

e-Textbook Writing Guidelines for Life and Society (Secondary 1-3)

1. Introduction

The purpose of this set of guidelines is to familiarise interested e-textbook publishers with the curriculum aims and objectives, guiding principles for writing e-textbooks, etc. of Life and Society (Secondary 1-3) in a bid to ensure that the e-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 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)
- *Life and Society Curriculum Guide (Secondary 1-3)* (2010)

2. Curriculum Aims and Objectives

2.1 The aims of Life and Society (Secondary 1-3) are:

- to develop in students a positive self-understanding, enhance competence to meet daily and future challenges, and pursue their goals and aspirations;
- to enable students to make decisions for the optimal use of personal and community resources;
- to develop students to become informed and responsible citizens to contribute to the development of a caring and just society; and
- to cultivate in students sensitivity, interests and concern for local, national and global issues.

2.2 The learning objectives of Life and Society (Secondary 1-3) are:

- to understand and accept oneself and to live a healthy life;
- to develop effective communication skills with peers, family and others in society, and realise ways to build and maintain positive interpersonal relationships;

- to develop an ability to make informed and responsible decisions regarding personal issues and practical short term and long term plans for the achievement of personal goals;
- to understand the roles of individuals, enterprises and the government in the economy and how they interplay to determine the distribution and uses of resources;
- to develop the skills to interpret and manage data, statistics and information relating to indicators and trends of general economic performances;
- to understand basic features of the political systems at local, national and global dimensions;
- to understand features of different social groups and how they interact with each other as well as the governments;
- to understand how different levels of communities are connected and interdependent with each other, and to develop the identification of local resident identity, national identity and identity as global citizens;
- to understand the perspectives, backgrounds and interests of different groups, and to develop an ability to make informed and reasoned judgments on social issues with due considerations to the different groups;
- to develop enthusiasm and readiness for responsible participation in public affairs;
- to be ready for self-management and independence, and willing to reflect on and clarify their own values and attitudes underlying the choices they make;
- to understand, appreciate, respect and reflect on the values and attitudes that underpin the local society, including rights and responsibilities, freedom, rule of law, social justice, democracy, equal opportunities, tolerance, plurality, clean, honesty and integrity, upright, compassion and mutuality; and
- to develop an attitude of open-mindedness and respect for all peoples, including their cultures, values and ways of life.

3. Guiding Principles

3.1 Content

- The writing of the e-textbooks should be in line with the curriculum aims and objectives stated in the *Life and Society Curriculum Guide (Secondary 1-3) (2010)* (called “the Guide” hereafter) prepared by the Curriculum Development Council in October 2010. The e-textbooks

being developed should cover the foundation parts of 29 core modules and include the essential learning elements required by the curriculum.

- The content should correspond to students' age, level of maturity, level of ability, interests and prior knowledge. Students would be guided to understand different issues in relation to their daily lives and society.
- The e-textbooks would provide students with the means to acquire knowledge and frameworks for constructing knowledge. Students would be assisted in making progress in their learning.
- The e-textbooks would facilitate a balanced development of students' knowledge, skills and positive values and attitudes; and enhance their knowledge and understanding of issues at the personal, local, national and global levels as well as their participation in the learning of this curriculum.
- The content of this curriculum is closely related to senior secondary humanities subjects. It is also intended to support learning in senior secondary Liberal Studies. Thus, the design of e-textbooks should be able to allow students to acquire solid foundation knowledge in topics studied, in order to prepare them for studies of humanities subjects and Liberal Studies at senior secondary level.
- In the description of events, objectivity should be exercised and different perspectives should be provided. The description should be clear and concise and able to highlight the main points of the topics studied. The description should be based on facts, with supporting evidence for the description quoted from reliable and credible sources. Facts and views/opinions should be distinguished from each other.
- The content should be accurate, timely, free of misleading claims and systematically organised. At the same time, the importance of mastering concepts and skills should be emphasised. However, overly technical or complicated theories and concepts should be avoided.
- When developing e-textbooks, reference should be made to the suggested lesson time for topics in each module in the Guide to ensure the depth of treatment of topics is appropriate and that the contents covered are not excessive.

3.2 Learning and Teaching

- The design of e-textbooks and associated learning activities and tasks should be student-centred, appropriate to the levels of Secondary 1-3 students and able to promote students' learning interests. Learning activities and tasks that offer diversified learning experiences and of different difficulty levels should also be provided in order to cater for diversities among students.

