

# Choosing Authentic Materials at Level

As a language instructor, you likely know *why* you should use authentic materials, but might not know *where* or *how* to find materials at the right proficiency level.

We consider three major questions when choosing an authentic resource:

- What is the purpose of the text/audio?
- What features of the ILR level are present?
- What mode is the information presented in?

## What is the purpose of the text/audio?

One huge clue as to the level is the purpose of the source:

- **Inform:** At lower levels (up to ILR 2 or 2+), the goal is typically to inform the audience: a news report on a natural disaster, a short biography, summary of past events, etc.
- **Persuade:** At higher levels (ILR 3 and above), authentic sources are typically persuading the audience: editorials, political speeches or debates, movie reviews, etc.

## What features of the ILR level are present?

Each level is typically distinguishable based on a series of major features:

- **Vocabulary:** Lower-level sources use high frequency vocabulary in its primary meaning, but as they increase in level sources often use topic-specific vocabulary and secondary or abstract meanings.
- **Rhetorical devices:** Lower-level sources are straightforward, whereas higher-level sources more often make use of rhetorical devices like hyperbole, irony, rhetorical questions, etc.
- **Structure:** Lower-level sources typically have more simple, linear discourse and sentence structure, while higher-level sources use more complex sentence structure and abstract discourse structure, with more unpredictable or complex turns of thought.

## In which mode is the information presented?

Authentic sources are by native speakers for native speakers, so you also want to consider how information is presented, such as:

- **Register:** Is it formal or colloquial?
- **Regional influence:** Is there an accent or dialect?

**Want to explore these questions in more detail? Watch a replay of our webinar on this topic, led by the [CL-150 Cohorts](#) team lead.**

<https://transparent.wistia.com/medias/0rz1jczwah?wmode=transparent>