within a visitor group (a family or a group of friends). Visiting tourist attractions results in experiences, emotions, understanding, knowledge and other benefits, depending on the type of attraction and expectations of visitors.

Heritage interpretation serves to facilitate the achievement all of these purposes: it aims to enrich experiences, stimulate activity and widen knowledge. Interpretation is a method for helping visitors understand the character of the place, explaining its meanings, providing experiences and provoking emotions. It also seeks to inspire visitors to gain knowledge about a heritage on their own. For this purpose, a variety of media are employed: from verbal talks, through printed resources, puppet shows and live interpretation, to advanced computer techniques. Knowledge about interpretive methods is not limited to techniques for communicating knowledge using specific media: it also includes the ability to write interesting interpretive texts, structure them in an adequate way, and formulate themes and subtitles in such a manner that will make the text easier to understand.

This knowledge also encompasses the ability to develop a complex interpretation plan for a heritage area. Such a plan integrates the natural and cultural heritage of the area into a coherent tourism product. It points out what are the main themes worth interpreting and where they should be interpreted, defines what media should be employed and how, and suggests appropriate tourism management strategies with regard to natural and cultural heritage sites.

For the reasons mentioned above, knowledge on heritage interpretation is indispensable to any professionals handling the tourism traffic, including guides, tour leaders, tourist information personnel, tourist attractions staff (in museums, zoos, heritage parks), as well as those involved in tourism management and the development of tourist areas.

# 1. HERITAGE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH TOURISM

## 1.1. The notion of heritage

The contemporary notion of heritage includes everything that is passed down from generation to generation, that is part of the society's life today and can be preserved for future generations, everything that can be protected or collected. Hewison [1986, p. 6] defines heritage as "that which a past generation has preserved and handed on to the present and which a significant group of the population wishes to hand on to the future". Heritage encompasses both tangible objects, places, environmental and cultural areas, and intangible forms of culture, such as philosophy, tradition, manifestations of art, lifestyles, literature and folklore.

Institutional interest in heritage began with the *Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, which was adopted by UNESCO in November 1972. A significant milestone in its popularization took place in 1975, which was declared European Architectural Heritage Year.

The growing interest in heritage in the last twenty years of the previous century was partly motivated by increasing decadent attitudes, which gave rise to a sense of nostalgia and being lost, but also inspired people to search for their roots and to perceive the past as friendly, calm and stable, in contrast to the turbulent present and the uncertain future it foreshadowed. David Lowenthal [1985] describes it as follows: dissatisfaction with the present and malaise about the future induce many to look back with nostalgia, to equate what is beautiful and livable.

Richard Prentice [1993] has observed that the notion of heritage in tourism is much broader than popularly understood: it includes all that can be used for creating tourism products. Heritage, therefore, is created as a result of a selective (subjective) re-enactment and interpretation of history [Timothy & Boyd 2003].

The increasing popularity of the notion of "heritage" and the development a related industry is often surrounded by politically-charged controversies. This is apparent, for instance, from the fact that in Poland under Soviet influence, the heritages of the German people and the Jewish Diaspora were largely ignored or neglected in restoration efforts, specific examples including

the Churches of Peace in Jawor and Świdnica or the numerous synagogues and Jewish cemeteries falling into decline. The same applies to the Polish heritage in Ukraine, as best exemplified by the ongoing issue over the Cemetery of Eaglets in Lviv, as well as to the Aborigine heritage in Australia and the Native American heritage in North America.

“Not everything is heritage, but anything could become heritage”, as Howard observes [2003, p. 7]. This means that heritage emerges as a result of a conscious creative process, which is deliberately targeted at a specific recipient [Mikułowski-Pomorski 1999]. The fundamental criterion, however, is an act of free will, an act of independent choice: a decision to acknowledge the heritage as one’s own. “It is not all which we have inherited from the past generations, but only that part which we wish to own and take responsibility for” [Tomaszewski 2005]. At this point, it is worth mentioning the notion of “cultural goods”, often juxtaposed with “heritage” [Gaweł 2011]. They comprise “all goods made by human talent, having a subjective historical and artistic value” [Gaweł 2011, p. 21]. Unlike heritage, the notion of cultural goods is apolitical and aideological.

Heritage resources can be broadly divided into tangible and intangible resources (Fig. 1). Tangible resources include cultural and environmental (natural) heritage. Cultural heritage encompasses man-made objects, such as monuments of architecture, sculpture and painting, building complexes, sites of human work, as well as cultural landscapes and historical sites. Natural heritage includes geological elements, landforms, plant and animal habitats, as well as areas of unique scientific, environmental or aesthetic value [UNESCO 1972; Howard 2003]. Intangible heritage encompasses tradition, oral history, language, shows and performances, customs, celebrations, knowledge about the universe and nature and related practices, as well as traditional craft skills.

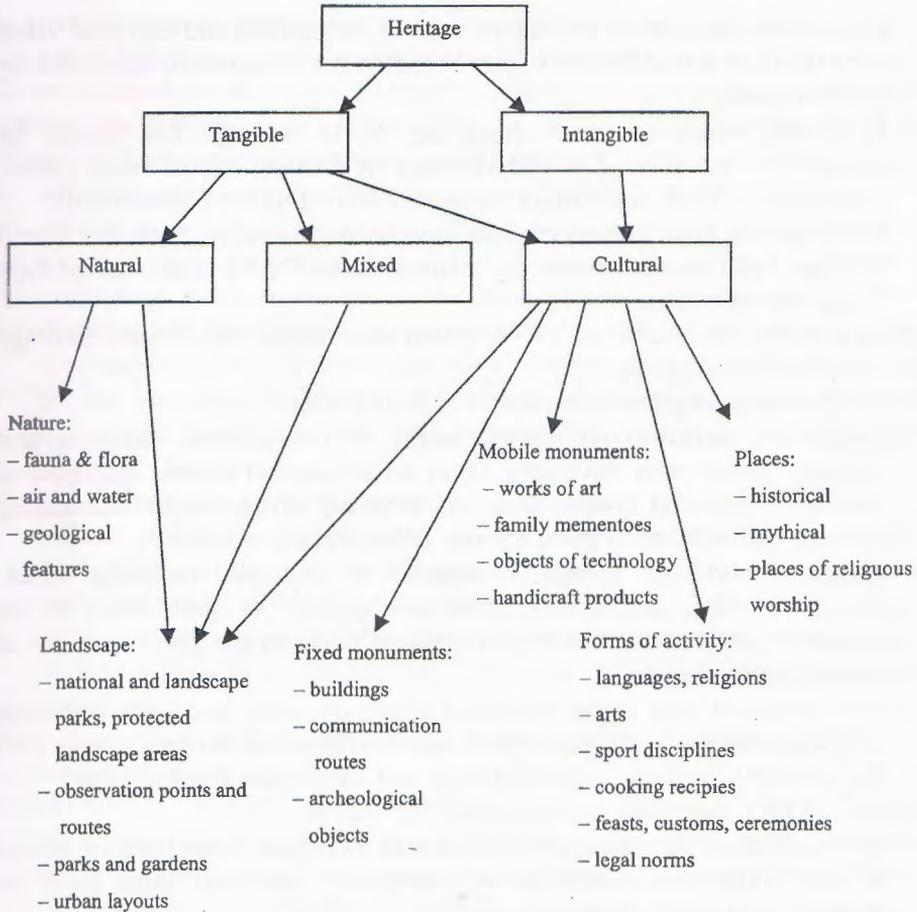


Figure 1. Classification of heritage resources [Nowacki 2012]

## 1.2. World Heritage List

The World Heritage Committee, assisted by the World Heritage Centre in Paris, coordinates the member states' efforts to help and facilitate the management of sites inscribed on the *World Heritage Sites list*. The World Heritage Committee seeks to accomplish<sup>1</sup> three basic objectives:

<sup>1</sup> As not all decisions can be executed. Political factors have led, for instance, to the destruction of Buddha statues in Afghanistan and the ransacking of world cultural heritage goods in Iraq following the Iraq War.

- To establish the cultural and natural sites of outstanding and universal value to be listed as World Heritage Sites based on the nominations submitted by member states;
- To decide which properties from the World Heritage List should be included on the List of World Heritage in Danger (which need special conservation efforts and require measures outlined by the Convention)<sup>2</sup>;
- To determine how and under what conditions resources from the World Heritage Fund should be used by member states for the protection of their World Heritage Sites.

Article 1 of the 1972 UNESCO Convention on Cultural and Natural Heritage defines cultural heritage as

[<http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext>, 18.10.2012]:

- monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

Article 2 of the Convention defines natural heritage as:

- natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view;
- geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation;

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<sup>2</sup> Every year, the World heritage Committee updates the list of properties which require special care to their poor condition or the need to use restoration means or methods outside the capabilities of the states where they are located. The Committee seeks to encourage relevant state authorities to come up with coherent restoration programs for endangered properties. In case of ill will on the part of the authorities (e.g. the Taliban authorities in Afghanistan), the property may not be included in the next version of the List of World Heritage in Danger.

- natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must meet detailed selection criteria. The criteria are regularly revised so as to reflect the evolution of the World Heritage concept. According to them, cultural heritage should:

- represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

Other important considerations include the authenticity of a property, as well as its protection and management.

Natural heritage should:

- be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
- contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

The protection, management, authenticity and integrity of properties are also important considerations. Nominations of mixed properties are based on both

natural and cultural criteria. In 1992, the concept of cultural landscapes was adopted. These reflect significant interactions between humans and their environment. World Heritage is a shared property of all the world's citizens, regardless of where a particular site is located. The protection of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List is a primary responsibility of the international community. Without active cooperation and support of other countries, some places could fall into decline or disappear completely due to the lack of funds for their protection. This is why the 160 states participating in the Convention have agreed to provide the financial and intellectual resources necessary for the protection of world heritage sites. What discriminates these sites from national heritage of a local character, is their outstanding and universal value. A number of properties, however, display a local or national significance and constitute the heritage of local communities or nations. With a view to the common good, they should be protected as well, irrespective of whether they have been included in the World Heritage List. The following Polish sites have been inscribed on the World Heritage List [<http://whc.unesco.org/>, 20.10.2012]:

1. The Białowieża Primeval Forest: inscribed in 1979 under the criterion N (3)<sup>3</sup>. Situated on the watershed of the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, this immense forest range, consisting of evergreens and broad-leaved trees, is home to some remarkable animal life, including rare mammals such as the wolf, the lynx and the otter, as well as some 300 European Bison, a species which has been reintroduced into the park. In 1992, UNESCO extended the status of World Heritage Site to the Belarusian part of the Białowieża Forest.
2. Cracow's Historic Centre: inscribed in 1978 under the criterion C (4). The historic centre of Cracow, the former capital of Poland, is situated at the foot of the Royal Wawel Castle. The 13th-century merchants' town has Europe's largest market square and numerous historical houses, palaces and churches with their magnificent interiors. Further evidence of the town's fascinating history is provided by the remnants of the 14th-century fortifications and the medieval site of Kazimierz with its ancient synagogues in the southern part of town, Jagellonian University and the Gothic cathedral where the kings of Poland were buried.
3. Wieliczka Salt Mine: inscribed in 1978 under the criterion C (4). *This deposit of rock salt in Wieliczka-Bochnia has been mined since the 13th century. Spread over nine levels, it has 300 km of galleries with works of*

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<sup>3</sup> N – natural heritage, C – cultural heritage, (x) – number of the criterion under which a property was inscribed on the List.

*art, altars, and statues sculpted in the salt, making a fascinating pilgrimage into the past of a major industrial undertaking.*

4. Auschwitz-Birkenau – German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945): inscribed in 1979 under the criterion C (6). The fortified walls, barbed wire, platforms, barracks, gallows, gas chambers and cremation ovens show the conditions within which the Nazi genocide took place in the former concentration and extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest in the Third Reich. According to historical investigations, 1.5 million people, among them a great number of Jews, were systematically starved, tortured and murdered in this camp, the symbol of humanity's cruelty to its fellow human beings in the 20th century.
5. Historic Centre of Warsaw: inscribed in 1980 under the criteria C (2) (6). During the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, more than 85% of Warsaw's historic centre was destroyed by Nazi troops. After the war, a five-year reconstruction campaign by its citizens resulted in today's meticulous restoration of the Old Town, with its churches, palaces and market-place. It is an outstanding example of a near-total reconstruction of a span of history covering the 13th to the 20th century.
6. Old City of Zamość: inscribed in 1992 under the criterion C (4). Zamość was founded in the 16th century by the chancellor Jan Zamoysky on the trade route linking western and northern Europe with the Black Sea. Modelled on Italian theories of the 'ideal city' and built by the architect Bernardo Morando, a native of Padua, Zamość is a perfect example of a late-16th-century Renaissance town. It has retained its original layout and fortifications and a large number of buildings that combine Italian and central European architectural traditions.
7. Medieval Town of Toruń: inscribed in 1997 under the criteria C (1) (4). Toruń owes its origins to the Teutonic Order, which built a castle there in the mid-13th century as a base for the conquest and evangelization of Prussia. It soon developed a commercial role as part of the Hanseatic League. In the Old and New Town, the many imposing public and private buildings from the 14th and 15th centuries (among them the house of Copernicus) are striking evidence of Toruń's importance.
8. Castle of the Teutonic Order in Malbork: inscribed in 1997 under the criteria C (1) (3) (4). This 13th-century fortified monastery belonging to the Teutonic Order was substantially enlarged and embellished after 1309, when the seat of the Grand Master moved here from Venice. A particularly fine example of a medieval brick castle, it later fell into decay, but was meticulously restored in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Many of the conservation techniques now accepted as standard were evolved here.

- Following severe damage in the Second World War it was once again restored, using the detailed documentation prepared by earlier conservators.
9. Kalwaria Zebrzydowska – The Mannerist Architectural and Park Landscape Complex and Pilgrimage Park: inscribed in 1999 under the criteria C (2) (4). Criterion (2): Kalwaria Zebrzydowska is an exceptional cultural monument in which the natural landscape was used as the setting for a symbolic representation in the form of chapels and avenues of the events of the Passion of Christ. The result is a cultural landscape of great beauty and spiritual quality in which natural and man-made elements combine in a harmonious manner. Criterion (4): The Counter Reformation in the late 16th century led to a flowering in the creation of Calvaries in Europe. Kalwaria Zebrzydowska is an outstanding example of this type of large-scale landscape design, which incorporates natural beauty with spiritual objectives and the principles of Baroque park design.
  10. Churches of Peace in Jawor and Świdnica: inscribed in 2001 under the criteria C (3) (4) (6). Criterion (3): The Churches of Peace are outstanding testimony to an exceptional act of tolerance on the part of the Catholic Habsburg Emperor towards Protestant communities in Silesia in the period following the Thirty Years' War in Europe. Criterion (4): As a result of conditions imposed by the Emperor the Churches of Peace required the builders, to implement pioneering constructional and architectural solutions of a scale and complexity unknown ever before or since in wooden architecture. The success may be judged by their survival to the present day. Criterion (6): The Churches of Peace bear exceptional witness to a particular political development in Europe in the 17th century of great spiritual power and commitment.
  11. Wooden Churches of Southern Little Poland (Dębno Podhalańskie, Lipnica Murowana, Sękowa, Binarowa, Blizne, Haczów): inscribed in 2003 under the criteria C (3) (4). Criterion (3): The wooden churches of Little Poland bear important testimony to medieval church building traditions, as these related to the liturgical and cult functions of the Roman Catholic Church in a relatively closed region in central Europe. Criterion (4): The churches are the most representative examples of surviving Gothic churches built in horizontal log technique, particularly impressive in their artistic and technical execution, and sponsored by noble families and rulers as symbols of social and political prestige.
  12. Muskauer Park: inscribed in 2004 under the criteria C (1) (4). One of the largest landscape parks in Europe. It stretches on both sides of the Nysa Łużycka River that constitutes the Polish-German state border. Prince Hermann Pückler-Muskau, the leading expert and father of German landscape parks, founded the park in the early 19th century. Perfectly

arranged in the river valley, the park also includes meadows, fields and farmland forests. The valley is surrounded by terraces as high as 30 meters, where compositionally coherent buildings and viewing areas are situated. Criterion (1): Muskauer Park is an exceptional example of a European landscape park that broke new ground in terms of development towards an ideal made-made landscape. Criterion (4): Muskauer Park was the forerunner for new approaches to landscape design in cities, and influenced the development of 'landscape architecture' as a discipline.