- Incorporation of elements of enquiry should be emphasised in the design of learning activities and tasks, in order to develop in students ways of acquiring knowledge through enquiries, open up their thinking and develop their critical thinking and evaluation skills.
- e-Textbooks should provide questions for enquiry in different forms or with different points of entry where appropriate. Closed-ended questions that tend to narrow down students' views on issues studied should be avoided.
- Concepts, relationships, characteristics, similarities and differences, changes, development, etc. should be explained and presented in a lively manner. In order to facilitate students' easy understanding of the content and to cater for their different learning styles, pictures, diagrams, maps, data, etc. which contain relevant, accurate, up-to-date and essential information should be introduced where appropriate.
- Guiding questions could be placed at the beginning of each topic to arouse students' interests and start off their thinking around the topic. Reference could be made to the "Suggested Introductory Questions" for each module in the Guide.
- "Questions for thinking" and "suggestions for learning activities" could be introduced where appropriate. In order to cater for learner diversity, learning activities and tasks should match students' different interests, levels and abilities. Sufficient information and guidelines should be provided, including the provision of suitable prompts that guide students in the right direction to complete the learning tasks. More than one item should be provided in each of the "questions for thinking" and "suggestions for 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.
- Learning activities and tasks should be able to strengthen the learning effectiveness and extend learning in topics. They should be interesting. If possible, they should link up with students' daily lives, and related life-wide learning activities. The content should aim to develop students' higher order thinking, for example, analysis, integration and evaluation. The forms of learning tasks should be diversified.
- Learning activities and tasks should aim to strengthen students' reading and writing skills. Different text types (e.g. expository, argumentative)

and text forms (e.g. newspaper reports, editorials, advertisements) should be used. Use of different language functions (e.g. comparing and contrasting, giving explanations, summarising) to complete learning activities and tasks should be encouraged.

- The design of learning activities and tasks should be able to develop students' generic skills and encourage the use of generic skills in an integrative manner, such as collaborative problem solving skills.

3.3 Structure and Organisation

- Publishers could decide the titles or topics for chapters and sections; there is no need to follow exactly the titles or topics recommended in the Guide. However, the codes adopted in the Guide should be used to label the chapters and sections to indicate the corresponding foundation parts or extended parts of the core modules or the enrichment modules. For instance, REA06 refers to Core Module (15) Foundation Part: “Macroeconomy of the Mainland”; whereas REA-E01 refers to Enrichment Module III: “Sustainable Development of the Chinese Economy”.
- The organisation of e-textbooks should be systematic. The presentation and genre should be diversified to promote students' learning interests.
- To avoid causing extra burdens on students, information on names of places and people as well as years that is not essential should be kept to a minimum. Chapters and sections of source materials as well as years of publication should be clearly indicated when important documents or statistical data are cited.
- Overly technical or complicated information could be provided as footnotes if they provide relevant supplementary information that could facilitate students' further understanding.
- Illustrations should be appropriately positioned to support understanding of the texts. Appropriate titles and legends should be provided. Sources of illustrations should be provided. Imaginatively created illustrations should be clearly indicated.
- Maps should be simple and accompanied by legends. Rivers and tributaries should be kept to a minimum. Names of places indicated on maps should correspond to those in the texts.

3.4 Language

- Formal language should be used. The level of difficulty of the language used in the e-textbooks should commensurate with the language ability of students. [*An English-Chinese Glossary of Terms Commonly Used in the Teaching of Life and Society in Secondary Schools*](#) (2015 Revised)

published by the Education Bureau should be referred to where applicable.

- For e-textbooks in English, pinyin should be adopted for Chinese names and places. [For exceptions, please refer to the document entitled 《關於改用漢語拼音方案拼寫中國人名地名作為羅馬字母拼寫法的實施說明》.]
- It is undesirable to include Chinese terms in parenthesis for e-textbooks 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.

3.5 Pedagogical Use of e-Features

- e-Learning has greatly facilitated access to different sources of information which provide students with a diversity of views and perspectives on issues studied. These different sources of information can complement each other and facilitate cross-checking to determine their authenticity, accuracy, completeness, sufficiency or timeliness. Any piece of information should be taken as offering one of a number of possible perspectives on an issue studied, but should not be taken as the only one.
- Facilitated by e-learning, a wide range of non-textual resources, such as photographs, audio records, video records, music, films, maps, posters, etc. become accessible, which can be used to cater for diversities among students, which include differences in socioeconomic background, gender, religion, language proficiency, learning style, etc.

3.6 Learning Elements/Skills Not Replaceable by Digital Means

- Participatory learning outside classrooms provide opportunities for students to learn by doing, such as community study and service learning. Participatory learning experiences are conducive to the development of generic skills and civic competency. Students’ direct participation in such learning activities are not to be replaced by digital means.

3.7 Technical and Functional Requirements

- Publishers should 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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