New York State EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Knowledge › Skill › Opportunity

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Authentic Resources

An Information Sheet for New York State World Language Teachers

Introduction

The NYS Learning Standards for World Languages intentionally highlight the use of authentic resources. This can be seen in the wording of Standard 1, Interpretive Communication:

> *Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, received, or viewed on a variety of topics, using a range of diverse texts, including* **authentic resources***.*

This information sheet is intended to support NYS world language teachers in understanding the importance and purposes of authentic resources in standards-based world language learning and to answer commonly asked questions about finding and planning with authentic resources.

Authentic Resources Defined

Authentic resources are defined as *unedited and unsimplified texts in print, audio, and/or visual formats that have been created by and for members of the target culture for real-world purposes other than language learning.*

Purposes for Using Authentic Resources

Authentic Resources in language learning serve multiple *essential* (ACTFL, 2025) purposes that include:
- reminding learners that entire populations of people use the target language every day;
- showing examples of how people communicate with the target language in everyday life;
- providing information about products and practices of the target cultures studied;
- giving voice to members of target cultures, making their perspectives evident;
- providing access to timely and up-to-date target language and cultural information;
- showing how words and structures are used in real-world communication and contexts;
- providing a rich source of input to promote target language acquisition and culture learning.

Authentic Resource Types

There are many authentic resource types from which to choose. Here are some to inspire your thinking:

Print			Audio and Multimedia
Advertisements	Infographics	Posters	Announcements, Commercials
Articles	Letters	Questionnaire, Survey	Audio Clips
Blog Posts	Maps	Riddles	News and Weather Reports
Books	Memes	Signs	Podcasts
Brochures	Menus	Social Media Posts	Songs
Cartoons	Poems	Stories	Stories
Currency	Postcards	Website Content	Videos, Reels, Movie Shorts

Evaluating Authentic Resources

Well-chosen authentic resources can have a positive impact on language and culture learning as well as learner motivation. The following are categories to consider and questions to ask as you evaluate an authentic resource:

Authenticity

☑ Was the resource created for a real-world purpose other than language learning?
☑ Does the resource come from a physical or online target culture location[1]?
☑ Is the intended audience of the resource someone *other than* language learners?

[1] A "target culture location" may be any location (e.g., country, community) where the target language is spoken.

Alignment

☑ Does the authentic resource address one or more topics specified in the *NYS World Language Themes and Topics* at proficiency Checkpoint of the course?
☑ Does the content of the resource align to a curricular learning goal?
☑ Do the features of the authentic resource align to the learners' proficiency level as noted in the chart below and described in the *NYS World Language Proficiency Ranges and Performance Indicators* (Category 1-2 Languages; Category 3-4 Languages; Classical Languages) document?

Text Quality	Checkpoint A	Checkpoint B	Checkpoint C
Context Familiarity	Highly familiar contexts	Familiar contexts	Familiar and less familiar contexts
Text Complexity	Simple content or message with redundancy	Straightforward content or message, primarily in a single time frame	Straightforward yet elaborated content or message across time frames
Text Length	Words and simple sentences	Sentences and strings of sentences	Strings of sentences and paragraphs
Support for Meaning-Making	Visual or gestural support	Some visual or gestural support	Minimal to no visual or gestural support

Appeal and Relevance[2]

☑ Would the learners find the authentic resource appealing and/or interesting?
☑ Would the learners find the content of the authentic resource relevant, *or* could the content be made relevant to the learners?
☑ Is the authentic resource developmentally appropriate for the learners?

[2] Learners' persistence in making meaning of an authentic resource is positively influenced by the appeal and relevance they perceive.

Finding and Curating Authentic Resources

Although there are myriad authentic resources just waiting to be found in real and online contexts, it should be acknowledged that trying to find "just the right one" when you need it can be difficult and, at times, frustrating. Instead, consider being a continuous collector and curator. By collecting authentic resources aligned to the *NYS World Language Themes and Topics,* your courses, and your curriculum on an ongoing basis, you will have a bank of authentic resources from which to choose. By curating the authentic resources in an organized manner, you will be easily able to locate them when you want and need them. Some search strategies to consider include:

Using a Search Engine[3], Social Media Site, or Artificial Intelligence (AI) Platform[4]…

- ☑ Enter key words, questions, hashtags, or prompts (a) related to the desired content; (b) in the target language[5]; and (c) as you would *naturally* do if searching for something else.
- ☑ For more specificity, add details to your search in the target language. Details might include the resource type (e.g., *infografía*) or target culture location (e.g., *Perú*).
- ☑ Scan search results in all the available formats (e.g., websites, images, videos).
- ☑ Refine your key words, questions, hashtags, or prompts based on the search results, as necessary, until you locate one or more resources that you evaluate as *authentic, aligned, appealing, and relevant.*
- ☑ Bookmark websites and save posts on social media sites that you want to revisit. To have continued access to your found authentic resource, however, follow curation guidance (below).