13. Centennial Hall in Wrocław: inscribed in 2006 under the criteria C (1) (2) (4). The Centennial Hall, a landmark in the history of reinforced concrete architecture, was erected in 1911-1913 by the architect Max Berg as a multi-purpose recreational building, situated in the Exhibition Grounds. In form it is a symmetrical quatrefoil with a vast circular central space that can seat some 6,000 persons. The 23m-high dome is topped with a lantern in steel and glass. The Centennial Hall is a pioneering work of modern engineering and architecture, which exhibits an important interchange of influences in the early 20th century, becoming a key reference in the later development of reinforced concrete structures.

The inscription procedure is rather complicated. Basically, the state where a given site is located must submit an application for its inscription on the list. It is then given consideration by a Committee which decides which sites are worthy of the world heritage status. The process normally takes about one and a half year. It must be also noted that the UNESCO Convention, which Poland ratified on 29 June 1976, obliges signatories to implement education on heritage interpretation and presentation, as well as to establish regional centers for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage (UNESCO 1972, Article 5, clauses b and e). As of March 2012, the World Heritage List includes 936 properties (725 properties of Cultural Heritage, 183 properties of Natural Heritage and 28 properties of Mixed Heritage) from 153 countries. 189 states have signed the Convention so far.

The 32nd Session of UNESCO's General Conference of 2003 adopted the Convention for Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage. Intangible heritage, as defined by the convention, comprises oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices and rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship. The List of Intangible Cultural Heritage includes, for instance, the Fujara and its Music, traditionally played by Slovak shepherds, and Slovácko Verbuňk, a Czech improvisational dance performed in the ethnographic area of Slovácko [<http://whc.unesco.org/>, 20.10.2012]. Unfortunately, no entry from Poland has made it to the list so far.

### 1.3. Heritage and tourism

The transformation of heritage sites into tourist attractions entails both positive and negative consequences. The positive aspects include [Herbert 1995]:

- greater opportunities to raise funds for protection and conservation,
- increased interest in the site on the part of local communities and more support for its protection,
- heritage conservation supervision, which ensures a proper exploitation of the site (retaining proper proportions between its protection and public availability),
- stimulating effect on local economies (heritage resources help generate workplaces and income for the local population).

Negative aspects of the process include:

- disappearance of the site's authenticity, since the interpretive process tends to distort its history (in the process of presentation and interpretation, the site is created anew, stylized so as to have an authentic feel, made more accessible to mass tourism),
- selectivity, since the transformation of heritage resources into a tourism product involves a selective choice of the content to be presented based on their promotional value,
- influence on local environment, as the transformation of heritage sites into tourist attractions often involves the development infrastructure, which may have a negative effect on natural environment,
- increase in the intensity of tourist traffic, which may lead to undesirable changes in the lifestyle and culture of local communities.

### 1.4. Is there European heritage?

The formation of European nations was accompanied by the development of national heritage, a process supported by propaganda. It was no accident that the interest in historic conservation and history, as well as the emergence of national museums in Europe of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, were all involved in the construction of national identities [Lumley 1988]. The identity of today's nations is based on historical memory and tangible remnants related to it. In the present reality, if the unity of Europe is to become a fact, there is an urgent need for the identification of European heritage. On the one hand, national heritage cannot dominate regional heritage, but it should not disappear due to the efforts aiming at abandoning state borders, homogenizing customs and developing European heritage. While the former is relatively easy to identify (for instance,

in Greater Poland or Lesser Poland), the latter (European heritage) may pose some problems. The history of Europe has been more about wars and rivalry between great families and later nations than about participation in the development of common cultural heritage. The geographical criterion of European heritage does not take into account the sites which are located outside of Europe, for instance those related to colonial conquests, and yet are clearly part of its heritage. On the other hand, sites of the Holocaust, although situated in Europe, are essentially the heritage of Israeli and American residents, while the Islamic heritage of the Caliphate of Córdoba in Spain or the Turkish occupation of Greece have left a lasting influence on the culture of Europe and its heritage. For this reason, European heritage should relate to the origin, evolution and achievements of European ideas (as opposed to national ideas). It could also relate to the so-called European (rather than national) capitals, as well as to figures, events and objects which proved crucial in developing the idea of a united Europe [Kruczek et al. 2010].

In the late 80s, the Council of Europe, in an attempt to promote European heritage, launched the European Cultural Routes project. Objectives of the project include “making Europeans aware of their cultural identity and European citizenship, as well as conserving and protecting heritage as a source of the social, economic and cultural development of their environment” [Orzechowska-Kowalska 2009, p. 6]. The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are designed with a view to presenting themes such as the cultural complexity of the various European communities and how the heritage of European nations represents the shared cultural heritage of the whole Europe.

Some of the most interesting routes of European heritage include:

- The Santiago De Compostela Pilgrim Routes (1987),
- The Via Francigena Pilgrim Routes (1994),
- The Mozart Route (1990),
- Saint Martin de Tours Route (2005),
- The Cluniac Sites in Europe (2004),
- The Viking Routes (1992),
- The Hansa (1992),
- Parks and Gardens (1992),
- The Legacy of Al-Andalus (1997),
- The Route of the Castilian Language and its Expansion in the editerranean (2002),
- The Jewish Heritage Routes (2004),
- The Routes of the Olive Tree (2005),
- The Via Regia (2005),
- Transromanica (2007).

## **2. HERITAGE INTERPRETATION**

### **2.1. The notion of heritage interpretation**

Interpretation is a process seeking to explain, explicate, elucidate a meaning. Heritage interpretation is an educational activity that aims to reveal meanings about natural and cultural heritage. Through various media, interpretation enhances understanding, appreciation and protection of natural and cultural sites [Beck & Cable 1998]. Freeman Tilden, one of the first theorists of interpretation, defines it as “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information” [Tilden 1977, p. 8].

Interpretation can be delivered through different media types – either personal or non-personal. Personal media include [Shape 1982]:

- information services (e.g. desk in visitor centre, roving interpreter),
- conducted activities (e.g. guided tours),
- talks (e.g. auditorium talks in visitor centre, campfire talks),
- living interpretation (e.g. historical re-enactment).

Non-personal media include:

- audio devices (e.g. audio stations, CDs),
- written materials (e.g. leaflets, guidebooks),
- self-guided activities (e.g. walking trails),
- exhibits (in visitor centers, in museums or open-air exhibitions)
- visitor centers which combine many interpretive techniques.

### **2.2. Aims and the significance of interpretation**

The basis aim of interpretation is to help visitors understand the meaning of sites, develop a sensitivity to their surroundings and realize the importance of history and the environment. Heritage interpretation enriches visitors' impressions, stimulating – or triggering – their free time activity. Another important aim is a practical one: to increase visitors' awareness and instill models of behavior which are friendly to both the natural and cultural

environment. Interpretation should inform about the objectives of public and private institutions managing protected areas (e.g. what is the purpose of admission fees at national parks), as well as present the aims of these organizations, their techniques and the results of their activity. Heritage interpretation should also seek to popularize new ideas (e.g. current trends in conservation and historic preservation), help tourists grasp the history of visited sites, explain technical problems and physical phenomena, suggest new perspectives on the surrounding environment, enable them to notice interesting specimens and rare animal or plant species.

Heritage interpretation is used in:

- natural and cultural heritage sites,
- natural and cultural trails,
- museums and galleries,
- heritage interpretation centers/TI center,
- aquariums, parks and zoos,
- objects of industrial heritage,
- nature reserves,
- events of cultural tourism.

**What is the difference between interpretation and information [Ham 1992]?**

- Information is just straight facts, figures & dates.
- Interpretation uses marketing and advertising techniques, journalism strategies, and a host of other tools to deliver an interpretive outcome.
- *Well executed interpretation is a fun, inspiring & motivating recreational learning experience.*
- *Interpretation IS NOT education.*

### 2.3. The product of interpretation

The product (result) of interpretation is tourists' knowledge about the sites and objects of heritage. It emerges as a result of interpretation in the form of exhibitions, signs, stories, themed tours, brochures, audio-visual techniques, etc. The aim of interpretation is accomplished when visitors have understood why a particular site, object or area is the heritage of the local community, state, nation, humanity and, above all, of every human. Objectives of interpretation could be formulated as follows [Rennie 1980; Knudson et al. 1999]:

- to **orient** visitors to basic services, dangers, supply options, available hotels and hostels, camping sites, means of transport;
- to **inform** about available forms of tourism and recreation, about the organizational policy of the site's manager, about local culture and environment;
- to **involve** in natural and cultural resource interpretation, and **inspire** to care for resources and provide cooperation and support (including financial support), as well as to explain the objectives of regional policies;
- to **inspire** a change in visitors' attitudes and behaviors, so as to shape such attitudes and behaviors which are friendly to the natural and cultural environment and take into account a sustainable management of natural resources and heritage protection.

Ideally, interpretation should result in an effective delivery of information to as many people as possible. It should not be targeted at tourists only: Programs of heritage interpretation should be broadcast daily in local television and radio. The variety of interpretation forms should make it possible to reach people in various ways and in various places: in a super-market, a train station or an airport. Interpretation should seek to transform a seemingly ordinary place into something special, intriguing, something which evokes powerful impressions.



*"People protect what they love".*

Jacques Cousteau



## 2.4. Benefits of interpretation

Beneficiaries of interpretation include not only individual visitors, but also society at large. When discussing benefits of interpretation, one should consider the following question: Why do people visit tourist attractions in the first place? Why should society provide funds for heritage interpretation?

Benefits arising from heritage interpretation for individual visitors are threefold [Knudson et al. 1999]:

- **Educational**, since a number of people visit tourist attraction to gain knowledge. Learning is an important an interesting experience for many. Some visitors wish to learn the habitats of rare animal species, others might like to understand the history of places and people, etc. The acquisition of new knowledge makes their trip meaningful.

- **Recreational**, since some visitors are not interested in gaining new knowledge in their leisure time. They should be provided with relaxation and entertainment and enabled to spend their free time at the heritage site in a pleasant manner. Pleasant experiences increase the quality of life, reduce stress, strengthen self-confidence and improve physical and mental health.
- **Inspirational**, since a successful interpretation not only encourages recreation, but provides inspiration as well. It may help visitors discover the beauty of a work of art, understand the adaptation of insects or discover the beauty of the scenery. Such experiences are neither educational nor recreational. E. Mills goes as far as to say that it is inspiration, and not information, that constitutes the fundamental purpose of interpretation. It should influence people's sensitivity, bringing them closer to the heritage. Inspiration can be provided, for instance, by helping visitors become more sensitive to the beauty of the surrounding scenery. Such sensitivity, however, must take time to develop.

Heritage interpretation also provides a number of benefits for society [Knudson et al. 1999]:

- Since the democratic system requires a well-informed society, interpretation informs the general public about the premises and ways of making decisions concerning the environment.
- Interpretation can help retain national identity and bonds with the country and its culture. It could even be argued that the Polish identity during the partitioning period was only retained thanks to a high awareness of the Polish society, its literature, education and attachment to tradition. Currently, in the era of a global Americanization and Europeization, societies need to identify with their lands and national cultures. In order for a nation to have pride and a sense of identity, it must be aware of its roots and heritage, aware of the existence and relevance of places which have a special importance. National pride is what can save these sites from ruin.
- Interpretation facilitates the development of a global environmental awareness. By informing about the need to adopt sustainable development and to protect ecological systems, it helps recognize, alleviate or eliminate major threats to life on Earth.
- Interpretation makes it possible to understand the ethical meaning of visited sites and place them in a wider context. It helps recognize triumphs and



*"It is much cheaper and more effective to teach and inform tourists than to punish them and mend the damages they cause".*

Freeman Tilden



defetats in the history of humanity, understand technological problems and explain how natural resources are used and converted. It points out the importance of becoming a better person.

Studies on how interpretation affects visitors' behaviors indicate its positive influence. Sharpe and Gensler [1978] reported that the influence of interpretation on visitors results in:

- decreased vandalism; poaching and smuggling,
- disappearance of behaviors such as collecting souvenirs from precious sites and motorbikes driving into environmentally sensitive areas,
- increased compliance with national park regulations, improved safety, greater support for the policies and decisions made by managers of protected areas.

In another study, Fritschen [1984] found that:

- distribution of interpretation brochures led to a decrease in littering and tree damage by 50%,
- distribution of brochures accompanied by personal contact decreased these depreciative behaviors by 80%,
- due to an interpretation campaign involving posters, brochures, signs and radio broadcasts, the number of speed boats decreased by 53% and the number of boats with water-skiers decreased by 77%.



*"Through interpretation,  
understanding; through  
understanding, appreciation;  
through appreciation,  
protection".*

Freeman Tilden



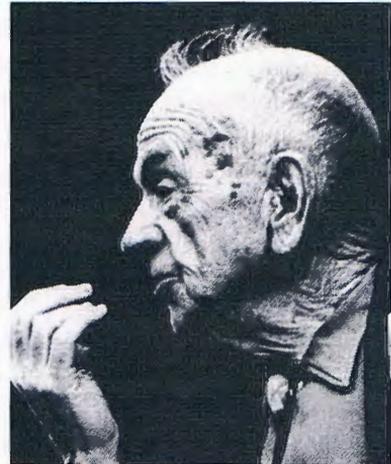
## 2.5. Foundations of heritage interpretation

Enos Mills (1870-1922) is widely considered a father of heritage interpretation. He made his living as a mountain guide, author and lecturer, and was one of the many guides who introduced visitors to the natural beauty of Rocky Mountains at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In his 35 years career as a guide and interpreter, he wrote 15 books on nature. Mills was also one of the founders of Rocky Mountain National Park, served on the committee which drafted the National Park Service Organic Act, and created education programs called Trail School. He experimented with various interpretation techniques, wrote books on the subject and taught about the art and theory of interpretation. By establishing rules for guides and interpreters, he contributed to the development of a vision of the world where people live in harmony with the natural environment and with each another.

The second founding father of heritage interpretation was Freeman Tilden (1883-1980). He began his career as a reporter, novelist and newspaper columnist writing about nature. When he was invited to work with the National Park Service, Tilden accepted the challenge. Having thoroughly analyzed the work of interpreters in national parks for many years, he shared his findings in *Interpreting Our Heritage* published in 1957, a work which remains a classic textbook of interpretation. The 105-pages long volume presents the essence of the subject and has served as an indispensable source of inspiration for generations of interpreters. It is also a display of Tilden's eloquence and the deep thought behind heritage interpretation. The book articulates several principles of interpretation, which will be now discussed.

**Freeman Tilden – Father of Heritage Interpretation**

- Most of the fundamental principles of the heritage interpretation process were conceived by **Freeman Tilden** in the 1950's.
- Freeman Tilden was born in 1883.
- He began his writing as a book reviewer.
- In 1940s, Tilden "tired" of writing fiction, and began to write about the national parks.
- With the publication of *Interpreting Our Heritage* (1954), he gave form and substance to the profession of heritage interpretation.



**2.6. Principles of heritage interpretation<sup>4</sup>**

*Any interpretation that does not relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.*

<sup>4</sup> The chapter was developed using: Tilden (1977), Ham (1992), Knudson et al. (1999).

**Interpretation must be relevant:**

- ✓ Interpretation must make a personal connection with the visitor (connect to something relating to that person, their family, health, quality of life or beliefs).
- ✓ To be meaningful interpretation must connect with something already in their life (Tilden).
- ✓ Interpretation allows the visitors to feel a sense of connection with the environment: this means visitors are more likely to listen about the issues.
- ✓ "To understand how volcano works, think of a covered pot of boiling water".

