

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

1. Introduction

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 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 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

- 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 emphasises 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.

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*](#) published by the Education Bureau in 2007 and its supplementary sheets (updated as at November 2018) 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

- 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

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.

3.6 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 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 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 in the e-textbooks so as not to violate the self-containment principles. The contents of the hyperlinks 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 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 electronic functions, language, information, punctuation,

illustration, pagination, etc., is completed and accurate before submitting the e-textbooks for review.

- 4.4 Publishers should clear all copyright issues of the e-textbooks as appropriate.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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 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.

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