NEWS LESSON

The Roman Coins Hidden in a German Field



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What would you do first if you found a pot of old coins?
2. Would you rather find one rare object or hundreds of ordinary ones?
3. What makes buried treasure exciting beyond the money?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**hoard**	☐	A	a very large amount of money
2	**specialists**	☐	B	a secret store of valuable things
3	**republic**	☐	C	people who know a great deal about one subject
4	**fortune**	☐	D	a country with no king or emperor
5	**container**	☐	E	facts or signs that help show what is true
6	**evidence**	☐	F	a person who buys and sells goods
7	**trader**	☐	G	something, such as a pot or box, that holds other things
8	**expenses**	☐	H	money that you have to spend on things like travel or food

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

The hoard holds 934 denarii, the oldest struck in 148 BC. It is the largest find from Hadrian's period yet recorded in Germany.

1 Oliver Riedl, an amateur archaeologist carrying out an authorised search, was working a field near Wesseling, south of Cologne, when his metal detector kept signalling. It led him to several Roman silver pieces, and he contacted specialists. The first coins were found in October 2025. Specialists then recovered a hoard of 934 denarii weighing 3.1 kilograms, and the find was announced publicly in September 2026.

2 The collection contains coins from several periods of Roman history. The oldest dates from 148 BC, when Rome was still a republic, and the most recent was produced around AD 124 or 125 under the emperor Hadrian. Archaeologists believe the money was deliberately buried soon afterwards, probably inside a container that did not survive intact. It is the largest hoard from Hadrian's period found in Germany, according to the regional archaeological authorities.

3 Who would have owned such a fortune? That remains a mystery. The money might have belonged to a wealthy individual, a trader or someone saving for an important purchase. Archaeologists have suggested that it could have been hidden for safety during uncertain times. Whatever the reason, something prevented the owner from collecting it. Perhaps they died, moved away or simply lost access to the place where the coins were buried.

4 The amount was considerable. Experts have compared it with the earnings of a Roman soldier, suggesting that it represented several years of savings after expenses. Although coins are familiar objects, their value in the ancient world is difficult to compare directly with modern money. What makes this collection unusual is not simply its weight but the number of coins stored together and the long period of history they represent.

5 Riedl's decision to inform the authorities mattered almost as much as the discovery itself. By investigating the area carefully, archaeologists could record the coins' position and examine traces of the original container. Such details provide clues about how and why the money was hidden. When historical objects are dug up without proper records, much of their story can disappear, even if the objects themselves survive.

6 The coins have since been displayed at the LVR State Museum in Bonn, where visitors can inspect a fortune that lay hidden for nearly 1,900 years. The find gives historians another small piece of evidence about Roman life in what is now western Germany. It also leaves room for a more human question: what plans did the owner have for all that money? We may never know, but the fact that nobody returned to collect it is what makes the treasure so intriguing.

Sources: LVR Office for Archaeological Monument Preservation. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. All the coins in the hoard were produced under the emperor Hadrian. T F NG
2. The newest coin was made more than two centuries after the oldest. T F NG
3. Riedl was paid by the museum for the hoard. T F NG
4. Archaeologists found the original container in perfect condition. T F NG
5. Archaeologists could record the position of the coins because they investigated the area carefully. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

authorised	considerable	intact	purchase	relics	tokens	traces	wealthy

1. Only _____ staff are allowed to enter the vault.
2. Remarkably, the vase survived the earthquake _____ , without a single crack.
3. Restoring the old bridge will need a _____ amount of money.
4. The detective found _____ of mud on the floor, so he knew someone had come in recently.
5. Only a very _____ family could afford a house like that.
6. He saved for months before making the _____ of a new car.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. The first coins _____ in October 2025. **(FIND)**
2. By the time the find was announced, specialists _____ the hoard for several months. **(EXAMINE)**
3. If the owner had returned, the coins _____ underground for nineteen centuries. **(NOT STAY)**
4. Anyone who finds a hoard _____ the authorities. **(SHOULD, TELL)**
5. Riedl decided _____ the authorities rather than keep quiet. **(INFORM)**

7 Language focus: collocations

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Many B2 collocations pair a verb with an abstract noun. Notice which verb goes with which noun, because a similar verb is often wrong.

draw	obliged	piece	place	raises	shed	take

1. The hoard may _____ light on trade across the Roman empire.
2. Historians should avoid trying to _____ firm conclusions from a single find.
3. The hoard _____ more questions than it answers.
4. In many countries, finders are legally _____ to report discoveries of this kind.
5. A single _____ of evidence is rarely enough to settle a historical question.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Should a finder get to keep something that matters to a place's history?
2. What can ordinary objects tell us that grand buildings cannot?
3. Which object from your life would help a future historian understand today?

9 Role-play: what should we do with the old coins?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the neighbour who found the pot

While digging a flower bed by the shared wall, you found an old pot of coins. You'd like to sell them and share the money. Explain why, and answer your neighbour's worries.

Student B · the other neighbour

You think the coins may be important to the history of your town. You want to tell the local museum. Ask questions, then try to agree on a plan.

Useful phrases

I'd like to find out what they're worth.
We shouldn't sell them before an expert has looked.
They might tell us something about the past.
That's a fair point, but it's our garden.
What if we told the museum first?
Let's agree on a plan we're both happy with.

Afterwards, tell the class what you agreed and whether you both felt it was fair.

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 B · 2 C · 3 D · 4 A · 5 G · 6 E · 7 F · 8 H

4 True, false or not given

1 F · 2 T · 3 NG · 4 F · 5 T

5 Vocabulary

1 authorised · 2 intact · 3 considerable · 4 traces · 5 wealthy · 6 purchase

6 Verb forms

1 were found · 2 had examined or had been examining · 3 would not have stayed or wouldn't have stayed · 4 should tell · 5 to inform

7 Language focus

1 shed · 2 draw · 3 raises · 4 obliged · 5 piece

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