In order to engage the audience, interpretation must relate to what they find relevant to their interests or personality. The message behind interpretation should be interesting, so that it arouses attention, meaningful, so that it raises concern, and fascinating, so that it exerts a lasting influence on the attitudes and behaviors of visitors. Relating to visitors' experiences is conceptually supported by the theory of schemas proposed by Neisser [1976], according to which mental schemas, developed as a result of diverse experiences, determine the perception of information and are themselves modified by new experiences. From this perspective, it is crucial to know visitors, including their socio-demographic features (such as age, gender, background, education), experience, interests, and even motivations. The knowledge of visitors helps reach their consciousness and thus effectively influence their cognitive schemas. This in turn makes it possible to select such facts, anecdotes and examples to illustrate a story which have a greater chance of catching visitors' attention.

*Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.*

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A commonly repeated error is that many tour guides only provide visitors with dull, textbook knowledge, much like in a school. They communicate dry facts instead of interpreting them. Another mistake is the lack of any specific facts: anecdotes, jokes and games may provide fun and entertainment, but they are not interpretation, either. Selecting just the right facts from the multitude of available information requires great skill. It is important to base them on up-to-date and credible sources of knowledge, while avoiding unreliable ones,

especially web sites. Information should only be obtained from proven, reputable and, ideally, peer-reviewed publications or reliable on-line sources.

**Example: “Interpreting Grey Whales” [Beck & Cable 1999]:**

- ✓ The annual gray whale migration route, of approximately 10’000 miles, is the *longest* of any mammal.
- ✓ The distance traveled over the life span of a gray whale is equivalent to the distance to the moon and back.
- ✓ Nine 120-liters trash cans lined up as if full of amphipods (small shrimp-like organisms) represent how much an adult gray eats in a day.
- ✓ A baby gray whale drinks 185 liters of milk and, consequently, gains 30 kg – a day.

Nowadays, when the amount of information available is increasing at an astonishingly rapid pace, it is difficult to be an expert in every field. In practice, interpreters will find themselves unable to answer all the questions asked by visitors. In such a case, it is better to admit a gap in knowledge and find the answer at the next occasion than to confabulate. It is equally important to make the audience aware of which facts have been found in reliable sources and which are the interpreter’s own speculations or comments. It must be borne in mind that gaining knowledge is an important motive behind tourist activities for many visitors: they find it extremely important to derive satisfaction from learning new facts, discovering local cultures or understanding laws of nature. Satisfying this type of visitors is particularly difficult, as many of them seek real intellectual challenges rather than trivial and boring facts.

*Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.*

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The art of storytelling has been used for centuries and remains inextricable part of our everyday life. The stories we hear influence us, our beliefs and attitudes. It is important that stories enable visitors to gain something and become better persons. The story of a given place can be delivered in a variety forms: orally, as a puppet show, a dance and music performance, a light and sound show, etc. Historical figures, places and periods can be presented by staging excerpts from plays in interesting venues.

How to entertain? [Ham 1992]:

- ✓ Smile – indicates pleasure in most culture.
- ✓ Use active verbs: „The bat pollinated the tree” not „The tree was pollinated by bat” (passive verb is in academic writing).
- ✓ Use a „visual metaphor”: e.g. diversity of tropical invertebrate species.
- ✓ Exaggerate Size: „If we were small enough to walk inside a wasp’s nest ...”
- ✓ Exaggerate Time Scale: „If time were speeded up, so that ...”
- ✓ Use Personification: „What might trees say if they could talk?”

Modern forms of interpretation have been increasingly used over the recent years, contributing to the popularization of heritage sites and properties in society. This in turn leads to a greater interest in heritage sites among local communities and an increase in the visitor return rate. The oral story is the most traditional and significant form of interpretation. While it does not always go with a visual performance, it is an important and often the most interesting component of interpretation. Despite the high popularity of modern interactive and multimedia techniques, the direct contact between the speaker and the audience remains a powerful and basic source of emotional experiences. Some go as far as to say that listening to one poignant and compelling story has a power to change the meaning of one’s life.

*The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.*

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One of the purposes of interpretation is to debunk myths and false beliefs about the surrounding world. Interpretation should inspire, offer recreational learning opportunities, provoke visitors to broaden their horizons and provide them with food for thought. Arousing doubt, citing controversial sources, inspiring a search for knowledge and sharing the interpreter’s own passion significantly contributes to the quality of presentation and has a stimulating effect on the audience. Interpreters, based on their own experience, should aim to present the “soul” of the place; to explain why it was important in the past, is important today and will be important in the future, as well as what constitutes its outstanding and unique value.

- ✓ Interpretation is not a neutral presentation of facts, it should inspire a new perception and understanding of the visited place.
- ✓ The communication must provoke curiosity, attention and interest.
- ✓ If you can't get attention, tourist won't even stop at an exhibit, want to attend a program, or pay attention during programs.
- ✓ Use provocative graphics, photos, or statements that get the audience's attention.

Another important purpose of interpretation is to make tourists aware of the need for protecting sites such as: land and water ecosystems, monuments of architecture, places related to significant historical events and other culturally important sites. By using provocation it is possible to influence visitors' behavior to a greater extent and make them realize that by destroying something beautiful, they actually destroy themselves. Interpretation helps visitors observe the beauty of the surrounding world, promotes a change in attitude and stimulates creativity. There are two motivational strategies: raising concern and inciting desire. The former involves a presentation of negative visions (which only have a short-lasting influence on the audience). The latter is more effective and seeks to present examples of positive activities. This strategy is most powerful if it manages to make the audience aware that acting in a specific way might change their future.

*Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.*

Naturally, interpretation does not aim at presenting all the information available on a given topic, as this would be impossible. A tourist can only intake a limited amount of information during one trip. In order to make the information to be communicated more accessible, it should be divided into seven (plus or minus 2) points. When designing an interpretation program, it must be also decided which themes to incorporate and which to omit so that the whole topic is illustrated adequately. Given the limited perceptual abilities of visitors, the story or phenomenon should be presented using only a limited number of facts and ideas.



People forget facts, they  
remember themes.



**Self-Reference and Labeling – to Make Communication More Personal**

Self-referencing:

- ✓ „Think of the last time you ...”
- ✓ „Have you ever ...”
- ✓ „How many of you ever ...”

Labeling:

- ✓ „People who understand the value of the forest know that ...” (positive)
- ✓ „Parents who care about ...” (positive)
- ✓ „The worst criminals are the ones who commit crimes against nature” (negative)

Every interpretation program should aim to provide tourists with a specific message: general truths, the themes which visitors should understand and keep in memory. Rather than being a collection of unrelated facts, it should only contain those facts which best illustrate the main theme of the program. Studies show that visitors facts but remember themes – that is, the messages of interpretation programs. The theme should be presented at the beginning of the program (the trip, presentation, exhibition or trail). Once visitors learn the theme, their attention is drawn to it, enabling them to understand and remember more.

**Interpretation should reveal the larger truth behind any topic or fact:**

- ✓ „Interpretation should reveal something of the beauty and wonder, the inspiration ...” [Tilden 1976].
- ✓ Visitors should not just being told endless facts, but come to discover for themselves what lies beyond these facts and what it means for their life.

The interpretation of general topics involves using local examples to illustrate a global problem (e.g. “Extinction of forests in a national park and the decrease of forests in the world”; “Churches of Peace as an example of changes in the awareness of the contemporary society”. A more general topic can be interpreted in several sites of the region, each of them illustrating another aspect of the same topic. By employing Interpretive System Planning, it is possible to avoid repeating the same themes across the region.

**Interpretation should be pleasurable**

- ✓ Interpretation should enrich the experience of the visitor, filling them with wonder and curiosity about the environment.
- ✓ Interpretation takes place in recreational settings, so there is a need to keep interpretation informal.
- ✓ Need to allow visitors to be actively involved.
- ✓ Utilize their five senses.

*Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.*

Today, the majority of children, especially those who grow up in urban areas, have no contact with nature at all. A number of them lead a sedentary lifestyle and spend their free time watching television or playing computer games. Many young people find wild nature alien and intimidating, which results from unfamiliarity with the natural environment, its inhabitants, smells and sounds. To prevent this fear and ignorance, environmental education should be introduced early in childhood. Interpretation programs targeted at children should take the following rules into account [Beck & Cable 1998]:

- Limit the involvement of adult chaperones. This will help children focus on the interpretation program better.
- Work in small groups of 10 persons at most. A larger number of participants makes it difficult to maintain order.
- Include elements of surprise in the program. This will help make better contact with children, capture their attention and improve the program's efficiency.
- Provide a program which is relatively short and varied, so that children keep their attention.
- Deliver the program in a safe and children-friendly place.
- Ensure that each child has an equal and direct contact with the interpreter.
- Encourage children to speak, use songs, rhythm and animal sounds (it is difficult to maintain silence in a group of children, so try to take advantage of noise).
- Encourage children to engage in physical activity, which a natural part of their behavior. The interpreter's role is to orient it to the desired direction.

**Interpretation should be organized (structurized)**

- ✓ People have limitations on the amount of new information they can remember.
- ✓ Limiting the information and presenting it in a way that is clear and easy to follow will enable visitors to remember more the interpretation.

*Interpretation should have a theme. People remember themes – they forget facts.*

When choosing the theme of interpretation, the following point should be considered [Regnier et al. 1994]:

- is the theme stated as a complete sentence?
- does the theme concern an important problem related to the place?
- will the theme enrich visitors' experience?
- will the theme appeal to visitors (examples should be selected so as to captivate visitors' imagination)?
- am I personally involved in the theme and do I possess enough relevant source material?
- when the interpretation program ends, will visitors be able to formulate its theme (they can be asked to do so after the visit)?



*"Whatever is written without  
enthusiasm will be read  
without interest".*  
Freeman Tilden



**Themes should:**

- ✓ Be stated as a short, simple, complete sentence.
- ✓ Contain one main idea if possible.
- ✓ Reveal the overall purpose of the program or activity.
- ✓ Be interestingly and motivationally worded when possible.

**Interpretation is thematic if it has a major point (theme)**

- ✓ Every presentation of ideas have both topic and a theme.
- ✓ A topic – a subject matter of the presentation.
- ✓ A theme – main point or the message that is trying to be conveyed about the topic.
- ✓ A theme is the central or key idea of any presentation.
- ✓ When communicating with your visitors, the audience should be able to summarize the main point of the program in one sentence. This sentence would be the theme.

Before starting a program, the audience should be evaluated. Visitors tend to value humor, multi-sensory input, clarity of the argument and interpreter's enthusiasm and dislike interpretations that are dry, longish, overtly technical or lacking in enthusiasm. At the beginning of the program, it is extremely important to arouse the interest of visitors, relate to their experiences, and engage them both emotionally and intellectually.

**Table 1.** The topic – the theme (examples) [Ham 1992]

The Topic	The Theme
<b>Cows</b>	Cows are amazing creatures that touch our lives every day.
<b>Caves</b>	Exploring caves is a sensual experience.
<b>Wetlands</b>	We need to preserve wetlands for five reasons.
<b>Steam engines</b>	Steam engines changed our lives in three ways.
<b>Mayan culture</b>	Much of the literature about the Mayan culture is incorrect.
<b>Baseball</b>	Baseball is America's greatest gift to the world.
<b>Birds of the Park</b>	Birds are a very interesting group of animals because of their special adaptation for flight. Native birds in this country are rapidly disappearing. Studying how birds fly led to the invention of early airplanes.

Steps in theme writing [Ham 1992]:

1. Select your general topic and use it to complete the following sentence:  
*"Generally, my presentation (talk, exhibit, trail) is about ..."*
2. State your topic in more specific terms and complete the following sentence:  
*"Specifically, I want to tell my audience about ..."*
3. Now, express your theme by completing the following sentence:  
*"After hearing my presentation (or reading my exhibit), I want my audience to understand that ..."*

Example. **Topic: „Soil erosion and sedimentation”** [Ham 1992]

**Theme:** „Soil erosion not only threatens agriculture, it threatens our water, fisheries, and major shipping corridor”

- I. Soil erosion and sedimentation are natural process that humans can affect.
  - a) Soil erosion
    1. How it happens and what causes it
    2. Where the run-off goes
  - b) Sedimentation
    1. Sand paper analogy
- II. Soil erosion affects agriculture
  - a) Story about grandfather farm
    1. Didn't terrace, didn't seed vulnerable areas
    2. In two heavy rain years, lost top soil, no crops
    3. Went broke, lost his farm
    4. My father grew up poor
  - b) Our future depends on agriculture
- III. Sedimentation affects our drinking water
  - a) Run-off carries dirt and contaminants
    1. Dirties the colour of our water
    2. Chemicals and bacteria in the turn-off poison our water
      - i. Story about the Kowalski family
      - ii. Story about the Anderson's baby
  - b) Statistics about diseases and deaths due to water contamination
- IV. Sedimentation affects fish habitat
  - a) Fish have to „breathe” clean water
  - b) Fish eggs need clean water to develop and hatch
  - c) Death rates and survival of fingerlings in certain rivers
    1. Clean rivers
    2. Dirty rivers
- V. Sedimentation affects shipping channel
  - a) How sedimentation builds up in the channel
    1. The Panama Canal Problem
    2. The Wisła River in Poland
  - b) Costs of dredging are enormous

## 2.7. Interpretive talk

Interpretive talk remains one of the most popular and appreciated forms of interpretation – despite being the oldest. Tourists often report that only a skilful guide makes it possible to discover the real beauty of visited sites. This means that visitor satisfaction is largely determined by how the guide presents a heritage site. In this case, the guide's personality plays a decisive role. Interpretive talks can be delivered:

- in indoor sites not directly related to the topic of the interpretation (e.g. in visitor and interpretive centers),
- outdoors (e.g. around a bonfire),
- at heritage sites (museums, churches, castles, battlefields, nature reserves, national parks),
- in a bus, on a ship and in other means of transport.

The essential characteristics of a good speaker include: politeness, enthusiasm, trustworthiness, communicative skills and logical reasoning.

Every talk should have four parts [Ham 1992; Regnier et al. 1994]:

1. **Pow** – serves to arouse the audience's interest (for instance, by introducing a provocative statement, joke, rhetorical question or quotation). Its aim is to focus visitors' attention on the talk. Example: "*What would you do of tomorrow you woke up in the middle of an ocean?*" – as an opening of a talk about global warming.
2. **Bridge** – refers to what was said a while ago. It should explain the opening statement, present the theme of the interpretation and encourage the audience to focus their attention. It answers the question: What is the aim of the talk? Why should I focus on its theme? Example [Ham 1992]: "*As unbelievable as it sounds, some scientists are telling us that future generations may actually have to face a very different world than the one you and I live in. The cause, they say, is that the world is getting warmer. In the next few minutes, I'm going to tell you about global warming and (1) why scientists think it's happening. We'll look briefly at (2) its causes and how it can affect not only the oceans, but (3) agriculture and forestry. Most of all, we'll look at how (4) it might affect people across the world – including us, our children and their children. I think you'll see that if the world is actually warming, sooner or later people everywhere will have to change the way they're living – and they'll have to change it dramatically*" – the main theme of the talk.
3. **Body** – elaborates on the main theme using examples. It should be organized around seven or less main ideas (psychologists would argue that five is the maximum), and each idea should be illustrated with carefully selected examples, metaphors, analogies and references. When moving

from one idea to another, it is good to use **transitions** to indicate a change of topic and at the same time help the audience remember the whole argument. Example: *“So as you can see, there’s some pretty strong evidence that the world really is getting warmer. And if this is true, it’s probably going to affect us in a lot of different ways. Let’s talk first about how it might change the earth’s oceans ...”*

4. **Conclusion** – serves as a punch line to the presentation by summarizing (and referring to) the main ideas and encouraging the audience to take action. The conclusion should answer the question “Where do we go from here?”; it might include an element of provocation or end suddenly so as to inspire the audience and motivate them to investigate the truth of the matter on their own. It should also remind them of the theme and how it relates to what the audience has just heard.

**Examples of bad, awkward endings [Ham 1992]:**

- Finishing the talk with a final sentence and then adding supplementary information.
- Introducing new ideas into the conclusion.
- “That’s it”, “It’s over”.

**Examples of good endings:**

„Thank your”, „Goodbye”, „Good night”.

