

e-Textbook Writing Guidelines for Geography (Secondary 1 – 3)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The revised S1-3 Geography curriculum has been implemented at S1 in September 2012, S2 in September 2013 and S3 in September 2014 progressively. The followings are some guidelines to publishers so that the writing of Geography e-textbooks will be geared to the Curriculum and the updated “Seven Learning Goals of Secondary Education” (www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/7-learning-goals/secondary/index.html). For details, please refer to the *Secondary Education Curriculum Guide* (2017) and its Supplementary Notes (2021) (www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/major-level-of-edu/secondary/cg_documents.html).
- 1.2 The *Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version)* was released in 2021 and ten priority values and attitudes (PVA) were introduced. The PVA have been optimised since 2023 with the PVA “Care for Others” extended to “benevolence” and two PVA (i.e. “Filial Piety” and “Unity”) added. Publishers should incorporate the learning elements of values education in the textbooks where appropriate. For details, please refer to the *Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version)*(2021) (Chinese version only) (www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/4-key-tasks/moral-civic/ve_curriculum_framework2021.html) and the EDBCM No. 183/2023 on *Enriching the Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version) – Optimisation of “Priority Values and Attitudes”* (applications.edb.gov.hk/circular/upload/EDBCM/EDBCM23183E.pdf).
- 1.3 The *Curriculum Framework of National Security Education in Hong Kong* was released in 2021 and updated in 2025. Publishers should incorporate the learning elements of national security education in the e-textbooks where appropriate. They may also refer to the government website “National Security Education Day” for information such as major fields of national security. For details, please refer to the *Curriculum Framework of National Security Education in Hong Kong* (www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/pshe/national-security-education/index.html) and the government website “National Security Education Day” (www.nsed.gov.hk/index.php?l=en).
- 1.4 For the general principles and requirements for writing e-textbooks and the requirements for submission of e-textbooks for review, publishers should refer to the latest edition of the *Guiding Principles for Quality Textbooks and Guidelines on Submission of e-Textbooks for Review* available on the EDB’s Textbook Information website (www.edb.gov.hk/textbook).

1.5 The e-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)
- *Geography Curriculum Guide (Secondary 1 – 3)* (2011)

2. Curriculum Aims and Objectives

The e-textbooks should be written in line with the aims and objectives of the S1 – 3 Geography curriculum and should facilitate the adoption of issue-enquiry approach in the learning and teaching of Geography as well as enhance skills development and values formation in students.

3. Guiding Principles

3.1 Content Selection and Organisation

- The writing of the e-textbooks should be in line with the curriculum aims and objectives stated in the *Geography Curriculum Guide (Secondary 1 – 3)* (2011), and should realise the related learning elements recommended in the *Curriculum Framework of National Security Education in Hong Kong* (2021) (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/pshe/national-security-education/index.html>).
- Selection and organisation of content should be done with a view to assist students to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework of the geographical issues and problems to be studied. It is crucial to ensure that the core knowledge, concepts and ideas are clearly presented.
- One of the core rationales for this major revision of the S1 – 3 Geography curriculum is to strengthen students' global perspective by facilitating students to gain a broad overview of the major geographical issues and phenomena at different scales in different parts of the world. e-Textbooks should thus be written to facilitate students to gain a basic understanding of geographical phenomena and patterns from a macro perspective. Minor details of specific features and processes should be kept to a minimum.
- To cater for the wide variety of school-based curriculum modes, the revised S1 – 3 Geography curriculum adopted an issue-based, modular approach to allow maximum flexibility for individual schools to plan their own curriculum structure and teaching sequences. As such, e-textbooks should assist teachers in curriculum planning by providing suggestions on how the content could be organised in a logical and progressive sequence. e-Textbook writers and editors could refer to

Sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 of Curriculum Guide for details.

- e-Textbooks should help students study the remote, non-observable environment by relating their learning to the students' immediate living environment. One possible way of achieving this is to supplement the study of the case studies of distant areas with relevant local examples. To cater for student diversity, e-textbooks should also provide a wider range of examples of various degrees of complexity and difficulty to suit the different abilities, interests and needs of students.

3.2 Learning Activities

- Junior secondary education emphasizes helping students build a solid foundation of knowledge. As such, learning activities and tasks included in e-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 overall design of learning activities should aim at catering for students' learning diversity. e-Textbooks should include a wide range of learning activities to facilitate teachers to adopt different learning and teaching strategies to suit the ability, need and interest of their students.
- Learning tasks, activities and exercises should be designed for a variety of learning situations — recapitulation, decision-making, problem-solving, identifying key issues, interpretation of local topographic maps and simplified map extracts, statistical maps and diagrams, pictures and photographs, field observation, etc.
- Map interpretation and field study are the core skills of Geography. Appropriate map interpretation exercises and field study tasks should be integrated and included in every unit / chapter / topic of the e-textbook as far as possible.
- Stimulus materials in the form of newspaper cuttings, extracts from articles, cartoons, flow-charts, photos, diagrams, statistical tables or graphs, etc. should be provided so that students can have some concrete materials to base on, some food for thought, as well as motivation for attempting any task of learning.
- Various types of data-response exercises should be included to help students develop the abilities of interpretation and analysis of information.
- Classroom and students' activities such as discussion, debates, role-

playing, simulation games, project work, surveys, case studies, information collecting, etc. could also be included as part of the exercises.

