

# FACT FINDERS – Facilitator’s guide

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## 1. Introduction

FACT FINDERS is an educational game/digital game with the overall goal of providing a training ground for learning about the negotiation of contested pasts. The game is a part of the RePAST project that aims at investigating how European societies deal with their troubled pasts through the analysis of conflict discourses rooted in those pasts.

In the game, students learn how to do critical research when constructing a viewpoint of their own. Based on a research question, the students obtain information from a variety of different sources and construct their answer in a report at the end. Students can choose from different scenarios depending on the age group.

## 1.1 Ressources

**Game website:** <https://factfinders.seriousgames.net/>

**Online web version:** <https://play.seriousgames.net/FactFinders>

**Android and iOS versions:** available from their respective stores

## 2. Learning principles

The course design behind FACT FINDERS is based on an experiential learning approach based on extensive research at IT-University of Copenhagen.

The experiential learning approach implies the introduction of different teaching modes, which stress different styles of learning. Learning involves a progression through different modes. Although students/players may have different starting points, strengths and preferences it is important to go through all modes to achieve the most well-grounded learning experiences.

We suggest that the teacher starts by providing an overview of the scenario to create some guiding concepts and understanding of the context before playing and working independently. Next, students are let loose in the game world, where they can actively explore the different sources and perspectives on the scenario and the research question. This active experimentation provides a number of concrete and tangible experiences that serve as a strong background for observation and reflection in the subsequent work, where students observe, reflect and expand on their experiences in the game. Finally, in a debriefing plenary the facilitator can complete the cycle. In the plenary session, the facilitator expands on the students' observations and



reflections to build more advanced and stronger concepts about the specific scenario.

### **3. Learning goals**

The overall goal for the digital game and exercises is to provide a training ground for learning about the negotiation of contested pasts.

At the end, users will have been exposed to and have been received training to achieve the following learning goals:

1. Being able to evaluate and criticize source credibility
2. Being able to explain that history is constructed and to describe some consequences of the fact that history is constructed
3. Being able to approach negotiating viewpoints

### **4. FACT FINDERS - an overview**

In FACT FINDERS the students are introduced to different scenarios. They start by choosing a scenario which they want to investigate. Their job is to explore different sources and information in order to collect enough information to create an answer to the research question. When the students receive information from a source, they have to decide whether the information will help them answer the research question or not. Therefore, they will have to discard or keep the information. The students can unlock and investigate as many sources as they want and add as much information to their answer as they want, within the duration of the game (30 min).

Throughout the game players will be able to keep track of their score, the time remaining and how wide and deep they have taken their investigation. The latter is a way of showing how many sources and much background information the students have discovered and investigated. It is important to investigate as many sources as possible but at the same time also conduct the investigation thoroughly.

At the end of the game, the students get an overview of the different pieces of information they have collected throughout the game. The information forms a report that will lead to the following exercises in the classroom.

## **5. Target group**

The game has been designed for students in secondary school, ages 11-18. The primary class is "history", though elements of religion and social studies are also present. The game challenges the students and their understanding of historical events while encouraging both critical analysis and personal involvement when they are faced with scenarios regarding history, culture and different ways of life.

## **6. Tutorial for facilitators**

This section provides guidelines for the educational use of the game. It is recommended that the facilitator make certain considerations and preparations before presenting the game to the students.

It is not suggested that the game stand by itself. As a teacher, your role is to facilitate the learning experience for the students expanding from the above-discussed learning principles. It is recommended to follow the step-by-step instructions below.

### **6.1 Before playing the game**

1. The teacher provides an overview of the scenario to give a rudimentary understanding of the context in which the game is set. Here you can draw on the themes listed under each scenario. The Borduria scenario includes a pdf with a short introduction to the fictitious scenario.
2. The game contains a range of different terms related to doing critical research. It should be stressed that a thorough review and discussion of these terms in cooperation with the students is necessary before playing.

## 6.2 Width and depth

These terms refer to how well players are progressing towards doing sound historical research. The metric measures how many sources and how much background information the students have discovered and investigated. It is important to investigate as many sources as possible but at the same time also conduct the investigation thoroughly.

Depth would be synonymous with spending time on investigating each source exhaustively; width would be synonymous with the number of different sources visited.