The form of the talk is just as important as its factual content. Interpreters should remember about the following rules when preparing and delivering a talk [Ham 1992; Regnier et al. 1994]:

- dress in appropriate, clean and tidy attire and wear the ID card (this makes the interpreter seem more trustworthy);
- arrive before the audience to check any audio and video equipment that might be used in the presentation;
- greet the visitors as they come (a mini-interview may help get to know the audience better and to adapt the presentation to their level and interests);
- prepare the introduction carefully (it is crucial to arouse the interest of the audience within the first 30 seconds of the talk);
- avoid barriers between the interpreter and the audience (do not stand behind a table or on a platform);
- greet the audience with a smile and keep eye contact; do not sit or put your hands in your pocket;

- do not write down the whole talk on paper (but it might be a good idea to take note of the main points on a sheet of paper and glance at it from time to time, not trying to hide it);
- avoid talking in a monotone; talk spontaneously and use your voice like a musical instrument (alternate between low and high tones, make pauses to emphasize main points);
- choose the wording carefully and use specific examples; avoid “uhms”, “errs” and other verbal fillers;
- use facial expressions and bodily posture to reinforce the meaning (55% of information is understood through facial expressions); avoid mannerisms (jiggling around, crossing arms); use gesticulation to emphasize the main points of the talk; keep proper timing; deliver the talk at a proper pace (timing);
- use jokes to introduce a little humor to the talk (but never make fun of the audience!);
- ask various questions from time to time:
  - focusing questions (Who?, What?, Where? E.g. “What do you know about Lemkos?”, “What are your associations with this sign?”),
  - explanatory questions (What does it mean?, What if?, Why? E.g. “How come that most Lemko families live in the western parts of Poland?”, “What will this lake look like in several years?”),
  - evaluation questions („What’s your opinion?”, “How do you think, why is there a motor boat ban on this lake?”, “Why is biodiversity so important?”).

Ways to make a talk more interesting [Knudson et al. 1999]:

- examples: specific examples are easier to understand than imagined ones
- cause and effect relationships: present cause-and-effect relationships (people are interested in what factors determine specific phenomena)
- analogies: explain unknown phenomena by showing how they are similar to what visitors already know; use comparisons to make the topic clearer
- change time scales: in order to make the topic easier to understand, you can alter scale of time (e.g. by presenting the history of the Earth in 24 hours, so that visitors can better understand the duration of geological processes) or space (e.g. by making a model of the Solar System along a tourist trail to show distances between planets)
- similes: employ words such as „like” and „as” in order to show similarities and better illustrate the presented phenomenon
- metaphors: use words and phrases which are normally used to describe something completely different and yet somehow related to the presented theme
- anecdotes: include an interesting and amusing story related to the theme of your talk
- quotations: quote other persons to make the talk more lively (people are interested observations made by other persons, especially if they are famous)
- paremiology: draw on the rich treasury of proverbs (a well-aimed proverb touches the heart of the matter and adds color to the talk)
- humor: engage visitors by employing humor, especially at the beginning of the talk so as to break the ice and get close to the audience
- repetition: repeat the key points several times, as the frequency of repetitions determines whether the content will be remembered
- topical events: talk about topical events, so that the audience can see parallels and find reference points

Talking about historical events and legends requires specific techniques. When talking about history, it is best to avoid a lecture-like form, instead reporting the events from the perspective of an ordinary person who took part in them. This will be much more interesting for the audience and will engage their imagination. Keep in mind the following rules [Ham 1992; Regnier et al. 1994]:

- choose stories which are relevant both to yourself and to the collective experience,
- formulate a problem which will make the audience think what the main point is going to be,
- decide whether to speak in first or third person (e.g. "I happened to ..." "A friend of mine was a witness of ...", "Me and my friends were ...", etc.),
- imagine a sequence of images which appear in the talk and then describe them,
- adjust intonation and gesticulation to the content of the talk,
- use sound-imitating words to enhance the atmosphere (door creaking, wolf howling, etc.),
- create story characters and let them have a dialogue, use various dialects and timbre,
- make occasional pauses to heighten the tension (but not too often: every 10-12 words at most),
- make the audience focus on yourself and not on any props, which may easily distract attention.

Planning a thematic talk – the 2-3-1 Rule [Ham 1992]:

1. Choose a general topic.
2. If necessary, choose a more specific topic.
3. Choose a theme based on the topic of your talk.
4. Summarize your entire talk in a short paragraph whose first sentence is the theme.

Apply the 2-3-1 Rule

5. Prepare an outline of the body.
6. Prepare the conclusion.
7. Prepare the introduction.
8. Rearrange the order and tie your talk together.
9. Practice your talk.
10. If appropriate, choose a title for your talk.

## 2.8. Slide talk

Slide talks using projectors and computers are a simple yet effective form of interpretive presentations. They can be delivered during evening bonfires (e.g. on campsites near protected areas), in museums or other types of tourist attractions, in cultural and community centers. A slide presentation might

employ pictures taken with a camera or mobile phone, downloaded from the Internet or scanned from printed sources (remember about copyrights). This form of presentation has many advantages [Regnier et al. 1994]:

- it is easier to focus visitors' attention in a darkened room,
- pictures may illustrate words or even communicate a message without the need to use narration,
- they provide sharp and colorful images,
- they can be used for groups of different sizes and in different rooms,
- they are easy to modify,
- the equipment is relatively inexpensive and easy to operate,
- a slide presentation makes the interpreter appear more credible and professional,
- the intimate atmosphere of a slide talk helps avoid undesired behavior.

The creation of a good slide talk involves the following steps [Regnier et al. 1994]:

1. Carefully choose a topic which can be adequately illustrated with pictures (e.g. rare animal species, landscape changes, historical events).
2. Specify the theme and express it as a sentence.
3. Analyze the topic of the presentation thoroughly and try to get expertise in this field.
4. Imagine the presentation as a story comprised of a series of images.
5. Write down the scenario of the presentation as a collection of loosely related thoughts.
6. Outline the scenario on separate sheets of paper.
7. Choose pictures and special effects which will illustrate the talk and arrange them in order.

A well-developed presentation scenario should be inspiring, exciting and leave a lasting impression in the audience. The best solution is to choose pictures based on a previously created outline, although in practice, scenarios are created based on available pictures. Before making a scenario, relevant pictures should be arranged in order using a computer program.

In order to achieve best results, some of the following advice can be helpful [Ham 1992; Regnier et al. 1994]:

- every presentation should have an introduction, body and conclusion,
- focus on the theme and limit the number of points to be discussed – do not try to say everything that is say on a given topic,
- keep the program concise and exciting; the ideal duration is 30 minutes (but it can be extended to 45 minutes; for an introductory program presenting tourists with attractions of the region, 5 to 15 minutes will be enough),
- arrange slides into sequences which develop a single idea,

- link sequences with interesting references,
- plan exciting and dynamic sequences of pictures at the beginning and end of the presentation; start with something unusual and atmospheric,
- project smooth series of related slides (e.g. a wide landscape shot followed by a close-up, comparisons, contrasts, sequences of pictures taken before and after an event – e.g. a flood or a battle), show cause-and-effect relationships (e.g. pictures of a slope from before and after an avalanche),
- do not elaborate on one idea by showing many similar pictures (a single good slide will be more powerful than several similar ones),
- use sounds (e.g. silent ticking of a clock – to illustrate the movement of a glacier, or the sound of stone pounded against stone – to illustrate the hewing of an axe by a primitive man),
- narration related to a single slide should not exceed 15 seconds,
- the speaker is more important than pictures, as they only illustrate the speaker's words, thoughts and impressions,
- face the audience at all times (do not turn your back on them to see the screen),
- do not comment subsequent slides – it is the slides that should illustrate the talk,
- do speak ahead of the pictures or make a pause until the next slide appears,
- avoid showing one slide for more than 15 seconds (after that, the audience will focus on studying its details rather than listening the talk),
- do not apologize for poor quality of pictures or the program – this may deprive the interpreter of credibility and place the audience in an awkward position,
- pay attention to the pace of slide changing (it should be adjusted to the talk),
- never show a white blank screen (it dazzles the audience and makes an unprofessional impression),
- in case of any technical problems, keep calm and resolve them (turn on the lights, check cable connections, turn off the lights, continue),
- ask someone to be responsible for turning the lights off and on,
- you might consider using special effects, such as video excerpts, statements by well-known figures, a musical background, sound effects, etc.

Before the first visitor arrives, the speaker should ensure that [Regnier et al. 1994]:

- the room can be darkened sufficiently,
- all visitors will see the screen perfectly,
- the screen is big enough for the group,

- the remote control is working,
- the projector is placed high enough (so that visitors will not block it),
- the projector will actually display the presentation (sometimes it may receive a different content than that visible on the computer screen),
- speakers are working,
- the screen size is compatible with that of the projector,
- visitors at the back of the room will hear the speaker,
- there is an illuminated table and a pointer available (if necessary),
- power wires are taped to the floor.

## 2.9. Puppet interpretation

This form of interpretation is especially effective with children. Puppets create a world where anything is possible: trees can talk, ghosts can be seen, wild animals are suddenly tamed. A puppet interpretation has many advantages [Ham 1992; Regnier et al. 1994]:

- puppets speak to children, entertain them and engage their attention,
- they can be used for presenting controversial topics in a humorous and balanced way,
- they are cheap, non-complicated and easy to use.

Interpreters holding puppet shows might consider the following guidelines:

- synchronize the lips of puppets with what they say,
- open puppets' mouth at the beginning of a word and close it after each syllable (as opposed to keeping it open until the end of the word),
- move only the mouth area and not the whole head (you might practice it in front of a mirror),
- never break roles before the end of the show (so as not to spoil the effect by showing that they are just props),
- puppets should keep an eye contact and look over the audience from time to time,
- each puppet should have a unique personality and voice: the more puppets differ from each another and from the interpreter, the better impression of the show,
- keep the show concise and exciting (5-10 minutes for each character),
- look at the puppet when it speaks: if you want children to believe that your puppets are real, act as if you believe it yourself.

## 2.10. Interpretation on the trail

Thematic tours involve an interpreter guiding visitors through thematic trails, city districts, museums, zoological gardens, protected areas, etc. The guide interprets assets of the natural environment, items or objects of historical value, sites of historical events or works of art, seeking to explain their meaning, provoking and engaging the audience. The more engaged are visitors, the more permanent their experiences will be.

The topic of a tour should reflect the character of the place and explain why it is unique. Topics cannot be not be overly general (e.g. “A historical tour”, “A natural tour”, etc.). A good topic should explain the theme and at the same time foreshadows experiences; examples of well-named topics: “The mysterious treasures of Templars” (Łagów Lubuski), “Shipwrecks, corsairs and lighthouses” (Cape Rozewie Lighthouse).

First steps are always difficult and every interpreter needs practice to learn the art of guiding. However, it is always important to keep in mind several guidelines [Trapp et al. 1994]:

- Act as a host: arrive at the assembly point at least 15 minutes early, get to know visitors, learn about their interests, greet the audience, introduce yourself, present the topic, tell visitors what is the time and distance of the tour. Plan the first stop at a place visible from the point of assembly, so that latecomers can join the group, and finish the tour in the starting point or in a place from where it can be easily accessed. Adjust the pace to the physical condition of the group: go only as fast as the slowest participant. The comfort of the group should be your primary concern; when talking, try to stand with the sun and wind to your face and not the faces of participants.
- Plan the sequence of stops: the place of each stop should be carefully selected so that it fits the topic of the tour. Keep stops short. A typical thematic tour should last about one hour and include about five stops. The pace should be adjusted to visitors' activity, involvement and interest. Pay attention to their enthusiasm and go ahead before it cools down; it is better to leave the group slightly unsatisfied and hungry for more information than bored and weary.
- Flexibility: allow for unexpected events during the tour and have a backup program prepared beforehand in case of bad weather.
- Large groups (over 30 visitors): the ability to guide large groups of visitors comes with time. It requires firmness and assertiveness. wait for all participants before starting to talk, wait for all participants at preplanned stops; speak loudly and clearly; try to be visible for every participant (stand

on a platform if necessary); ensure that the whole group can see the interpreted object.

- Full loop: it is a good idea to make a thematic loop (by concluding the talk with a reference to what was said at the beginning) and a physical loop (by returning to the original point of departure – every tour should start and end in the same place); the introduction and conclusion should be related to each other to give a sense of coherence; at each stop, elaborate on the topic presented at the beginning.
- Use gadgets: many problems can be better understood and explained with the use of items such as:
  - maps help look at the area from another perspective,
  - binoculars helps see details that are invisible to the naked eye,
  - a stick may act as a pointer,
  - a pocket mirror can be used to catch sunbeams and point at architectural or natural details (e.g. a tree hollow).

Particular attention should be paid to the needs of special groups (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Needs of special groups [Regnier et al. 1994]

Group	Description	Needs	Guidelines
Elderly visitors	Relatively much free time, declining physical fitness, extensive experience.	They seek to interact with others of similar age; often return in previously visited places; like comprehensive programs; inclined to spend more time in visited attractions.	Avoid long and toilsome marches; remember about their perceptual limitations due to poor vision and hearing; refer to their experience; encourage them to interact with the interpreter.
Tourists from abroad	Lack of knowledge about the interpreted area, mostly young and well-educated.	Be careful about cultural differences and language skills.	Avoid colloquial language; speak slowly; allow additional time for discussing special interests and questions.
Visually impaired visitors	Includes those who have severely limited vision and those who can only "see" by touch.	Describe objects and landscapes using a vivid language; if unsure, ask whether they need anything.	Engage them by providing objects to touch.

Hearing impaired visitors	Around 4% of the population – mostly in older age groups.	The interpreter's face, illustrations and visual presentations must be clearly visible.	Keep hands away from your face when talking; talk with your face to the audience; repeat important points; speak slowly.
Physically handicapped visitors	Use wheelchairs, crutches or other mobility devices.	Ensure the area is fully accessible to wheelchair users.	Limit the tour to wheelchair accessible areas; avoid steep slopes, uneven terrain and stairs.
Families	Have a wide variety of motives for participating in interpretive programs.	Allow a lot of time for interactions within family groups – education is their secondary aim compared to the joy of being together.	The involvement of children acts as a catalyst for the involvement of the whole family.

### 2.11. Living history interpretation

Living interpretation is becoming an increasingly popular way of sharing knowledge in recent years. Its beginnings can be traced back to 1981, when, having already opened the Nordic Museum on the island of Djurgården in Stockholm, its founder, Artur Hazelius, created the famous Skansen, where local musicians and craftsmen could demonstrate their skills the idea of a living museum became very popular in the United States. One of its earliest and most influential implementations is Colonial Williamsburg. Opened in 1934, this living-history museum is comprised of over 400 buildings, including shops, taverns and markets, which were reconstructed with a tremendous amount of effort on the site of a former settlement from the American Revolutionary War period. Dozens of professional interpreters reenact aspects of daily life in a colonial settlement. Living interpretation is also part of many historical reenactment events, such as the Battle of Austerlitz or the Battle of Waterloo, and numerous historical festivals (e.g. in Biskupin and on Wolin Island). Participants of these events are mostly amateurs and people fascinated by the subject.

The purpose of living interpretation is not only to share information – it also serves to revive historic facilities so as to show how they were used in the past. Currently, the prevailing trend in living interpretation is to portray the

lives of common people, local jargons and traditional skills, as opposed to presenting great figures, national heroes and significant events. Even in battle reenactment there is a tendency to focus on the fate of ordinary soldiers and civilians rather than generals. This is not to belittle the merits of great historical figures, but to show them from the perspective of common people that the audience may relate to. Living interpretation can be performed either in first person (by assuming the role of a person from the past) or in third person (by wearing a historic outfit and telling about past events from a contemporary perspective). The decision to go for first- or third-person interpretation depends on a number of factors, including the site of interpretation and its features [Regnier et al. 1994]:

- interpreters performing in third person can handle questions which can only be answered from a contemporary perspective (e.g. what happened to an interpreted site later on or what were the consequences of an event), whereas those performing in first person must claim ignorance in order to keep their character credible,
- third-person interpretation is less awkward and uncomfortable for the audience,
- in third-person interpretation, the costume serves as a starting point for presenting information, whereas in first-person interpretation it is supposed to be something natural and not a subject of discussion,
- to deliver a credible first-person performance, the interpreter must possess acting skills,
- first-person interpreters needs an assistant who would introduce the audience into the events to be presented.

