

Printed Textbook Writing Guidelines for General Studies for Primary Schools

1. Introduction

The purpose of this set of guidelines is to highlight the curriculum aims and targets, as well as guiding principles for writing textbooks of General Studies for Primary Schools. Publishers who are interested to develop textbooks need to familiarise themselves with the related textbook information to ensure that the textbooks are written in accordance with the specific requirements of the curriculum and “The Seven Learning Goals of Primary Education” (www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/7-learning-goals/about-7-learning-goals/primary.html) (For details, please refer to *Basic Education Curriculum Guide – To Sustain, Deepen and Focus on Learning to Learn (Primary 1-6)*(2014)). For the general principles and requirements for writing textbooks, publishers should refer to the latest edition of the *Guiding Principles for Quality Textbooks* available from the Education Bureau’s Textbook Information website (www.edb.gov.hk/textbook).

2. Curriculum Aims and Learning Objectives

2.1 Curriculum Aims

Enabling students to:

- maintain healthy personal development and become confident, rational and responsible citizens;
- recognise their roles and responsibilities as members of the family and society and care about the common good;
- develop a sense of national identity and be committed to contributing to the nation and the world;
- develop curiosity and interest in the natural and technological worlds as well as understand the impact of science and technology on society; and
- develop care and concern for the environment and practise green living.

2.2 Learning Objectives

Students are expected to:

- understand their growth and development, develop a healthy lifestyle, respect for themselves and others, and attach importance to harmonious interpersonal relationships;
- understand the development and changes of the community, and appreciate and respect multiculturalism of Hong Kong;

- develop care and concern for the well-being of their families, the community of Hong Kong, the nation and the world, and as a result understand their roles and responsibilities in their families, society and country, respect the rule of law and contribute for the common good;
- develop interest in exploring the scientific world and technological world, be able to integrate and apply science and technology knowledge and skills to solve everyday problems;
- understand the impact of science and technology on human society and the environment, and practise green living; and
- develop capabilities of effective and ethical use of information and information technology, and engage in continual learning.

3. Guiding Principles

The textbooks should be written in line with the curriculum aims, learning targets and objectives of the latest version of *General Studies Curriculum Guide for Primary Schools (Primary 1 – Primary 6)* (2017). Textbooks should also be designed with a holistic plan of learning themes, cover the knowledge and understanding, skills, values and attitudes of six strands and all core learning elements, for supporting the “student-centred” learning approach.

The GS curriculum provides diversified learning experiences for students to lay a knowledge foundation for the Key Learning Areas (KLA) of Science Education (SE), Technology Education (TE) and Personal, Social and Humanities Education (PSHE), and to progressively develop their positive values and attitudes, and generic skills. Publishers should make reference to the above curriculum document (the latest version) and the “*Report on Promotion of STEM Education - Unleashing Potential in Innovation*” for a smooth and coherent interface between different year levels and key stages.

3.1 Content

- Emphases should be placed on the lateral coherence and vertical continuity of the learning themes of each year level and help students construct knowledge, cultivate positive attitude and develop generic skills.
- The level of difficulty should take into consideration of the prior knowledge of students and should be appropriate for students’ understanding and meet their learning needs. New concepts should be built on prior knowledge.
- Using students' experiences as a starting point, the contents included are to be related to current happenings, with close connection to students' everyday life experiences. Excessive factual information, fragmented information and unnecessary repetitions should be avoided.
- The concepts presented should be correct. Examples and explanations given should be appropriate. Questions/ problems should be holistically

interpreted from different angles and perspectives. Over-generalisation should be avoided.

- Stereotyping and any form of discrimination on the ground of gender, age, race, culture, disability, socio-economic status, religion, nationality, etc, should be avoided

3.2 Information

- Information provided should be appropriate for the age of students and interesting so as to enhance learning motivation of students, inspire and facilitate their learning.
- Information provided should be accurate, which should be accurately reported based on facts, but not casually amended due to the change of stance.
- Information provided should be objective and general examples should be used. Publishers should avoid showing brand names of commercial items in the illustrations (if applicable). They should also pay special attention to the legal liabilities related to intellectual property rights. In addition, the illustrations and content should be suitable for students' psychological development and deliver positive and healthy messages.
- Photos, pictures, reference data and graphs / charts etc. should be accurate, relevant and effective with appropriate elaborations and sources. Illustrations should reflect the actual size of an object and in appropriate proportion. Maps should include relevant labels. For example, title, coordinates, scale and legend.
- Though textbooks are positioned as self-contained learning materials, publishers may provide a suitable amount of appropriate booklist and websites for students' reference in view of the direction to promote reading and self-directed learning.