Ask the students:

- How would you explain the terms **width** and **depth** with your own words?
- Can you give examples of how you can investigate something **widely**?
- Can you give examples of how you can investigate something **in-depth**?
- Think about examples from other subjects and projects you have worked with. Why is it important to keep these two terms in mind when you conduct an investigation?

## 6.3 Credibility

This term refers to the level of the source's credibility. Players are encouraged to base their report on facts, so in general on primary sources of information presenting multiple perspectives (both sides of the conflict) that are not biased in favor of one side.

The range of credibility in the game is set to: very low, low, undecided, high and very high. An example of this is presented below:

Type of source	Example	Credibility	Explanation of credibility score
Primary	Interview from a witness of the event	Low	Even though it provides first-hand information, the source is of low credibility because it is an opinion and it can be biased, it reflects individual views about the past, it is shaped more by sentiments than by facts.

Secondary	Interview from a non-witness of the event (transmitted experience, e.g. child of someone who lived the event)	Very low	The source is of low credibility because it reflects individual views about the past that was transmitted to a person who hasn't experienced the event, and are shaped more by sentiments than by facts.
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Rules of thumb on how to determine the credibility of sources:

- What kind of source is it? E.g. relic, photo, textbook, article, interview. Narrative constructs like stories given through interviews are less credible than relics.
- How large is the span of time between the date of origin and the event. The longer the span, the less credible the source.
- Is the source first hand or second-hand? First-hand sources are more credible than second-hand.
- What source bias exists? If the source is found to have a strong interest or motivation to skew information, the source is less credible.

Discuss the term credibility in class using these questions:

- How would you explain the term **credible**?
- Give an example of something or someone credible.
- What makes someone credible?
- Think about different historical sources. Make a mindmap of all the different sources.
- Try to rate their credibility from very low credibility, low credibility to high credibility and very high credibility.

## 7. Scenario 1: Cyprus

The Cyprus scenario relates to Cyprus conflict, the ongoing dispute between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

Cyprus is a historic Mediterranean island. Its capital, Nicosia is known as the last divided capital in the world. There is an inter-communal conflict between the two main communities of the island, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. A coup by Greek colonels on Cyprus in July 1974 resulted in ousting its Greek-Cypriot leader

Archbishop Makarios. A military operation by Turkish troops ended with the division of the island into two parts: the southern (Greek Cypriot) and the northern (Turkish Cypriot) part. Since then Cyprus remains permanently policed by the United Nations and split in two.

### **7.1 Research question**

The question that students will try to answer in this scenario is

**How was life immediately after 1974, the year that changed Cyprus forever? Is there hope for a unified Cyprus?**

## **8. Scenario 2: Borduria**

The Borduria scenario is entirely fictitious. The main goal of this scenario is to investigate the troubled past of Borduria. A country tormented by a devastating Civil War.

In the 20th century the country of Borduria experienced a conflict between two groups- the new believers in the South supporting Queen Novartia and the old believers from the North supporting her sister Montezia. The conflict was triggered by an economic and social crisis which took the shape of a deep religious cleavage. Religious confrontation evolved into an open civil war and foreign involvement. Peace was restored but the memory of the Civil War is not uniform. Its legacy is manipulated in different ways.

### **8.1 Research question**

The question that students will try to answer in this scenario is

**Judging from the ways the Civil War is remembered and represented, will Bordurians ever manage to overcome their troubled past?**

For students to be able to play the scenarios in a proper way, they are suggested to read the following background story. It can be printed and handed out or the facilitator can touch on the most important points in plenum.

## **8.2 CIVIL WAR IN BORDURIA (HANDOUT)**

Borduria has been since the early modern period a kingdom with fairly stable borders. Half of it, the northern part, is covered with mountains and it is crossed with a few navigable rivers. It has no access to the sea, but through Megalia, a medieval empire which developed into a modern great power. Bordurians share the same language and religion with their forefathers, Paullicianism. The northerners were always considered more religious and conservative, yet bold and brave, compared to the submissive lowland peasantry. Parliamentarism was introduced in the early 19th century when the country modernized and the urban class grew stronger following the exploitation of mines, forests and waterfalls (laying mostly to the north). The industrial sector developed in the last quarter of the 19th century in the lowlands across the rivers and attracted many highlanders. They were urbanized yet they treasured their highland origin, idealized by 19th century literature. They voted for the conservatives, they remained church-going family people, and they supported religious organizations.

