

Join **Augustin, Alex, Lisa and the whole ArkeoTopia team** to discover **additional resources for step 4** in *My Archaeology Book* about the requirements for a permit to dig in France.

Step 4 - Authorizations for Archaeological Excavations Construction and Fieldwork Permits

Corresponding pages in MAB1 and MAB2

MAB 1, p. 14 (step 3 on p. 8 in 1st edition) and MAB 2, p. 18

More about this step's reference artifact

The drawing in *My Archaeology Book* titled *Construction and field work permits* was inspired by a Gallo-Roman structure. This image has two aims:

1. to present how the French population participates in the so-called archaeological map, or the identification of ancient human occupation sites on a national scale
2. to present the requirements for performing an archaeological excavation, whether it be a research excavation or a development-led, rescue excavation.



In France, before any construction project begins, whether it be for real estate transactions (buildings, vacation villages, restaurants, etc.), urban space management projects (large scale railway or road construction, etc.), or even individual buildings (family swimming pools and home additions, etc.), official authorization must be obtained in accordance with the [Heritage Code](#).

Although this requirement can be stifling, it also ensures that the construction project won't destroy archaeological remains. Regardless of how many have been excavated before it, each and every Gallo-Roman house uncovered provides useful information to archaeologists, thus increasing our understanding of human History. The quality of scientific data, whether it be in archaeology or any other field, is based on [seriation](#). The more information there is, the greater the accuracy of subsequent analyses. Thanks to the development of [rescue archaeology](#), what would have been destroyed before these protections were put into place can now benefit from detailed documentation and study.

Who is Authorized to Do Archaeological Fieldwork in France?

Published: Wednesday, 02 March 2022 13:58

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In the picture in *My Archaeology Book*, we can see that our young Augustin's neighbors want to build a **swimming pool** (*piscine* in French on the drawing). They have applied to the city council for a **building permit** (*permis de construire* in French on the drawing). This request will be granted on the condition that the pool's construction does not destroy any heritage remains. This is what archaeologists, represented in the image by **Alex**, must verify. In France, these diagnostic studies are conducted by Inrap. The [Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives](#) (Inrap - National Institute for Preventive Archaeological Research), created in 2002 in application of the law from 2001 on rescue archaeology, ensures the detection and the study of archaeological heritage affected by land development projects.



Given that Alex has a doctorate in archaeology as well as state approval for rescue excavations, **Madam Prefect** issues him a **permit for diagnostic operations** (*fouilles* in French on the drawing). When Alex and his team have completed the diagnosis, and depending on the results, Madam Prefect will issue Augustin's neighbors a permit to build their pool. **Trace, the snail**, who represents the traces left by human beings in the past, already knows that the neighbors will have to wait for their pool. In fact, Diggy the mole has shown him that underneath the family's feet lies a [Gallo-Roman villa](#) just waiting to be discovered and its **foundation walls** can be seen underneath where our friends are standing.

Clues

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The 9 clues include:

1. Augustin's neighbors' house, which represents construction from the present day.
2. Augustin's neighbors (the mother and the little boy), who are examples of citizens with a home construction project that requires public authorization.
3. The document about the swimming pool construction project, which represents the form needed for submission to the public authorities in order to acquire a building permit.
4. Alex, the archaeologist, with his work clothes, helmet, and notebook, who represents the scientific community that ensures heritage documentation.
5. The permit delivered by Madam Prefect, which will allow Alex and his team to take action.
6. Madam Prefect, who represents the public authorities and provides the link between citizens and other State services or local authorities, in this case the Ministry of Culture, which ensures the practice of rescue archaeology.
7. The building permit that Madam Prefect will send to Augustin's neighbors once the diagnostic operation and/or the excavation has been completed.
8. Trace the snail, who represents traces left behind by human beings (archaeological remains).
9. The Gallo-Roman walls beneath Augustin's neighbors' garden that are waiting to be found by Alex, the archaeologist, and his team. These walls highlight the precious information that lies underground and can lead to a better understanding of human History.

[Step 3 - Funding](#)

[Seeking MoneyMy Archaeology Book](#)

[Resources HomepageStep 5.1 - Fieldwork](#)

[Building Archaeo](#)