[3]For increased access to online content from another country, change your browser setting or the Google URL suffix to that country's location. Using a virtual private network (VPN) may also allow you to directly access online content from another country.

[4]If using AI to search for authentic resources, ensure that the resources and/or URL hyperlinks provided are authentic and not ones generated by AI.

[5]Searching in the target language frequently may positively influence online algorithms, making more target language content available to you.

Using Collections Curated by Others…

- ☑ Identify, bookmark, and search websites, blogs, channels, or playlists of organizations, groups, or individuals who curate authentic resources in the target language(s) you teach.
- ☑ Follow organizations, groups, or individuals on social media platforms who regularly post authentic resources in the target language(s).
- ☑ Bookmark the **NYS World Language Standards Initiative: Authentic Resources Wakelet**, and click on the authentic resource collection of the target language(s) you teach. Use the spreadsheet found at the start of the resource collection to search by keyword, resource type, or NYS theme or topic; or explore the individually linked sites, each of which is accompanied by a description.

Curate Your Found Authentic Resources

To ensure that your found authentic resources are available when you are ready to use them:

- ☑ Download them (or take screenshots), and save them to your device or a curation platform.
- ☑ Copy the source URL and include it with the authentic resource.
- ☑ Give the authentic resource file a meaningful name, or tag the file with a relevant search term.
- ☑ Finally, file the authentic resource using a logical filing system (e.g., by topic, by course).

Preparing to Use an Authentic Resource with the NYS Learning Standards for World Languages

Chunking

Although the definition of an authentic resource refers to *unedited and unsimplified texts,* that does not mean that learners must always be asked to interpret a complete authentic resource. There are times when the complete authentic resource is useful and appropriate for interpretation. There are other times, however, when there are reasons to limit use to a portion or portions of the authentic resource (e.g., relevance to the curricular goal, alignment to learners' proficiency or development). Selecting portions of an authentic resource for use in an Interpretive task is referred to as *chunking*. You may chunk the authentic resource before designing or selecting the Interpretive task. You will find numerous suggestions for creating interpretive tasks and for supporting learners' meaning-making of authentic resources in the *[Pre-, During-, and Post-Strategies for Interpreting Authentic Resources](#)* document. As Interpretive Communication does not take place in isolation, this document also suggests tasks for Interpersonal and Presentational Communication Standards as well as the Culture Standards.

Vocabulary for Recognition

After evaluating an authentic resource, you may discover that, although it is aligned, appealing, and relevant, it contains vocabulary that your learners do not know nor that they will need to know beyond interpreting the particular authentic resource. Rather than disregard the authentic resource, you may choose to provide learners *vocabulary for recognition*. Vocabulary for recognition refers to giving learners the definitions—in familiar target language wording or in English—of a limited number of key, low-frequency words in the text that they will need to successfully make meaning of the authentic resource and engage in completing the Interpretive task(s). You may include the vocabulary for recognition with the authentic resource itself or in a separate word bank. If the number of vocabulary words for recognition is too great, however, consider selecting a different authentic resource. Defining too many words for learners impedes the interpretation process and their comprehension.

NYSED OBEWL Webinars on Authentic Resources

To learn more about finding, evaluating, and using authentic resources, view these recorded webinars:

- [Discover Authentic Resource Gems in the World Language Wakelet](#) (Patterson, 2023)
- [Embedding Authentic Resources into Lesson Plans](#) (Grahn, 2021)
- [Standards in Action: Interpretive Communication Strategies](#) (O'Toole, Heller, Langer de Ramírez, 2023)
- [Using Authentic Resources for Proficiency Development from Checkpoint A to Checkpoint C](#) (Silva, 2024)

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