

# **e-Textbook Writing Guidelines for Geography (Secondary 4-6)**

## **1. Introduction**

The Senior Secondary (SS) Geography curriculum is in line with the local education reform and the international trend of geographical education which emphasise the application of knowledge into life situations, the development of subject-specific and generic skills as well as the cultivation of an environmental ethic and global perspective.

The latest updated SS Geography curriculum has been implemented at S4 in September 2019, S5 in September 2020 and is scheduled to be implemented at S6 in September 2021 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](http://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](http://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 and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4-6)* (2007) (with updates in July 2017)

## **2. Curriculum Aims and Objectives**

The e-textbooks should be written in line with the aims and objectives of the SS Geography curriculum. They should facilitate the adoption of issue-based approach in the learning and teaching of Geography, and 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 assisting students to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework of the geographical issues and problems to be studied, and to understand geographical phenomena and features from a macro perspective. Minor details of specific features and processes should be kept to a minimum.

- The e-textbook 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.

### 3.2 Learning Activities

- 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.
- 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 students in terms of their prior knowledge, and deviate from the curriculum objectives.
- Map interpretation and field study are the core skills of Geography. Appropriate map interpretation exercises and field study tasks **MUST** be integrated and included in every unit/chapter/topic of the e-textbook.
- 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.

### 3.4 Illustration

- 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.

### 3.5 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.

### 3.6 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.

### 3.7 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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