Given an appropriate set and costume, first-person interpretation certainly provides more powerful impressions: it engages visitors' imagination,

First-person interpretation requires excellent attention to detail [Regnier et al. 1994]:

- the audience must be comfortable and should not stand against the sun or wind,
- introduce the audience into the historical context before the show: in a few words, present the interpreted character,
- choose a site that fits the character (e.g. a hill, vehicle from the period, workroom),
- if the interpretation is to be performed more than once, check the site at various times of the day,
- the costume must be comfortable, slightly worn and stained so as to feel authentic; it should not look like a costume designed for performances, but be a natural illustration of the character,

- remember about the tiny details which might enhance the character's authenticity (e.g. a chain watch, a monocle, laborers with dirt under the fingernails, firemen smelling of smoke, rafters with wet trousers),
- arrange the room carefully: use smells (the smell of old beer in a pub or fresh coffee in a colonial store), sounds (music in an old tavern), appropriate lighting (oil or gas lamps, candles).

### **2.12. Visitor centers/heritage interpretation centers**

Visitor centers are one of the most dynamically developing types of paramuseal facilities today. Located near the entrance to sites of natural or historical heritage, they allow visitors to understand the significance of heritage better and introduce them into the topics related to the site and other heritage sites. A visitor center serves as a portal into the living museum outside, presenting the topography of the surrounding site, its history and environment. Exhibits designed to interpret local heritage can also be found in many tourists information points.

Exhibits presented in heritage interpretation centers may take many forms: from collections of pictures, sculptures, paintings and functional art, through archeology finds, to living plants and animals. The fundamental purpose of an exhibit is to provide visitors information which will encourage visitors to go outside (rather than stay within the center) and enable them to understand everything they are to find there. Interpretation centers might present information about local events or show exhibits which visitors will want to see after exploring the site in order to learn something more or get more detailed information.

### **2.13. Exhibition design**

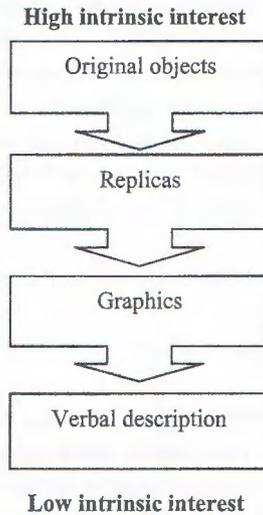
An interpretive exhibit seeks to presents the audience with its topic by actively involving visitors and relating to their everyday life. Such exhibits should intrigue, arouse curiosity, bring about a sense of "revelation", provide a unique point of view, present a story which illustrates a greater whole. They should encourage visitors to expand their knowledge on the topic being interpreted. Based on the level of visitor interaction, exhibits can be classified into four groups (Table 3):

1. Visitor-stimulating moving exhibits – stimulate visitors' interaction by providing direct contact with living animals or moving models.

- 2a. Visitor-stimulating inert exhibits – may include button-controlled models and items or interactive computer panels.
- 2b. Non-stimulating moving exhibits – may include moving models or living animals in the zoo.
- 3. Non-stimulating inert exhibits – works of art, picture collections, graphics, dioramas.

**Table 3.** Exhibit classification based on visitor interaction [Veverka 1997]

Visitor interaction	Exhibits	
	Moving	Inert
Active	1. Provide direct contact with living animals or moving models, which stimulates visitors and requires activity on their part	2a. Stimulate visitors' interaction: button-controlled models or items, interactive computer panels
Passive	2b. Watching moving models or animals in a zoo	3. Works of art, photos, graphics, dioramas



**Figure 2.** Exhibit content and visitor interest [Veverka 1997]

In practice, various types are often combined into a single exhibit, some parts of it stimulating visitors' activity and others being passive. Yet such exhibits can be still classified into one of the four groups based on exhibit load, which describes the amount of time and energy (physical and psychological) that the visitor must spend in order to understand the exhibit. The highest load is found in types 1, 2a and 2b, whereas passive exhibits of type 3 have the lowest load. The visitor comes to the exhibit area with a certain level of enthusiasm and interest, which then decreases with each exhibit. Studies show that visitors are most enthusiastic about dynamic, animated and multisensory exhibits. It has also been found that original exhibit items arouse greater interest than replicas, photos and graphics (Figure 2).

When designing an exhibit, it is a good idea to arrange its individual components in such a way that they form a kind of sinusoid, where interaction-stimulating components alternate with those that have a low exhibit load (Figure 3). Such an exhibition provide alternating periods of stimulation and relaxation, as a result of which it will attract visitors' attention for a longer time.

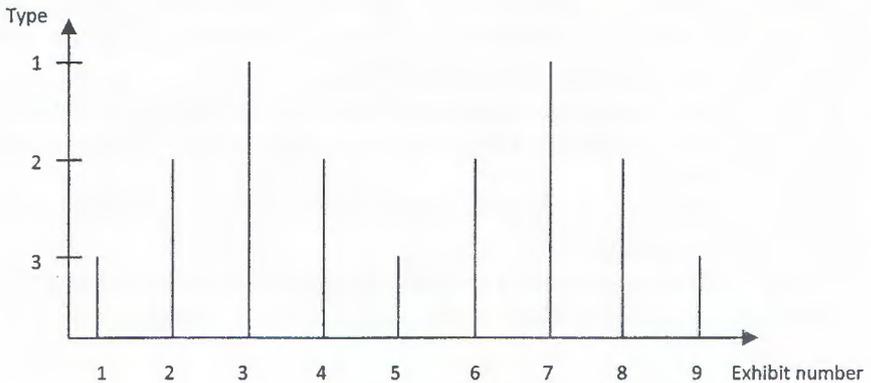


Figure 3. Distribution of exhibit load [according to Veverka 1997]

Other practical guidelines for exhibition design include [Veverka 1997; Knudson et al. 1999]:

- If a label is over 50 words, most visitors will probably not read it. The shorter the text, the more likely visitors are to read it and the greater interest it arouses.
- Less than 1% of visitors read the whole content of exhibit panels, and 90% out of those who do are scientists and academics with expert knowledge on the topic.

- On average, visitors only spend 30% of the time required to see the whole exhibit and read all descriptions.
- If visitors fail to get the point of the exhibit within 15 seconds, they will probably walk away.
- Provocative headlines and graphics arouse interest and draw attention.
- The average time that visitors spend on viewing videos or slide presentations in an exhibit is 3 minutes.
- The maximum time that visitors are ready to spend on watching a presentation is about 7 minutes.
- To find out if an exhibition meets its purposes, evaluate it while it is still at the design stage and ideally before spending any substantial budget on its implementation.
- 65% of visitors use interactive devices. But if a device is too complicated, they will quickly go away.
- While 35% of visitors watch three-dimensional maps, but they remember almost nothing afterwards.
- Only 25% watch two-dimensional maps, but the amount of information about tourist trails and infrastructure that they remember is much higher than in the case of three-dimensional maps.
- 33% of visitors listen to voice information. The average time of listening is 4 minutes. Only 5% listen for at least 10 minutes, and 95% listen for less than 3 minutes.
- While as many as 55% visitors watch video and slide presentations, only 8% do it for more than 6 minutes.
- 95% of visitors touch stuffed animals. Every chance of touching anything leads to an over 90% increase in the level of visitor interaction.

#### **2.14. Thematic (educational) routes**

Interpretation on thematic routes may involve brochures distributed before starting the trail, signs, plates, panels, audio devices along the route or portable audio-guides available at the beginning of the trail.

The starting and ending point of a route should be located possibly close to the areas where tourists stay, such as campsites and parking lots, as a number of tourists will not want to go far from a campsite or parking lot in order to find a route. Tourists also tend to prefer shorter routes.

If the investment in a route is to be efficient, the amount of the information it conveys relative to its construction cost must be as high as possible. For this reason, the route must be available to the highest number of

visitors possible. It should also serve as a marketing tool for other interpretive programs and services available in the area.

The process of designing thematic routes can be divided into several stages [Trapp et al. 1994]:

1. First of all, analyze the area thoroughly: specify the topic and purpose of the route, then plan stops which will illustrate the topic and help achieve the purpose. Subjects of interpretation should be permanent – for this reason, avoid birds' nests, bears' dens, cobwebs, etc. Consecutive stops should follow a logical sequence which illustrates a specific story or develops a specific idea. Ask another person to correct the route idea. In the final version, clearly mark the stops.
2. Choose the medium of interpretation (e.g. signs, brochures, audio-guides, panels, etc.) and write a clear and simple description for each stop, preferably in the form of a story containing important information. Descriptions should not be longer than 50 words. Print a small number of brochures to check their content and assess quality.
3. Describe the plant habitats along the trail, animals which can be encountered, historic objects and sites, etc. Interpretation should not be limited to their names only: inform visitors about their significance, physiology, reproductive strategy, adaptation to the environment, culture.
4. Try to design the route as a full loop, so that visitors can easily return to the starting point. Extra route variants located outside the main route should also be designed as loops.
5. The route should be relatively short: from 200-500 m to 3.5-4 km.
6. To provide visitors with a place to rest, place benches along the route, preferably close to viewing areas or at steep climbs.
7. Depending on its length, plan 10 to 20 stops along the route.
8. Place interpretive panels in well-visible areas which afford an unobstructed view on the relevant object. The first two stops should be located close to the starting point, so that visitors know they are going in the right direction, and keep the following stops relatively close to each another to avoid boring pauses. It is a good practice to place a stop or a directional sign after a series of complicated turns: this way, visitors will know that they are following the right path.
9. Consider other ways of adapting the route: for instance, by providing information specific for different seasons of the year (e.g. about birds remaining for the winter, hibernating animals, winter clearances in the forest) and information targeted at returning visitors.
10. Maintain the route on a regular basis: leave brochures in boxes, replace missing signs and repair any damage that might have occurred.

When designing an outdoor thematic route, keep in mind the following guidelines [Trapp et al. 1994]:

- The route should run among trees, through diversified forest habitats and meadows to reach viewing points which overlook interesting types of terrain, such as lakes, mountain peaks, valleys and postglacial forms.
- Shape the landscape so as to create interesting views: selectively remove shrubbery and shape the open space, but remembering to retain the natural character and ecological coherence of habitats.
- Plan the route along open forest fringes (unobscured by thickets) to encourages visitors to enter it, along interesting water edges and tall trees.
- Exploit the diversity of terrain for placing viewing points.
- To avoid monotony, plan the route along a twisting path.
- Direct visitors' attention to interesting views, sounds and landscape forms.
- When designing the route, try to plan it in such a way that visitors have their backs to the sun when walking it.

## **2.15. Media in interpretation**

A number of interpretive programs are not exclusively targeted at visitors of museums, national parks and other tourists attractions. People who never visit tourist attractions or do so very seldom can be the target on interpretation as well. The diverse media channels, including books, daily papers, weekly magazines, radio, television and especially the Internet, make it possible to disseminate interpretive information outside of attraction sites.

Each medium has both advantages and disadvantages: a great panoramic movie, when screened for a large audience on a small screen, will not arouse much interest; a newspaper article on a natural disaster will be much less powerful than a good documentary; the long-lasting process of historic monuments deteriorating due to air pollution could be a good topic for a weekly magazine. Based on the level of participation required by a medium on the part of the audience, media can be divided into "hot" and "cool" [McLuchan 1964]:

- Hot media include books, newspapers and periodicals, as they demand much attention and mental effort. This group also includes movies, as they favor concentration of the audience.
- Cool media include radio and television, which provide little intellectual involvement. Radio, however, is somewhat hotter than television, as they require more concentration, attention and imagination (radio is sometimes described as a festival of imagination).

It has been found that the more effort the audience make to receive information, the better they remember it [Vivian 1999]. For this reason, interpreters should encourage visitors to put effort and to become intellectually involved in receiving the interpretive message.

### 2.15.1. Printed materials

Many agencies aim to inform the society and shape its attitudes towards heritage. Despite these efforts, however, a number of people still do not visit tourist attractions at all. Mass media provide an excellent tool with which to address this group. They can be used not only to advertise exhibits, events, fairs and festivals, but also to shape environmentally-friendly attitudes and popularize historic preservation. News published in local press, news-sheets, brochures, leaflets and tourist guides all provide an excellent opportunity to communicate the interpretive message to a wide audience. A number of museums, national parks, associations and agencies publish their own materials or advertise in local media, for instance by placing information on current events in weekend editions of a local newspaper or by airing regular broadcasts on museum exhibits or events. For example, Smithsonian Institution<sup>5</sup> publishes a widely-read magazine about its museums which is distributed across the whole country.

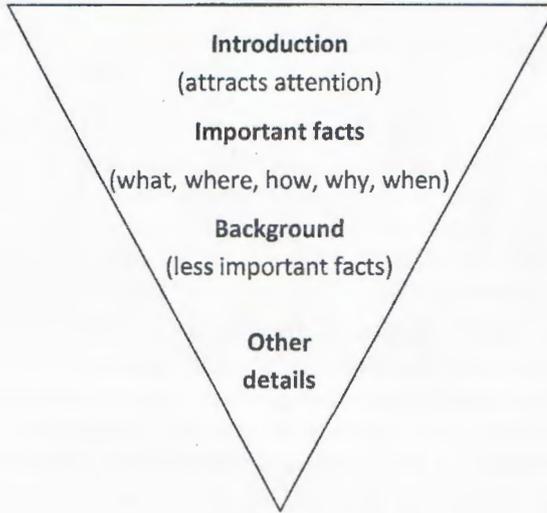
Interpreters can submit information about current events to the media, especially to local papers, which find them interesting. News to be published in daily press should meet the following criteria [Fazio & Gilbert 1981]:

- They should be topical: write about events which are to take place in the near future (e.g. an upcoming archeological festival, animal birthday party in a zoo, archeological finds)
- They should be interesting: some types of news, such as those concerning the fate of animals, aging processes, conflicts, rare phenomena, arouse particular interest.
- They should be relevant to the local audience.
- Exploit the fact that readers are attracted to news containing information related to famous people and places (e.g. a well-known figure visiting a museum or a park).
- Readers are interested in those events which may affect them; for instance, deteriorating quality of water in a river will probably be of interest to residents of a city which draws water from it.

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<sup>5</sup> A complex of museums related to American history.

When editing a news story, collect and verify facts to be included and try to answer the questions: who, what, where, when, how and why? Finally, write the story following the inverted pyramid pattern (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** News structure [Knudson et al. 1999]

The most important information should be placed in the first paragraph (preferably within the first 3-4 lines), which serves as an introduction. The second paragraph contains other important facts, and rest of the story should explain the first two paragraphs in greater detail (most editors start breaking texts from the end to adjust it to the space available in columns). The story should be written in such a way that it will make no difference where it is broken up. Keep words, sentences and paragraphs short and concise. Avoid words such as “today”, “tomorrow”, “this weekend”, “next weekend”, etc., as they might become out of date on the day of publication.

### 2.15.2. Electronic media

Preparing a news story for radio or television is much more difficult, since if the recipient fails to hear or understand the information at once, there is no chance to read it again. The first sentence is most important: either it attracts

the audience's attention or it will discourage them from listening to the remaining part.

Keep in mind the following guidelines when preparing radio news stories [Beck & Cable 1998]:

- Follow a natural style: write concisely and avoid technical jargon.
- Make the announcer's work easier by avoiding abbreviations. Use only those most popular, such as UEFA or NATO. If letters are to be pronounced individually, separate them with a dash (e.g. E-M-I or I-T-I).
- Allow for natural pauses when developing sentences; sentences should make a natural conversation (you could read the whole text aloud to test this).
- Give phonetic pronunciation of difficult names.
- Avoid quotations, as they make reading the text overly complicated and confusing.
- Adjust length of your script to the time available for its reading.
- To make reading easier, write whole words instead of symbols (e.g. "dollars", "kilograms", "percents").
- Write numbers from 1 to 10 as words, numbers from 11 to 999 as numbers, write "hundred", "thousand", "million", etc. as words (e.g. "20 thousand"), use numbers to indicate time or date (except for months).
- The script should be proofread for errors several times, preferably by several different persons.

