

Printed Textbook Writing Guidelines for Religious Education (Secondary 1-3)

1. Introduction

The purpose of this set of guidelines is to familiarise interested textbook publishers with the curriculum aims and objectives, guiding principles for writing textbooks, etc. of Religious Education (Secondary 1-3) in a bid to ensure that the textbooks are written in accordance with the specific requirements of the curriculum and “The Seven Learning Goals for Secondary Education” (www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/7-learning-goals/about-7-learning-goals/secondary.html) (For details, please refer to *Secondary Education Curriculum Guide* (2017)). 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).

The textbooks should be written in line with the following CDC curriculum documents:

- *Personal, Social and Humanities Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1-Secondary 6)* (2017)
- *Religious Education Syllabuses for Secondary Schools (Secondary 1-3)* (1999)

2. Curriculum Aims and Objectives

2.1 The aims of Religious Education (Secondary 1-3) are:

- to help students understand the relationship between religion, life and society, and to further explore the meaning of life;
- to develop students’ respect for religions; and
- to enable students to learn to search for a way for the harmonious coexistence of different religions in a diverse human society.

2.2 The learning objectives of Religious Education (Secondary 1-3) are:

- to enable students to acquire an understanding of religion and religious ways of living;
- to enable students to reflect upon their own experience of life and upon mankind’s quest to understand the place and significance of religions/belief systems;
- to enable students to appreciate the contributions of religions/belief systems to human cultures and individuals in their search for the meaning of life; and

- to give assistance to students in their search for a faith/life stance by which to live.

3. Guiding Principles

3.1 Content

- The writing of the textbooks should be in line with the curriculum aims and objectives stated in the syllabus of *Religious Education (Secondary 1-3)* (1999).
- The writing of the textbook should be student-centred and from the religious perspectives. The design of learning and teaching activities and homework should be related to the content and aims at promoting students' learning interests.
- Elements of enquiry should be emphasised in the design of learning activities which develop students' ways of knowledge enquiry and the skills in thinking and evaluating knowledge relating to religion.
- Textbook publishers should refer to the syllabus of *Religious Education (Secondary 1-3)* (1999) for details.

3.2 Learning and Teaching

- The starting point for writing the textbook would be students' levels and interests. Students would be guided to understand the founders, origin, doctrines and practices of the religion they study.
- The textbooks should give an account of and analyse concepts relating to religion in a lively way.
- In order to facilitate students' easy understanding of the content, relevant and essential information such as diagrams, maps and data should be introduced where appropriate.
- To avoid putting extra burdens on students, information on years as well as names of places and people that is not essential should be kept to a minimum. If religious classics are quoted, chapters, sections and the versions adopted should be cited clearly.
- Old names of mountains, rivers and cities related to historical religious events should be used. Modern names should be added as remarks. The interchangeable use of old and modern names should be avoided.
- The principle in the design of homework, which is an extension of the learning themes, would be the enhancement of learning effectiveness.
- Questions for thinking/homework should aim at developing students' higher order thinking (e.g. analysis, synthesis and evaluation) and

consolidating the learning outcomes. The forms of homework should be diversified.

- Junior secondary education emphasises helping students build a solid foundation of knowledge. As such, learning activities and tasks included in textbooks should aim at helping students acquire knowledge and develop understanding; whereas excessive evaluation questions should be avoided. Moreover, the introduction of broad questions without the provision of sufficient information and guidelines should also be avoided, so as not to exceed the capability of junior secondary students in terms of their prior knowledge, and deviate from the curriculum objectives.
- The design of homework should take account of students' interests and, if possible, link up with students' daily life.
- The design of learning activities should link up with students' daily life and related life-wide learning activities, as well as provide sufficient information and guidelines to cater for students' different interests, levels and abilities.

3.3 Structure and Organisation

- The structure and organisation of textbook should be in line with the syllabus of *Religious Education (Secondary 1-3)* (1999).
- Textbook publishers should follow the recommended titles of topics in the syllabus. However, they may decide sub-titles on their own.
- The organisation of textbooks should be systematic. The presentation and genre should be diversified to promote students' learning interests.

3.4 Language

- [*An English-Chinese Glossary of Terms Commonly Used in the Teaching of Religious Education \(Christian\) in Secondary Schools*](#) (1988) published by the Education Bureau should be referred to where applicable.
- Vernacular language should be used. The level of difficulty of the language used in the textbooks should commensurate with the language ability of students. The wordings used should be clear and simple.
- Where appropriate, guidance on pronunciation could be provided to facilitate student learning.

3.5 Textbook Layout

- The font size of the texts and footnotes should not be too small so as to avoid affecting the eyesight of students. The typesetting should enhance readability.

- Illustrations, maps, data, etc. should be appropriately positioned in respect of the texts.
- Publishers may refer to the latest edition of EDB's [*Guiding Principles for Printing of Textbooks*](#) for use of paper, colouring, use of inks, etc.
- Typesetting should be practical in principle. There should be good use of the space on each page so as to keep the thickness and the weight of textbook to a minimum.

4. Others

- 4.1 When writing textbooks, publishers have to ensure that the contents of 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 should also avoid showing brand-names of commercial items in the illustrations and images.
- 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 intend to 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 is planned to be submitted in a later submission period, it should be submitted upon the completion of the revision of the contents as required in the review reports for the previous version.