- Learning activities should be challenging enough in view of students' ability. Activities that require student to copy mechanically from the text or that focus largely on students' reading comprehension ability should be avoided.
- In addition to assisting students to construct a solid knowledge foundation and develop skills, learning activities should cultivate students' proper values and attitudes and help them to become informed and responsible citizens of society, our country and the world.

3.3 Language and Presentation

- Pinyin should be adopted for Chinese names and places.
- It is undesirable to include Chinese terms in-parenthesis for books in English. This practice should be avoided as far as possible and the terms should be restricted to the "glossary section" at the end of each chapter or at the footer of the respective page. Where appropriate, guidance on pronunciation could be provided to facilitate student learning.
- [*An English-Chinese Glossary of Terms Commonly Used in the Teaching of Geography in Secondary Schools*](#) updated by the Education Bureau in 2022 should be referred to where applicable.
- The level of difficulty of the language used in the e-textbook should commensurate with the language ability of junior secondary students. Students should be capable of reading the e-textbook easily on their own.
- The language of the extracts from newspapers or other authentic secondary sources contained in the e-textbook should be modified to suit the reading ability of average junior secondary students.
- e-Textbook should be rich in photographs and other visual resources. It should also contain an open layout, an attractive design, short line lengths and plenty of sub-sections to make it accessible to students.
- Illustrations adopted in e-textbook should contain information that can be easily identified, absorbed and interpreted by students and be relevant to the text. They should not contain far more information than are required.
- Legends and scales (preferably linear scales) must be included and accurately drawn for all maps.
- All statistical figures, wherever appropriate, should indicate the years they represent.

3.4 Pedagogical use of e-features

- The e-textbooks should meet the technical and functional requirements with appropriate pedagogical use of e-features for learning and teaching activities and assessments.
- Provision of virtual field trips, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) resources to inaccessible field sites, such as overseas field sites and local field sites that are unsafe to students.
- Provision of video clips / animations to explain abstract geographical concepts and processes.
- Provision of simplified, easy-to-use GIS programs for students to construct, overlay and interpret maps and other spatial data.
- Interactive assessment tasks could be included in e-textbook to facilitate assessment for learning.

3.5 Learning Elements / Skills Not Replaceable by Digital Means

- Outdoor geographical enquiry activities, in particular fieldwork and visits, that are to be conducted by students in person, should not be completely replaced by digital means.
- Drawing of sketch maps, cross-sections, transects, climatic graphs and other subject-specific diagrams should not be replaced by digital means.
- Technical and functional requirements
- Refer to the latest edition of the Guiding Principles for Quality Textbooks for the relevant requirements.

4. Others

- 4.1 When writing e-textbooks, publishers have to ensure that the content 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 the brand names of commercial items unless they are necessary.
- 4.2 All URLs and hyperlinks (including the publisher's self-developed learning materials and the learning and teaching resources developed by the third party) in the e-textbooks should be linked to the publisher's website for the publisher's easy management. For the third party resources, the URLs or hyperlinks should be linked 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. In case problems arise from the hyperlinked content (including the third party resources), the publisher should take immediate follow-up actions and bear the relevant liability.

- 4.3 Publishers should avoid putting excessive hyperlinks that provide additional references in the e-textbooks so as not to violate the self-containment principles. Publishers may place the hyperlinks of their self-developed supplementary learning materials or the learning and teaching resources developed by the third party on their website. Publishers may also provide their website's URL in the Teacher's Book for teachers' reference to facilitate lesson preparation or design of learning and teaching activities. Publishers should be accountable for the learning and teaching resources they provide.
- 4.4 The maps included in the textbooks should be accurate and only contain essential information suitable for student learning. Reference should be made to the requirements and standard maps of the Ministry of Natural Resources of the People's Republic of China for all maps of China included in the textbooks, and wherever appropriate, the respective map review numbers and dates of reference should be quoted. Textbook publishers should also follow strictly the provisions in “公開地圖內容表示規範” issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources.
(https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2023-02/17/content_5741977.htm)
- 4.5 When using images of the national flag, national emblem, regional flag and regional emblem, the following points should be noted:
- **avoid drawing** the national flag, national emblem, regional flag and regional emblem on your own;
 - use real photos to show the national flag, national emblem, regional flag, regional emblem, etc.;
 - use the files of the national flag, national emblem, regional flag and regional emblem downloaded from the Protocol Division Government Secretariat and follow the relevant requirements stipulated by the Protocol Division Government Secretariat on the use of these images.
- 4.6 It is mandatory for the publishers to ensure that all proof-reading work, including that for e-features, language, punctuation, information, illustration, pagination, etc., is completed and the e-textbooks are error-free before submitting them for review.
- 4.7 Publishers should review the e-textbook content from time to time. When necessary, publishers can make amendments to the e-textbook content with the EDB's consent. The EDB may also require publishers to make amendments when needs arise.
- 4.8 Publishers should clear all copyright issues of the e-textbooks as appropriate.
- 4.9 The suggested time allocation set out in the curriculum documents should be taken into consideration to ensure that the learning content is designed with an appropriate quantity and level.

4.10 If publishers submit other versions (such as Chinese version or printed version) of the same textbook title for review at the same time, they should duly check the consistency of the content among all the versions. If another version is to be submitted at a later stage, the suggestions in the e-Textbook Review Report for the previously submitted version should be duly followed before submission.

Personal, Social and Humanities Education Section
Education Bureau
August 2025