



## Vocabulary in Current Affairs Source Material

The purpose of this handout is to help you find good and relevant material which you can use as a basis for the session you have to run.

### Some tips

When you are preparing your session you have several tasks, of which the first is to choose a topic, and the second is to find good material. (After that, of course, you have to transform the material for actual use in class.)

When you are selecting your topic please keep in mind that this class is not about the news of the day, but about current affairs, i.e. issues that bother people, that are on people's minds, in debate.

If you want to start off from your own situation, and are already well informed, you can choose issues of immediate relevance to people in Germany today, then look for articles on these issues which have appeared in the English-language press. You could also search the English-language press to see whether the same issue is a problem in other countries too. (It generally is!)

Alternatively, you can sit down regularly with the English-language newspapers and find out what the regularly recurring topics are, then choose the one you want to concentrate on.

### Sources of material

- Newspapers:

The library is well stocked with newspapers and magazines from a variety of English-speaking countries

For example

(UK based) Guardian, Guardian Weekly, Scotland on Sunday

(US based) International Herald Tribune

etc.

- Magazines:

Economist – wra2/e80 (world politics, current affairs, business, finance, science, books, arts)

New Statesman – pol2/n75

Ecologist – swa2/e21

Time / Newsweek

etc.

- News on TV:

You can watch TV in the Selbstlernzentrum of the SLI. There is BBC World, Sky News and CNN.

- News on Video:

Video has the advantage that you can watch as many times as you want, wind back and listen again, which is a good way of acquiring the relevant vocabulary.

You might think that “old news” is of no relevance, but many of the problems in the news today have been around for quite some time, and the vocabulary is the same.

BBC Newsbrief (fse 525/n29) is a monthly digest of the major stories covered by BBC television news from September 89 to June 91.

ITN World News from 1990-1992 (fse 550/i96) has “international events of historic importance”.

1995. A Year to Remember (6gsx7/t95a) has material from the BBC News Archives.

Britain in View 1994 (fse 527/d98) has an accompanying book with scripts.

- Internet:

The latest news:

You can get the latest news (USA and world) from [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com)

(UK and world) from the UK press association [www.pa.press.net](http://www.pa.press.net)

The latest news and archives:

You can use Glasgow University [www.gla.ac.uk](http://www.gla.ac.uk) to go to the sites of many English-language newspapers. There you can both get the news and search the archives.

For example, I looked for articles on the issue of “Studiengebühren” in Germany.

At the above site, clicking on *Reference*, then *Webguide*, then *Newspapers and current affairs*, then *Guardian* let me search the

Guardian archive for articles on Germany/ tuition fees. I found just what I wanted “Germans in conflict over tuition fees”, an article which outlines the problem and gives you all the English expressions you need.

Political speeches:

If you want to read and print out the speeches of the men in power you will find them at

[www.number-10.gov.uk](http://www.number-10.gov.uk)

[www.whitehouse.gov/news](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news)

It can be very interesting to look at the speeches made by Blair and Bush on the same issue/event on the same day, and compare them. (e. g. the capture of a very important person)

- Other sources:

For both vocabulary and ideas:

Pros and Cons. The Debater’s Handbook. Michael Jacobson. 1999. (fse 549/j12). This book was actually written for native speakers who like to debate. It is full of issues, with lists of arguments pro and contra.

Collins Cobuild Key Words in Business / Science and Technology / the Media. This is a series of books presenting the relevant vocabulary in a sensible, meaningful context.

August 2004