In the early 20th century Megalia, the major importer of Bordurian products, introduced protectionist tariffs while major waters works at the coastal line made Bordurian rivers less navigable. The Bordurian industry was badly hit. Unemployment was rocketed sky-high and an influenza epidemic decimated the lowlands. Unrest built up. King Asurbanis II exercised all his influence, but, having failed to make Megalia revise its tariff policy and unable to declare war, he abdicated. His son Novartius III decided to declare union with Megalia to save his people and even tried to pass an act of submission from the parliament, supported by the lowland constituencies mostly in distress.

Northern Bordurians had no doubt that all these grievances were a sign from God. Religious papers, pamphlets and sermons stressed that it was modernization and the negation of tradition that had caused the anger of God. Through the religious urban networks the word of the old-believers spread in the lowlands and got a



firm grip, within the unemployed industrial classes of the urbanized Northerners, mostly within the second generation. Repentance and immediate return to the roots of Paullicianism was imperative but this was impossible with a traitor king. They pledged their allegiance to the King's younger brother Montezim. Their opponents, the lowland Bordurians in general, peasants who could still make ends meet, and the educated mercantile class, who were unable to see God's involvement, ironically called the "new-believers", stood up for the realistic policy of their lawful King Novartius.

In the following years (1910s) the cleavage deepened and evolved into an open civil war fought between new and old believers, the former supporting King Novartius and the latter his brother Montezim. It broke out when an old-believer called Adrias attempted to assassinate King Novartius and was lynched. The slogan –with a touch of prophecy-- was "The True North will save us". Supported by their northern brethren the old-believers in the South managed to win two strategic battles and to control most of the lowlands. This was followed by raids against the southern farmers, execution of leading members of the "atheist" mercantile class, court-martials to cleanse the army of all officers who had remained loyal to the "traitor king" and the imposition of strict rules of religious conduct. The clergy of the new-believers was concentrated in camps and forced to hard labour. King Novartius fled to Megalia and Arch-Bishop Divinius died in prison. Woolen caps of the northern style became fashionable even in the summertime.

The old-believers would have won the war, had it not been for Megalia which supported the King with guns and ammunition and even lent its air-force. Air-raids and bombardments with numerous casualties and severe damages brought them to their knees. Megalian ground forces also moved in causing heavy casualties to the rebels. Eventually the King was restored and the martyr new-believer Arch-Bishop was canonized. The King's brother Montezim was killed in a mysterious car-accident. Adamant old-believers were re-located from the South, where they had lived for two generations, to the devastated high-lands of the North. Economic aid from Megalia made recovery possible, yet Borduria turned into and still remains a satellite state.

In the new era Northern Bordurian prefectures declined. Many northerners emigrated to neighbouring Megalia to survive. Its infrastructure was not modernized, while demand from Megalia favoured the rise of the primary sector in the South. The Northerners suffered a trauma in addition to relocation. Having rebelled against their King and church and having been defeated they could no longer boast for their tradition of bravery and faith; for bravery in the new era was equal to treason and faith to heresy. New books revised and degraded their past. A century after the Civil War some analysts consider them an ethnic minority. Megalia's role in the early 20th century crisis is absent from history text-books but its role for the reconstruction of Borduria is constantly stressed.

Modern historians have proved that most of the unemployed workers who had fought against the King were neither of northern extractions nor church-going people. Adrias, the assassin, was only a peasant's son from the South. Indeed most fighters had joined the northern old-believers, attracted by the vigour of the mountain identity. The same factor was crucial for the second generation Northerners living in the South. Returning to their origins was a rite de passage to adulthood social anthropologists suggested. Findings also suggest that the old-believers' propaganda and Press, even their militia during the Civil War had been sponsored by high-ranking bankers of the North, without any religious motivation. They had hoped that the crisis was an opportunity to relocate industry to their lands, where ore had not been exhausted. Thus they had invested in this movement, spiritual, cultural and social evangelizing return to the North. It was bound to be to their interest. But they were wrong.

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