

From Tourist to Tour Guides

Mrs. W is a primary teacher in an urban school located near the heart of the city. Her school is within walking distance of several museums, including the local historical society. For several years she has done a project with her students in which teams of students select an exhibit at the historical society that they find interesting, and then they do additional research on the topic of that exhibit.

Last year, one group of students became interested in the early settlement of the city and used materials provided by the historical society to research this. Another group became interested in furniture production, one of the early industries that supported the development of the city, and they even invited an elderly craftsman who had worked in the industry as a classroom speaker. The product of each project was a written report presented to the class. This time Mrs. W decides that she will use the technologies that have recently been made available to her classroom to “spice up” the unit.

Mrs. W reads about an app called Layar, which is an “augmented reality” tool. Augmented reality tools add computer-generated media to real world objects or views. An example given in the augmented reality article that Mrs. W read is an app that, when a phone or tablet is pointed at a city intersection, recognizes the location and labels the streets and buildings in the scene.

The Layar program allows users to upload a pdf file of a document and then add media, video, images, sound files, etc., to specific locations in the document. For example, a button can be added on a pdf of a map of the historical society to show the location of the furniture exhibit. When a phone or tablet running the Layar app is pointed at any print version of the document, a video created by the students plays on the phone or tablet, providing background information regarding the furniture industry in the town. If the Layar app is pointed at the page of the map that describes the early history of the town, a student video pops up on the device that provides student-generated information and images about that history.

This project allows Mrs. W to work on several areas of the curriculum at once. It requires students to do research, read informational texts, write informative texts, and do expressive oral reading. She can’t wait to get started!

On the day of the tour, Mrs. W provides each student with a print copy of the map of the historical society museum. As they tour the museum, the students circle those exhibits that they are interested in researching further. Using their phones and tablets, students take pictures for exhibit elements that might be included in their product.

Upon returning to school, Mrs. W forms teams based on the exhibits that interest the students. Each team creates a simple media project that any visitor to the historical society can access with the Layar app by simply pointing their phone at the print map of exhibits and clicking a button. With ideas provided by Mrs. W, each team decides on what their project will entail.

One team, interested in a display on historical buildings in the town, decides to do a “then and now” exhibit, which will show a building as it appeared when it was built and then contrast that with the building as it currently exists. On another team, interested in the early furniture industry, one member has a grandfather who used to work as a craftsman in the furniture plant. The team decides to interview him for their media project. A third group, interested in

learning more about the early settlers of the town, decides to do use the student animation tool Dolnk to create a cartoon introducing the most interesting of these settlers.

The students work on the classroom laptops to do research, write their scripts, and assemble their projects. When they are finished, they upload their projects to YouTube and then create links in the online Layar Creator site. At the end of the project, Mrs. W and her students return to the historical society and, with phones or tablets, use the Layar app to experience the “augmented reality” tour, as other visitors will be able to in the coming years.

Resources used in this scenario:

- [Layar Creator](#) * for creating an augmented reality layer for the historical society map
- [Dolnk](#) * for creating animations

Tools used in this scenario:

- [Layar](#) * to experience the augmented reality

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