

# au·thor·i·ty W1 AC

/ɔːˈθɒrəti, ə- \$ ɔːˈθɒɑː-, əˈθɒɔː-/

noun

(plural **authorities**)

**1 | power** [uncountable] POWER the power you have because of your official position:

**the authority to do something**

*Only the president has the authority to declare war.*

**authority over**

*Several countries claim authority over the islands.*

**in authority**

*I need to speak to someone in authority (= who has a position of power) .*

**2 the authorities** [plural] GOVERNMENT

the people or organizations that are in charge of a particular country or area:

*an agreement between the US and Colombian authorities*

**3 | organization** ORGANIZATION[countable] an official organization or a government department that has the power to make decisions, and has particular responsibilities:

*the **local authority***

*East Sussex Education Authority*

*the San Diego Water Authority*

*Welsh **health authorities** face a £13m deficit this year.*

**4 | expert** KNOW SOMETHING[countable] someone who knows a lot about a subject and whose knowledge and opinions are greatly respected:

**authority on**

*Mr Li is a **leading authority** on Chinese food.*

**5 permission** LET/ALLOW[uncountable and countable] official permission to do something:

**under the authority of somebody**

*The attack took place under the authority of the UN Security Council.*

**without somebody's authority**

*No one may enter without my authority.*

**6 authority figure**

someone who has a position of power, especially because of their job:

*teenage rebellion against authority figures*

**7 personal quality** [uncountable] a quality in the way you speak or behave which makes people obey you:

*Jack's air of quiet authority*

**8 I have it on good authority** SURE

used to say that you are sure that something is true because you trust the person who told you about it

**9 speak with authority**

to be sure of what you are saying, because of your knowledge or experience

## COLLOCATIONSense 1

### verbs

have authority *Teachers should have the authority to discipline their students.* |

*He has no authority over us anymore.*

exercise/exert your authority (also wield authority (formal)) (= use your authority) *In practice it's very difficult for the president to exercise his authority.* |

*He was one of those people who want to wield authority over others.*

abuse/misuse your authority (= use your authority in a bad

way) *The mayor was accused of abusing his authority and taking bribes.*

establish/ assert/ impose/ stamp your authority (= show people that you have authority) *The new manager was anxious to establish her authority.* |

*Robertson quickly stamped his authority on the team.* |

*The State Department pressed him to take bolder steps to assert his authority.*

lose your authority *He's worried that he is losing his authority over the party.*

undermine/ weaken somebody's authority (= make someone's authority weaker) *I wasn't trying to undermine your authority.*

exceed/ overstep your authority (= do more than you have the power or right to do) *A higher court decided that the judge had exceeded his authority.*

challenge somebody's authority (= try to take the power away from someone) *There had been no-one to really challenge his authority.*

## **adjectives**

full/ complete/ total authority *The manager has full authority to make decisions.*

absolute authority (= complete authority over everyone – used especially about the leader of a country) *In those days, the emperor had absolute authority.*

parental authority *The younger children are more likely to resist parental authority.*

governmental authority *Their failure undermined governmental authority.*

presidential authority *A number of constitutional amendments have increased presidential authority.*

legal authority *US agents have legal authority to bring criminals*

*back from overseas.*

## phrases

be in a position of authority *I've never been in a position of authority before.*

have an air of authority (**approving**) (= look like you have authority, in a way that makes people obey you) *The commander had an unmistakeable air of authority.*

a challenge to somebody's authority *The leadership saw the demonstrations as a challenge to their authority.*

an authority figure (= someone, such as a parent or teacher, who has the power to tell young people what they can do) *The teacher is an authority figure, like the parent.*

### Word origin

**Date:** 1200–1300

**Language:** Old French

**Origin:** **auctorité**, from Latin **auctoritas** 'opinion, decision, power', from **auctor**; →

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