News stories for radio are written in a similar way to those for press, using the inverted pyramid pattern. The only difference is that they should be shorter – this way, it is more likely that the audience will pay attention. Besides, the style of radio news requires them to be concise: if a story is too long, it might not be broadcast at all.

When preparing a radio news story, first specify the topic and then provide additional information according the pattern what-who-when-where-why. The time required to read the story can be estimated based on the number of words: 20-30 words – 10 seconds, 40-60 words – 20 seconds, 70-80 words – 30 seconds, 150-200 words – 60 seconds.

### 2.15.3. Internet

Today, web sites have become the primary source of information on natural and cultural heritage. Information about heritage is available on sites operated by local authorities, tourist attraction managers and associations for heritage promotion. These web sites can be classified into three groups, based

on their stage of development and the web technologies they employ [Sigala 2005]:

1. "Electronic brochures" include the most basic web sites, similar to paper brochures used for attraction promotion (hence the name).
2. "Museums in the Internet" (virtual attractions) include web sites that recreate the physical attraction on-line through the on-line projection of its objects, exhibits, collections, maps and floor-plans.
3. "True interactives" is the most valuable group, which includes those web sites that have some relation to the real tourist attraction, but also add or reinvent the attraction and encourage visitors to do so. Their main purpose is to educate and to interpret of the heritage being presented.

Social media and Web 2.0 technologies provide interpreters with even greater possibilities. A number of social networking websites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, blogs, etc., enable users to voice their opinions, present original content, share media and build a network of people with similar interests. They have transformed the Internet from a place for presenting information to a place of lively communication and virtual life. Web 2.0 provides space for a public discussion on planned routes and exhibits and makes it possible to learn visitors' needs and expectations with regard to specific interpretation forms already at the planning stage.

For instance, the Flickr website, which provides image hosting and sharing services, might serve as an excellent tool for promoting heritage sites among potential visitors. Images allow users to learn more about the site they plan to visit or even to go on a virtual tour without leaving their own homes. They can also discover a new value of heritage sites by looking at them from an entirely new perspective. An interesting form of photo sharing is a mash-up, created by combining two applications from two different sources (e.g. Google's Picassa and Maps) to provide an entirely new quality. A mash-up might include a map, photos from a heritage site, interpretive text and information for tourists.

When building a networking group around a specific heritage site, try to keep the following guidelines [Bailey 2009]:

- Networking websites help create fan groups of people interested in a museum, national park or other tourist attraction. Their members can post messages, share pictures and comment new ideas. This creates a dynamic environment which is more interactive than traditional web pages.
- By subscribing to news feeds, users can receive news about content published on a web site and keep track of new posts in a discussion. To ensure a regular stream of feeds, keep fans engaged by starting discussion topics, inviting them to make comments, submit their own content, etc.

- To get involved with social networking sites, adopt a conversational style of communication: write new posts using an informal and fun style, and avoid specialist jargon.
- Your content should be fascinating enough to capture and maintain people's attention. Do not bore them with dry facts.
- The key aspect of building a successful on-line networking group is frequent interaction with users. Regularly submit new posts and send news to group members.

#### 2.15.4. Mobile phones

The wide availability of mobile phones provides a number of possibilities with regard to heritage interpretation. For instance, it is possible to have a mobile operator send network's messages to people who are near museums, national parks or other heritage attractions. Such messages might contain information about the heritage, rules of behavior in protected areas, attractions available in the region and their opening hours.

Another way of using cell phones can be a mobile based system of monument information, such as the one which has been implemented in the city of Łódź. By scanning the bar code placed on a monument with their mobile phones, tourists can quickly access a web site containing information about a given monument. This feature, however, is only available to users of mobile phones with a web browser and internet access. Besides, it involves additional costs of data transfer, which may be considerable – especially for tourists from abroad<sup>6</sup>.

#### 2.15.5. Signs and interpretation panels

**Signs** – boards containing information, warnings, directions or a single piece of information (e.g. input traffic signs, directional signs, traffic control signs) (Fig. 5).

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<sup>6</sup> Roaming charges for data transfer (Internet access) tend to be much higher than for voice calls.



Figure 5. Directional sign

**Panels** – large boards presenting information in a graphical form with a small amount of text. Provide interpretation of events or places, illustrate a topic or a story, contain information to help understand the subject matter, cause experiences. Main function – education in leisure time.

Modern technology makes it possible to design boards and panels featuring colored graphics and high quality pictures (Figure 6). Preferably, they should be made of materials that are resistant to changing weather conditions and vandalism.

Advantages [Trapp et al. 1994]:

- resistance to changing weather conditions and vandalism (not in all cases),
- constant readiness to work (even in rainy weather and during blizzards, day and night),
- resistance to fatigue (do not require coffee breaks or battery replacement, have no special needs),
- always polite and patient (whether at the beginning or at end of the day),
- highly efficient despite a relatively high price (cost/number of recipients).

**Typefaces** [Zehr et al. 1994]:

- Times is a serif font easy to read (useful for long texts).
- Arial (helvetica) is a sans-serif font with good readability (useful for titles and subtitles).
- *Avoid handwriting – it is difficult to read.*
- Avoid mixing typefaces. This causes dysharmony. Instead, you can *italicize*, **bold** or increase the font size for the text you want to emphasize.
- **DO NOT WRITE IN UPPER CASE! SUCH A TEXT REQUIRES 14% MORE TIME TO READ AND CONSUMES 40% MORE SPACE.**
- Use upper case letters only in titles.



Figure 6. Interpretation panel

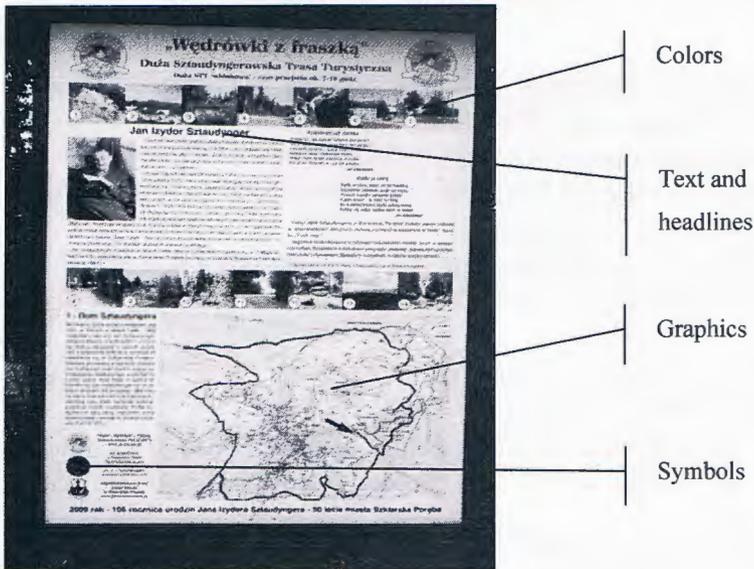


Figure 7. Components of a panel

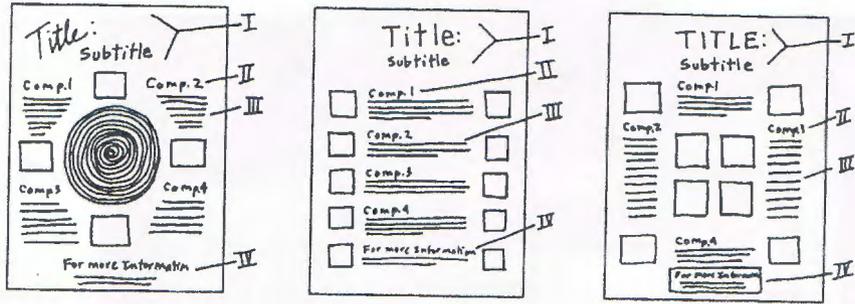


Figure 8. Examples of indoor panels [Ham 1999]

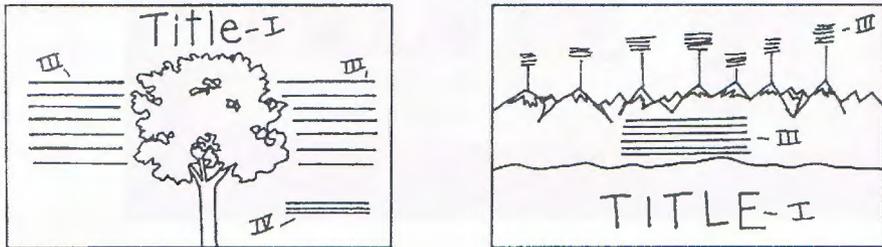


Figure 9. Examples of outdoor panels [Ham 1999]

Keep in mind the following guidelines when designing interpretation panels [Ham 1992; Knudson et al. 1999]:

- Use themes instead of titles.
- Use sub-themes at the second level.
- Specify a maximum of 5 sub-themes.
- A good layout can be more informative than hundreds of words.
- Limit the third-level text to 45-60 seconds of reading (225-300 words at most).
- Avoid including references to other parts of the text so as not impose a specific order of reading the panel.
- Try to avoid specialist terms. If impossible, it is necessary to explain them, which takes additional 200 to 300 words. Use words that are short, especially verbs.
- Limit sentences to 10-15 words.
- Divide the text into short paragraphs (2-3 sentences).
- Use active voice, as it is easier to understand than passive voice.

- Subordinate clauses should follow the main clause. Example:
  - good: “Many farmers plant trees to protect the soil”.
  - wrong: “To protect the soil, many farmers plant trees”.
- Use personal and possessive pronouns (*you, I, he, my, your, us, our*), names and expressions that relate to people (*Have you ever seen ...*). This makes the text more reader-friendly.
- Use the technique of associations by citing short examples, analogies and comparisons (up to 100 words).
- Think thematically: even when designing directional signs, denotative labels (indicating important features or elements) and rules of behavior (why follow them, what are the benefits).
- Read the text THREE times before submitting it and wait at least 24 hours before the final check.

**Fraction of selection** [Ham 1992]

$$\text{Frequency of activity} = \frac{\text{Expectation of reward}}{\text{Effort required}}$$

Success (financial and educational) is achieved by increasing expected rewards and decreasing the required effort.

It is good to answer the following questions when designing signs and panels and choosing their location [Trapp 1994]:

- Is there anything worth interpreting in a given area (e.g. a mountain summit, a waterfall, a member of a rare species, a historic object, forest, an area of natural beauty)?
- Is there anything interesting along the trail that tourists could overlook (e.g. an interesting postglacial form, a young forest, recultivated terrain, a site of an important historic event)?
- Will we make an impression of visitors by telling them where they are (e.g. in a national park, a nature reserve, a site inscribed on the UNESCO list)?
- Do visitors need help finding their way, returning to the entrance, understanding where the route goes, locating a given place within the whole area?
- Will the panel help visitors understand the rules and restrictions in the area?
- Will the panel be viewed by enough tourists to make it economically viable?

- Perhaps there are enough panels in the area and this one will prove superfluous?
- Is the selected location appropriate for putting up a panel (is it safe and practical)?

**Table 4.** Minimum font sizes and viewing distances [Ham 1992]

Viewing distance	0–0.5 m	1.5–2 m	9 m	18 m
Title	2 cm; 72 pt	2.5 cm; 96 pt	10 cm; 384 pt	15 cm; 576 pt
Headline	1.3 cm; 48 pt	2 cm; 72 pt	8 cm; 288 pt	13 cm; 480 pt
Body	0.6 cm; 24 pt	1.3 cm; 48 pt	6 cm; 192 pt	10 cm; 384 pt
Captions, map legends	0.5 cm; 18 pt	0.6 cm; 24 pt	N/A	N/A

The rule of four levels [Ham 1992]:

1. Communication of the topic: the visitor find and understand the topic of the panel (clearly formulated in the title) within the first 1-2 seconds.
2. Communication of message components: 5 components maximum; the less, the better; keep headlines, subtitles, colors, illustrations and visual separators clear, but less visible than the topic.
3. Selected details (body + illustrations). Each fragment should be quick to read, and its relationship with the main topic easy to comprehend. Two sub-levels.
4. Suggestions what's next? (brochures, leaflets, contact to an expert, phone number, address, where to go, what to do).

Written texts are subject to readability and comprehensibility tests. Readability tests serve to assess the combinations of syllables, words, sentences and paragraphs, assuming that easy texts are composed of short, simple sentences made up of simple words (that is, words containing a small number of syllables). Some of the most commonly used readability tests are those by Gunning [1968], Flesh [1948] and Fry [1977]. Comprehensibility tests involve removing part of the text and investigating how this influences its comprehension. The most popular comprehensibility tests are the CLOZE procedure [Taylor 1953], where every fifth word is deleted, and the OPIN procedure [Denner & Pehrsson 1994] where the second half of the sentence is

deleted. Respondents are asked to fill in the missing spaces to make sense of the whole text.

Gunning Fog Index [Zehr et al. 1994]:

- Select a passage of around 100 words.
- Calculate the average sentence length (i.e. the number of words).
- Count the “difficult” words (words with four or more syllables).
- Do not include proper nouns, compound words and inflection endings.
- Add the average sentence length and the percentage of complex words.
- $GFI = 0.4 * [(words/sentences) + 100 * (complex\ words/words)]$ .
- The result is the number of years of education that your reader hypothetically needs to understand the passage.
- A Gunning Fog Index of < 8 is ideal.
- A Gunning Fog Index of 12 or more will be difficult to comprehend for a majority of people.

Signs, panels and exhibits are part of a larger whole: they provide experiences whose source is a heritage site or object, give visitors information and encourage them to learn more about the topic being interpreted. This is why their design, material and location should be in harmony with the surroundings (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Type of materials used for making signs and panels [Trapp 1994]

Material	Application	Form	Advantages	Disadvantages
Wood	retaining the authentic rural character	carved, engraved, sandblasted	naturally harmonizes with the landscape, three-dimensional, every plate is unique and becomes more elegant with age, relatively resistant to weather conditions, absorbs bullets, easy production and maintenance	difficult to make and reproduce, easily scratched, fine details are difficult to make and short-lasting

Laminate	wherever there is a need for detailed and repeatable information		<p>                     durable, resistant to weather conditions and vandalism, easy to reproduce, good rendition of color and detail, can be used for pictures                 </p>	<p>                     may fade in sunlight or turn yellow, need framing and support, easily scratched                 </p>
Metal	<p>                     memorials (cast), road signs (painted), trail signage                 </p>	<p>                     painted surface, cast iron or aluminum, engraved or etched                 </p>	<p>                     no need for framing or supporting plates, resistant to water and vandalism                 </p>	<p>                     some may rust; thin – can be shot through, expensive in some variants, relatively high costs of reproduction                 </p>
Etched metal	<p>                     historical interpretation, commemorative plaques, trail signage, outdoor exhibits                 </p>		<p>                     very durable, even in extreme weather conditions, do not require framing, resistant to vandalism                 </p>	
Porcelain	<p>                     for detailed and colorful graphics                 </p>		<p>                     can be used for reproducing high-resolution pictures and graphics in vivid, long-lasting colors, durable, maintenance-free, resistant to vandalism and biological factors                 </p>	<p>                     slightly more expensive than other materials, require framing and support, sensitive to chipping and then rusting                 </p>

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### 3. INTERPRETIVE MASTER PLANNING

Currently many interpretative programs are designed only for one site, or park, with little attention to a regional context and integration with other nearby sites or facilities. Agencies with interpretive planning responsibilities covering various areas generally emphasize only on those facets or stories directly pertaining to the scope of their concern [Veverka 1997]. Therefore, a systematic approach in tourism development and heritage interpretation planning is necessary for the effective management of tourist areas. As a result, many of the interpretation services are limited to one site and thus fail to promote regional stories and develop interpretive opportunities of the region.