3.3 Learning Activities

- The design should be appropriate, meaningful and diversified to enhance students' learning interest.
- Allow students to construct knowledge gradually and develop their cognitive abilities of different levels. For example, search and collect information, grasp and organise the main points as well as comprehensive analysis of information / data etc.
- Guide students to show care to the environment and things in their surroundings using different topics. Develop critical thinking skills, analytical skills and problem-solving skills as well as cultivate positive values and attitudes among students through their daily practices and experiences.

- Develop students' ability to integrate and apply knowledge and skills. For example, theme-based study, case study and STEM education related learning activities etc.
- Develop students' self-directed learning abilities, such as the use of learning tools.
- Promote life-wide learning with everyday life experiences and community resources.
- Remind students to observe and follow safety rules and regulations. Related instructions, tools, graphs / charts and photos should also meet safety requirements.

3.4 Assessment

- Match with the learning objectives, contents, and the learning and teaching process.
- Help students improve learning by including self-reflection, self-assessment, peer assessment or group assessment based on the learning objectives.
- Set more open-ended questions/ questions without fixed answers to guide students think and understand more deeply as well as unleashing their creativity.

3.5 Structure and Organisation

- The structure should be clearly delineated with a table of contents, chapter titles, topics / headings and outlines.
- For the preface, simple guidelines for students could be provided to highlight how to use the textbook for their learning.
- For each learning theme, an overview of the learning objectives or prior knowledge are to be included. The concluding summary should be consistent with the content of each module / chapter.
- The table of contents should show clearly the topics and related sub-topics. The themes should align with the learning contents. The headings should be attractive and reader-friendly.
- The contents of each learning theme should be of appropriate quantity with due consideration on the lesson time allocated for General Studies for primary schools. It should also facilitates students' learning inside and outside classrooms.

3.6 Language

- The language used is of an appropriate level of difficulty. Reference could

be made to the “*Lexical List for Chinese Learning in Hong Kong*” (2007).

- Textbook contents should be well structured to facilitate students’ understanding of knowledge.
- New vocabulary items should match the relevant topics. The key words and concepts should be highlighted for easy recognition.
- Mixed mode of Chinese and English languages should not be used. Consistency is needed for all terms used. Language use should be clear and accurate.
- Appropriate hints should be provided to facilitate students’ understanding and use of subject specific terms and vocabulary.

3.7 Textbook Layout

- The font type should be consistent throughout the whole set of textbooks. The font size should be appropriate. For details of the standard written forms of Chinese characters, please refer to the “*List of Graphemes of Commonly-used Chinese Characters*” published by the Education Bureau in 2012. The line spacing and margin should be appropriately arranged for easy reading. Unnecessary blank parts should be avoided.
- Publishers may make reference to the latest version of “[*Guiding Principles for Printing of Textbooks*](#)” for the suggestions for use of paper, colouring and use of inks.

4. Others

- 4.1 When writing textbooks, publishers have to ensure that the contents and information provided in the materials should be correct, complete, up-to-date, objective and impartial. The source and the date of the information should be provided as appropriate. The information in the illustrations and images should avoid showing brand-names of commercial items unless it is necessary.
- 4.2 Publishers should avoid putting excessive hyperlinks / QR codes in the textbooks so as not to violate the self-containment principles. The contents of the hyperlinks / QR codes should be placed in the teacher’s handbooks or the publisher’s online learning platforms as far as possible for teachers and students’ reference. The hyperlinks / QR codes should link to the websites with high credibility, such as the official websites and the websites of academic institutions, and avoid linking to commercial or social media platforms.
- 4.3 It is incumbent on the publishers to ensure that all proof-reading work, including the language, information, punctuation, illustration, pagination, etc., is completed and accurate before submitting the textbooks for review.

- 4.4 Publishers should clear all copyright issues of the textbooks as appropriate.
- 4.5 Publishers should not use expiration of copyright on the textbook materials as a reason to apply for textbook revision or reprint with minor amendments.
- 4.6 Publishers should pay attention to the curriculum time allocation suggested in the curriculum documents of this subject to ensure that the learning contents are designed with an appropriate quantity and level.
- 4.7 If publishers submit other versions (such as Chinese version or electronic version) of the same textbook title for review at the same time, they should duly check the consistency of the contents among all the versions. If another version will be submitted at a later stage, the suggestions in the review reports for the previous submitted version should be thoroughly followed before submission.
- 4.8 Safety precautions when conducting learning activities and outdoor activities should be clearly specified in a concise manner where appropriate. The main point is to remind teachers and students to stay alert and take precautions against all potential hazards and to avoid accidents. For more information about the safety measures of learning activities, please refer to the latest version of related official documents such as the chapter on “*Safety precautions and guidelines*” in the “*School Administration Guide*” (updated regularly) and the “*Safety Handbook for General Studies for Primary Schools*”.

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