Interpretive planning is a strategic process which achieves management objectives for interpretation and education by facilitating meaningful connections between visitors and regional resources. Interpretive planning comprehensively analyzes all interpretive needs and determines a wide array of interpretive services, facilities, and programs to communicate in the most efficient and effective way the area's purpose, significance and themes. Interpretive planning is a goal-driven process that determines appropriate means to achieve desired visitor experiences and provide opportunities for audiences to form their own intellectual and emotional connections with meanings/significance inherent in the resources while protecting and preserving those resources (CIP 2000).

The main task of the Interpretive Master Plan is to identify regional significant stories. This "significant stories" in regional context refers to the mix of all tangible and intangible resources of the region, which together form what is commonly called 'a sense of place'. Systems planning allows to look more broadly at the whole organizational system of tourism, heritage resources and tourism facilities in the region. The system can consist of all natural parks or reserves, historic or cultural sites, monuments, museums and trails within the interpreted region.

According to John Veverka [1997], the most important advantages of this planning method include:

- integrating related facilities, themes and stories of the system within an agency,

- it facilitates a variety of levels of experience or ‘interpretive pacing’ [Traweek & Veverka 1979] for visitors with a common thread of experience on a regional level,
- it facilitates and enhances optimal use of natural, physiographic, historical and cultural resources (and stories) which might otherwise be ignored,
- it encourages a more expedient and rational approach to planning interpretive services along corridors such as cultural or natural trails or networks.

The key challenge of interpretation is to reveal to visitors why the province’s heritage resources should be interpreted, or, why these resources matter [Nova Scotia ... 2009]. Therefore an Interpretive Master Plan should engage and involve local residents, and visitors, in the region’s heritage, to ensure an involved constituency for the future. In order to engage and attract visitors to the region’s heritage sites and resources, interpretation must enrich visitor experiences in meaningful ways. ‘Meaning making’ happens when a visitor to a natural or historic site, a nature trail, or a museum exhibit is able to extract meaning from that experience, the experience has the potential to become memorable, transform their behavior and/or trigger an emotional response [Nova Scotia ... 2009].

### **3.1. Planning process**

Developing an interpretative plan should be based on a clear and proved scheme. Many organizations have developed their own schemes of interpretive plans (e.g. Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, US Forest Service). They usually consist of the following parts [Knudson et al. 1999]:

1. Formulating goals and objectives of the agency and for the interpretive plan.
2. Conducting an inventory of existing resources, facilities and interpretive opportunities within a region.
3. Performing audience (visitors) analysis and isolate specific target groups.
4. Developing main interpretive theme and subthemes for the region.
5. For each selected resource considering: develop the story, themes, objectives (i.e. desired outcomes) and media (e.g. visitor center, trails, waysides, films/videos).
6. Costs estimating and schedule for implementing the plan.
7. Monitoring and evaluation (effectiveness evaluation and plan revision).

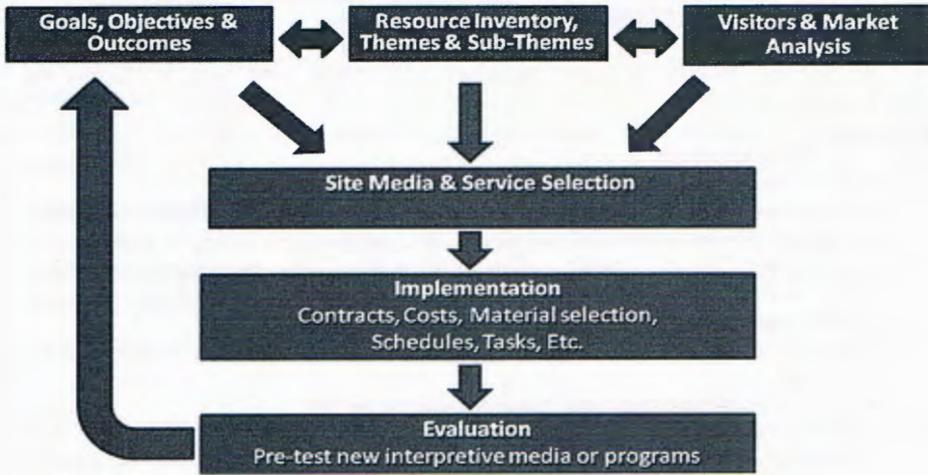


Figure 10. Process of planning for interpretation [according to Veverka 1997]

### 3.2. Visitor experiences

The development of interpretive program plans involves planning the experiences which visitors will have an opportunity to have during their visit to the area. All the available experiences, as well as the available forms of physical and educational activity, should be characterized in a possibly detailed way.

VISITOR'S EXPERIENCES [Planning ... 1998]

"... few visitors come to parks just to learn information. Visitor experience goals describe opportunities for visitors to derive meanings and values from park resources and experiences".

Examples

**Blue Ridge Music Center IP**

*The National Park Service will provide opportunities for visitors to:*

- ✓ *learn information and stories associated with major interpretive themes, and other related information, to the depth that they choose, and through a variety of media,*
- ✓ *listen to a wide variety of traditional music of the Blue Ridge, including pieces of their choice, and including both live and recorded music become acquainted with musicians from the region whose backgrounds, life histories and artistry,*
- ✓ *illustrate important themes in the history and/or perpetuation of music traditions in the Blue Ridge,*
- ✓ *participate in informal music and dance activities at the site,*
- ✓ *learn about and attend musical and related activities in the area,*
- ✓ *have an enjoyable recreational experience without impairing the natural and cultural values of the site,*
- ✓ *be oriented to and participate in recreational activities along the Blue Ridge Parkway.*

**Keweenaw NHP GMP/IP**

*Opportunities will be provided for visitors and area residents to:*

- ✓ *understand Keweenaw's natural, cultural, and industrial history, and be able to relate it to the broader scope of American experience,*
- ✓ *explore the diversity of Keweenaw's cultural resources and be inspired to participate in perpetuating the area's heritage,*
- ✓ *obtain information necessary to safely, enjoyably, and easily visit Keweenaw's cultural and natural features, visitor facilities, activities, and services,*
- ✓ *acknowledge Keweenaw National Historical Park as an important national park area preserving and interpreting nationally significant resources,*
- ✓ *understand the economic, environmental, and social effects of the Keweenaw copper industry and wisely use,*
- ✓ *develop, and preserve natural resources in the future,*
- ✓ *understand C&H's magnitude, complexity, and creativity, and appreciate the corporation's contributions to the community, the copper industry, and the nation,*
- ✓ *understand Quincy Mining Company's role as a typical example of the rural industrial setting of many copper country mines,*
- ✓ *experience current and historic lifestyles of the region to understand similarities and differences between contemporary and historic people,*
- ✓ *participate in a diversity of activities appropriate for audiences with differing levels of interest,*
- ✓ *understanding, and sophistication receive current, accurate, and balanced information that presents all viewpoints and beliefs regarding the area's people, technology and resources,*
- ✓ *understand that Keweenaw's cultural landscape is the product of prehistoric, historic, and continuing changes in natural and cultural environments,*
- ✓ *participate in an integrated interpretive program developed cooperatively by the National Park Service and other visitor service providers to offer a complete, balanced Keweenaw visitor experience.*

### 3.3. Formulating goals and objectives

In the first stage of the plan development it is necessary to clarify the interpretation plan goals and objectives for the entire system, then specific objectives for each site separately. Objectives are outcomes driven and measurable.

Goals lead directly to interpretive media, activities or facilities; they help planners decide among various options for activities and media; and they help designers craft specific approaches to media and facilities.

The following are examples of goals and objectives of the plan formulated for the Region<sup>7</sup>:

**Goal 1:** Contribute to an understanding and appreciation of the heritage of the Region through interpretation.

*Objective 1:* Ensure a balanced approach to natural and cultural heritage.

*Objective 2:* Cause that authority as the voice for the Region heritage be respected.

**Goal 2:** Achieve sustainability by ensuring that the heritage of the Region thrives and survives into the future.

*Objective 1:* Achieve resource sustainability.

*Objective 2:* Achieve social relevance through community involvement.

**Goal 3:** Ensure that interpretation is authentic, relevant and inclusive for all audiences.

*Objective 1:* Be accurate and authentic.

*Objective 2:* Be relevant to visitors' personal experiences.

Objectives can be more specific, so that it is possible to check empirically if they have been achieved:

- Learning objectives:
  - The majority of visitors will be able to list / describe ...
- Behavioral objectives:
  - The majority of visitors will want to try/ interact/ protect ...

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<sup>7</sup> The plan concept is based on the Nova Scotia Interpretive Master Plan [<http://museum.gov.ns.ca/en/home/aboutnsm/imp.aspx>]

- Emotional objectives:
  - The majority of visitors will be surprised/ impressed/ feel importance ...

For instance:

**Learning objectives:**

- Upon the completion of the program the majority of visitors will be able to name three reasons that wetlands should be protected.
- Upon completion of the exhibit 90% of visitors will be able to identify 3 species of native trees.
- Upon completion of their visit the majority of visitors will be able to identify 3 gothic architectural features.

**Emotional objectives:**

- Upon completion of their visit to the nature reserve the majority of visitors will FEEL good about the preservation work we are doing here to protect wetlands.
- On completion of their visit to the historic site the majority of children will feel that they have had an enjoyable experience that they would like to repeat at another site.
- Upon completion of the interpretive presentation the majority of visitors will feel that protecting wetlands does indeed benefit them, their community and the environment.

**Behavioral objectives:**

- Upon completion of the interpretive panels the majority of visitors will want to see the wetland exhibits in the Nature Center.
- Upon completion of their visit to the site 70% of visitors will consider contributing money to our “preserve the wetlands” fund.

**Example**

Another approach is to describe visitor experiences in a narrative format.

**Lakota Tatanka Heritage Park (Concept Plan) [Planning ... 1998]**

*"The Experience" is what visitors take from a park. Lakota Tatanka offers a multifaceted*

*experience: cultural, educational and recreational. A cross-cultural experience awaits both national and international travelers. European, Asiatic, and American tourists will mingle and share cultures with the Sioux Indians, in a forum designed to foster harmony and admiration between races and individuals. If you cannot know a man until you have walked in his shoes, then here is where the path begins. Each visitor is allowed to seek his or her own level of intimacy with the prairie and the Lakota culture. As the visitors travel through the park to the visitor center, they are exposed to the vastness of the prairie with an occasional but exciting glimpse of the buffalo, an elk, or even perhaps a band of Lakota people crossing the prairie. When they reach the visitor center, they are exposed to enjoyable learning experiences designed to enrich the minds of all age levels and cultural backgrounds. These learning experiences focus on the three elements that form the management objectives of the park. Viewed in their proper context, these three elements are seen as the interdependent legs of a foundation that supports and is the reason for the park. First is the prairie which nurtures a vast array of plants and animals. Second are the Sioux Indians, the Lakota people who lived and developed their culture as the beneficiaries of this landscape. And last is the park management program itself, a program which re-enacts the traditional Sioux culture and preserves the prairie, all as a self-sustaining natural, cultural, and economic system.*

**3.4. Resource inventory**

The planning process should be preceded by a detailed inventorying of the natural and cultural resources of the area. A resource inventory makes it easier to specify the main interpretation theme and detailed themes. Insight into the local heritage helps formulate themes which will best reflect the history or character of any place. Assets to be inventoried can be classified into the following groups:

- NATURAL ASSETS:
  - ❖ Geology
  - ❖ Landscape
  - ❖ Waters (rivers, lakes, marshes, springs, waterfalls)
  - ❖ Birds and wildlife
  - ❖ Reserves
  - ❖ Natural monuments (stones, trees)
- CULTURAL ASSETS:
  - ❖ Archeology
  - ❖ Architecture (churches, castles, palaces)
  - ❖ Historic sites, battlefields, cemeteries, homes
  - ❖ Industrial heritage: watergates, canals
  - ❖ Museums
  - ❖ Folklore
  - ❖ Festivals
- FACILITIES:
  - ❖ Recreation
  - ❖ Farms
  - ❖ Information offices
  - ❖ Gift shops
  - ❖ Campgrounds, kayaks rentals
- EXISTING OR PLANED TRAILS
- NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

Make an inventory form for each asset (Figure 11). It should contain the site name, site index number, site location and GPS data, site description and interpretive significance.

1) Site Name	
2) Site Index Number	
3) Site Location	Reference site index map, GPS data
4) Site Description	Detailed site description with relevant photos
5) Interpretive Significance	Explain why this site is interpreted and how it fits into the overall theme

**Figure 11.** Site inventory form [Veverka 1997]

The inventoried sites should then be plotted on a map (Figure 12), which will help determine the layout of access routes, find out which assets repeat,

plan the distribution of tourist traffic and channel it to undervalued areas, anticipate potential conflicts with other sites.

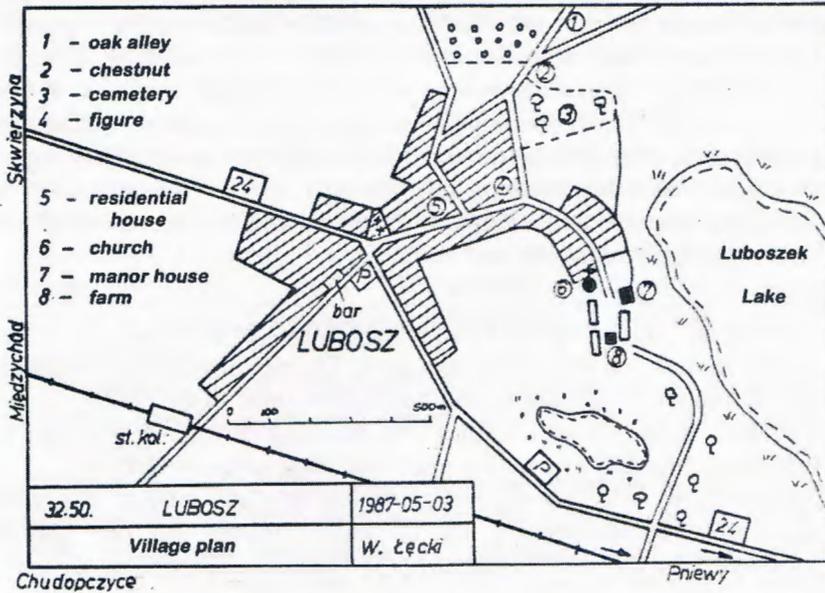


Figure 12. Village plan [Łęcki 1987 – modified]

Table 6. Criteria for site selection

Site	Natural assets					Cultural assets							Ranking					
	Geology	Landscape	Waters	Wildlife	Reserves	Natural	Archeology	Architecture	Historic sites	Industrial	Museums	Folklore	Festivals	Uniqueness	Infrastructure	Accessibility	Score	Priority
Oak alley						■			■					1	1	1	3	L
Chestnut						■			■					1	0	2	3	L
Cemetery						■			■					2	0	1	3	L
Figure						■			■					3	0	2	5	M
Residential house						■			■		■			4	2	2	8	H
Manor house						■		■	■					4	2	2	8	H
Lake			■	■		■			■					2	3	2	7	H
Luboszek			■	■		■			■					1	2	3	6	M
Farm						■			■		■			1	2	3	6	M

■ – unique feature, □ – applicable but not unique, □ – not unique; Priority: H – high, M – moderate, L – low (source: own elaboration)

### 3.5. Developing main- and sub-themes

Based on of inventoried resources, the main theme for the region can be developed. Themes express the broad vision of what the region represents – what serves as its central messages. It is a ‘vision’ of the character of the place. This vision is then broken down into one to four major interpretive themes [Knudson et al. 1999]. Themes are the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting the area. They tell what are the most important ideas or stories that will be interpreted. The goal is to develop themes that are understandable, concise and complete thoughts, and are the most important ideas for that area [Planning for ... 1998].

- ✓ Themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park. Themes provide the foundation for all interpretive programs and media developed in the park.
- ✓ The goal is to produce themes that are understandable, concise, and complete thoughts, that are the most important ideas for that area.
- ✓ Themes can help organize media, facility, and visitor experience discussions by considering the question, “Where and how will we interpret these themes?” [Planning ... 1998]

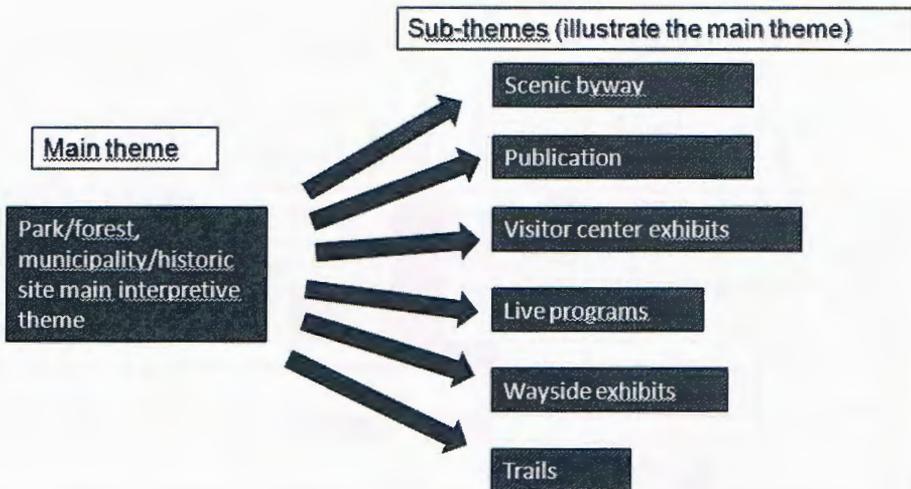


Figure 13. Theme and sub-themes relations (source: own elaboration)

A theme should be stated as complete sentence, contain one main idea, reveal the overall purpose of the plan and be stated in an interesting manner [Ham 1994; Regnier et al. 1994]. The theme should be the most important message we wish that visitors will carry away from the area. Proposed main interpretive theme could be stated as follows [Nowacki & Chrancokova 2012]:

***'Banska Bystrica Region's unique natural and cultural heritage has given its citizens a strong sense of place and identification with its history.'***

The main them can be further divided into detailed sub themes which are implemented in the form of thematic trails, interpretative panels, guided walks and exhibits in interpretive centers [Nowacki & Chrancokova 2012]:

1. The cultural richness of the region was formed by people of different origins and faiths (Hronsek – the articular wooden church, Brezno – a synagogue, Hronsky Benadik – a monastery and cathedral, Lucenec – the Calvinist church)<sup>8</sup>.
  - a. 'The history of the region and life of its inhabitants was marked by the mining of gold, silver and copper' (Banska Stravnica, Banska Bystrica, Kremnica).
  - b. 'The throne of the Hungarian rules was sustained by the royal mining towns of the Region, where gold and silver were wined'. (Nova Bana – old mining town and gold mines, regional museum, Pukanec, Hodrusa-Hamre – old mining towns, folk architecture and mining houses, Banska Stravnica – Slovenske Banske muzeum, Banske muzeum v prirode, Banskostavnicke tajhy).
  - c. 'Pohronie for centuries have been a land of miners and steelworkers and industrial traditions have survived here till today' (Hronec – first cast-iron bridge in the Hungarian Kingdom from 1810, Osrblie – remains of a blast furnace from 1795).
2. 'The Banska Bystrica region has become a center of identity formation of the Slovak nation'.
  - a. 'History and culture of the region was created by both the Slovaks, the Hungarians and the Germans' (Zvolen – Hungarian King's Castle, Pusty hrad).
  - b. 'Banska Bystrica was the center of one of the most significant historical events of the Slovak nation: the Slovak National Uprising of World War II' (Banska Bystrica – monument and museum SNP).
  - c. The Upper Hron area was scene of bloody fighting during the Slovak uprising in the late summer of 1944 (Castle in Slovenska Lupca – place of imprisonment for partisans, Nemecka – the monument and exposition of 900 partisans burned in a lime kiln).

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<sup>8</sup> The brackets contain examples of places where a given theme could be interpreted.

3. 'Banska Bystrica Region is rich in unique natural treasures'.
  - a. 'Forestry can exist without man, but not vice versa'. (Harmanecka tisina – one of the largest yew forest in Europe, Čierny Balog – Čiernohronská Železnica, Dobroc – Dobrocky prales, Zvolen – Lesnicke a drevarske museum, Borova Hora – Borovanska desta – arboretum).
  - b. 'The beech forests of the region have been depleted due to the production of charcoal for smelting silver and copper and intense shepherd colonization of the mountain in the region'.
  - c. Landscape of the region is characterized by the presence of karst and volcanic forms (Bystrianska and Harmanecka caves, Pol'ana – the largest extinct volcano in Europe).
4. 'Folk traditions in the region is still present in everyday life and customs' (Brezno – Horehronske museum).
  - a. 'The most characteristic instruments of the region include: the fujara and the klopacka' (Detva – production of the 'fujara', laces, folk costumes).
  - b. In the region survived the traditional songs and dances, ability of playing unique musical instruments and distinctive costumes and wooden architecture (Jaraba, Vyzna i Nizna Boca – mountain villages with wooden houses and huts in mountain pastures, Sumiac – former Wallachian village, Detva – rustic wooden cottages).

Example: Interpretive Master Plan [Nova Scotia 2009]

Main theme: Nova Scotia's unique natural and cultural heritage has given its citizens a strong sense of place and identification with its history.

Sub-themes:

- **Nova Scotia's natural world has been shaped by its location in the northern hemisphere and its relationship to the sea** (Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, peninsula and island, were born of tectonic upheaval in the world's ancient oceans; once formed, ultimately by glaciation, it was the sea that determined its climate and thus its flora and fauna).
- **Nova Scotia's strategic location has allowed it to develop a strong engagement with the wider world** (Nova Scotians have always been mindful that they are affected by the sea. This has linked them to the world, making them the recipients of people and ideas from other lands, as well sharing their own people and ideas with the world).
- **Nova Scotia has been challenged, shaped and strengthened by conflict and cooperation** (From Aboriginal conflict to the clash of empires, commercial competition to the fight for responsible government, and union struggles to the battles for gender and racial equality, Nova Scotia's society has evolved by meeting the challenges of conflict and cooperation).
- **Nova Scotia's destiny on the edge of a continent-wide nation has involved continual struggle to fulfill the promise of political and economic equality.** (The promise of the 19th century was never realized by Nova Scotia in the 20th century and her citizens have always felt the need to battle feelings of marginalization and to strive for better terms).
- **Nova Scotia is a place of diversity and continuing natural and cultural evolution** (Neither the world of nature, nor human society are ever static. The world adapts and changes and Nova Scotians are inextricably bound in a relationship with their natural environment).

**Examples [Planning ... 1998]**

**Underground Railroad Special Resource Study [1995]:**

*An escape from slavery on the Underground Railroad was an individual effort as well as a cooperative effort transcending racial and cultural boundaries.*

**Zion National Park Interpretive Plan [1996]:**

*Zion National Park: nowhere else on earth do the three processes of deposition, uplift, and erosion come together in such intimate and scenic fashion.*

**Natchez National Historical Park Interpretive Plan [1994]:**

*Based on a cotton economy and a slave labor system, Natchez served as the symbolic capital of the cotton kingdom.*

A hierarchical approach to themes.

**Brown v. Board of Education NHS GMP/IP [1996]**

*The Effects*

**The 1955 *Brown II* decision, which directed states to implement the *Brown* decision with all deliberate speed, was met with varying responses throughout the country; although progress has been made since then in many areas, racial inequality of educational opportunity continues today.**

*Racial segregation as an official policy at any level of American education was to have ended soon after the *Brown II* decision, which in May 1955 implemented the May 17, 1954, *Brown I* decision. Segregation did not end with the *Brown II* decision. Many states and localities, especially in the South, either evaded or refused to comply with the Supreme Court edict. De facto segregation in education continues today in many areas, influenced by factors such as economics, settlement patterns, and racial prejudice. Current issues include corrective measures such as mandatory busing and magnet schools, neighborhood schools, the fairness of funding sources such as property taxes, the advisability of vouchers, and many issues relating to curricula. Racial discrimination, with all attendant issues, perspectives, and ramifications, also continues today.*

**Stories (Theme 2):**

- *Reactions by public officials to the *Brown* decision; examples of delays and subversion of the intent of the decision by public officials, mostly in the South (e.g., some schools in Virginia closed rather than integrate).*
- *Some results of the implementation of desegregation were, in the short term, negative. Integration sometimes negatively affected discipline in schools and lowered expectations of student performance.*
- *Current educational issues including busing, bilingual education, magnet schools, prayer, vouchers, and de facto segregation.*

Note that there are **four levels** to *Brown v. Board* themes: a **topic** (*The Effects*), a **summary theme statement** (*The 1955 *Brown II* decision, ...*), **several related subthemes** (*Racial segregation as an official policy ...*), and **examples of interpretive stories**. Topics help a reader get a quick idea of the scope of the themes. The theme statement summarizes the concept. Subthemes zero in on specific aspects of the general concept, and can add texture, explanation, perspective, and detail. Interpretive stories are suggested for media designers and interpreters.

### 3.6. Marketing analysis

The next step involves marketing analyses of region's tourist market, that is, the identification of target segments and potential groups of people visiting the region. At this stage, it must be specified what the market is characterized by, what are the characteristic of its sectors, who are the visitors, when and why visitors come, what means of transport they use, how long are their visits and what are the activities of visitors to the region.

At this stage, the following criteria must be specified:

- market characteristics
- sector characteristics
- visitors
- means of transport
- main motives and motivation of the visit
- duration of the stay
- visitors' activities.

### 3.7. Preparing an interpretive plan for all facilities

The next step is to decide how, when and where to implement the interpretive plan. For each asset, the project should define in detail the following [Veverka 1997]:

1. Interpretive theme for each individual site.
2. Site objectives.

1) Site Name	
2) Site Index Number	
3) Interpretive Theme	The main interpretive Theme for each individual site
4) Site Objectives	Physical development objectives such as building a stair way, add a viewing deck, etc.
5) Interpretive Objectives	Specific objectives (learn, feel or do) that interpretive programs, services or media are to accomplish at this specific site
6) Interpretive Media	Recommended Interpretive Media for this location. This is a list of the interpretive media that could best be used to accomplish the stated objectives (i.e. self-guided trail, interpretive panel, outdoor demonstration, guided walk, exhibit in visitor center, etc.)
7) Costs	Any budget issues or estimates. This helps make each individual interpretive planning form set a work plan for each individual site or feature that is part of the interpretive plan.

Figure 14. Story development form set [Veverka 1997]

3. Interpretive program objectives.
4. Recommended interpretive media/services.
5. Justification.
6. General planner comments.

### 3.8. Implementation

At this stage, it must be specified what will be needed to implement the plan, how much it will cost and what will be the project contractors. The program should be launched by printing pilot leaflets interpreting proposed themes and constructing a web site. Simultaneously, walks, guided tours thematic trails and presentations conducted by regional guides, nature parks staff, forestry workers and students from the region can be suggested. The next step would be to set directional signs and interpretive panels at tourist attractions and the information boards at the entrances to the region. All signs, panels and tables should create a coherent 'Visual Identity System'. The final stage should involve the construction of interpretive centers in selected sites.

**Table 7.** Implementation and operations matrix [according to Veverka 1997]

Site index	Interpretive Media & Services	Year of implementation					Cost estimates
		2012	13	14	15	16	
1,2,3,4,5,6,7	Guided walks	X					100 €
2	Trailhead signs		X				1500 €
3	Interpretive viewing area platform			X			10 000 €
	Interpretive panels			X			3 000 €
	Develop interpretive brochure			X			5 000 €
	Developing teachers packet			X			8 000 €
4,5,6,7	Interpretive panels				X		12 000 €
1	Interpretive center					X	300 000 €

### 3.9. Monitoring of the plan

The final step of the plan involves the development of strategies to assess achievement of the objectives of interpretation. The evaluation is necessary to find out whether the goals of interpretation (general and specific) have been achieved.

The assessment should include an analysis of visitor's interest in interpreted themes, understanding conveyed contents, attention focused by the panels, exhibitions or presentations and possibilities of changing visitors' attitudes and behaviors. Evaluation should be carried out at each stage of the plan development, to allow the current correction of errors committed in the planning and program modification.

The analysis and assessment conducted during interpretive planning may include [Beck & Cable 1988]:

- Visitors, their behaviors and reactions, so as to evaluate the design of a place, an exhibit, etc.
- Presentations, talks, demonstrations and other activities of interpreters, so as to help them find effective ways to improve methods for conveying information and strategies for the future.
- Installations, such as exhibits and thematic routes, so as to find out if they meet their purposes and modify them, if necessary, to improve their efficiency.
- Equipment and the interpretive program as a whole, so as to ensure that the invested resources have been used effectively. The assessment will reveal the benefits which may be useful when raising funds for future programs.

The assessment of interpretive services should take into account the following questions: do visitors participate in presentations, what do they think about programs, what do they learn from them, what are their experiences, do they read panels and boards, how much time do they spend on reading, how do they benefit from the visit and who are they?

The assessment of interpreters' work serves to improve their interpretive skills. Such an assessment can be conducted by senior and more experienced instructors or lecturers. It normally involves a highly formalized (structured) assessment scheme which evaluates components such as: appearance, enthusiasm, level of knowledge, trustworthiness, communication skills, humor, non-verbal communication, voice and articulation, ability to engage visitors, introduction, presentation plan, ability to use visual techniques, using interpretive principles, accuracy of information and ability to draw conclusions. A less stressful method is a peer assessment. Reliable, honest, free from envy and constructive, it can be an important source of information about one's work.

The least stressful technique is self-assessment, which involves evaluating one's own shortcomings to be worked on and strong points to be developed. Such an assessment, if conducted honestly, systematically and as objectively as possible, may also bring valuable results.

The assessment criteria of interpretive programs should include the cost of one program hour per visitor. For instance, if creating a thematic route costs EUR 500 (preparing the route, cost of the guide) and 50 visitors attend a one-hour tour along the route, the cost of the program is EUR 10 per visitor per hour. Another example: if a medieval combat demonstration lasts for 30 minutes, costs EUR 1,000 and is attended by 200 visitors, the cost per visitor remains the same as in the first case, but the cost per visitor per hour is 20 EUR, which makes the second form of interpretation twice less effective than the first one.

Evaluation should be carried out in different hours of the day and over the whole year. This will help eliminate the least effective programs and develop the efficient ones (e.g. by determining the most effective opening hours of a museum, assessing the effectiveness of wayside panels, etc.).

**Table 8.** Methods of assessing interpretation [according to Veverka 1997]

Evaluation method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
Direct response evaluation	Analyses an exhibit's effect on visitors	Allows a direct analysis of visitors' reactions to interpreters or other forms of interpretation and makes it possible to modify the program.	Subjectivity, since it is the interpreter that evaluated visitors' response to an interpretive program.	Indications of satisfaction or boredom are the number of questions asked by tourists, their facial expressions and concern.
Expert evaluation	Conducted by an experienced interpreter or interpretive presentation critic.	Makes it possible to draw on the experience of professionals and to improve the program.	Subjectivity.	If there is no possibility to conduct it directly, this can be done by watching a presentation recorded on video.

### 3. Interpretive master planning

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Tourists' preferences evaluation	Determines which services tourists prefer.	Helps determine which services are most preferred by tourists.	Does not provide information on why some services are preferred over others.	Can be conducted by counting visitors or tickets. Should be used on combination with an interview questionnaire to determine why visitors make certain choices.
Visitors' interest observation	Secret observation of visitors to find out how many of them are interested in an interpreter's program.	Makes it possible to assess the level of visitors' interest in a presentation.	Assumes that looking at the interpreter entails interest, comprehension and satisfaction.	

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Marek Nowacki shows the interpretation as the way of presentation of natural and cultural heritage by revealing its significance for humans. Interpretation stimulates independent thinking and exploring personal relationships with heritage. It has also has a large market potential, which is used in the so-called cultural industries and tourism economy.

Dr hab. Marek Stuczyński

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International Office of LLP/Erasmus  
Rector's Building of AWF, Room. No. 101  
Królowej Jadwigi str. 27/39  
Phone +48 61 835 50 66  
Fax +48 61 833 00 39