

e-Textbook Writing Guidelines for History (Secondary 4 – 6)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this set of guidelines is to familiarise interested e-textbook publishers with the curriculum aims and objectives and related principles for writing e-textbooks of History, etc. in a bid to ensure that the e-textbooks are written in accordance with the specific requirements of 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 e-textbooks where appropriate. For details, please refer to *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)*
- *History Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 – 6) (2007) (with updates in November 2015).*

2. Curriculum Aims and Objectives

e-Textbook publishers should refer to *the History Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 – 6) (2007) (with updates in November 2015)*. The writing of e-textbooks should be written in line with the aims and objectives of the SS History curriculum and should facilitate the adoption of enquiry approach in the learning and teaching of History as well as enhance skills development and values formation in students.

2.1 Curriculum Aims

- The aims of this curriculum are to enable students to:
 - (a) discover where they stand in the contemporary world through understanding the origins and development of modern events;
 - (b) develop the skills of critical thinking, making sound judgments and effective communication through exploring historical issues;
 - (c) approach past and current events in an impartial and empathetic manner, using a variety of perspectives;
 - (d) understand the characteristics and values of their own culture, and appreciate the shared humanity and common problems of the world's many peoples;
 - (e) cultivate both national consciousness and the consciousness of being citizens of the global community, and thus become rational and sensible members of the local community, the nation and the world; and
 - (f) be prepared to explore in greater depth an issue of personal interest, or one that may be of relevance to their future careers and professional studies.

2.2 Curriculum Objectives

- Students are expected to acquire knowledge and develop understanding of:
 - (a) basic historical concepts, such as cause and effect, change and continuity, and similarities and differences;
 - (b) diverse standpoints and perspectives inherent in different ways of representing and interpreting the past;

- (c) the beliefs, experiences and behaviours of their own nation as well as of other nations, and the ways in which they have shaped the development of the contemporary world;
 - (d) the inter-relations of major events and movements that have occurred in the local community, the nation, Asia and the world in the 20th century; and
 - (e) the major historical developments and trends that have shaped the contemporary world.
- Students are expected to master skills which will enable them to:
- (a) distinguish fact from opinion; detect biased viewpoints, ambiguous assumptions and unsubstantiated arguments; and build up proper historical perspectives;
 - (b) compare and interpret historical data; arrive at reasoned conclusions based on available evidence; and recognise the fact that history is subject to reassessment based on the interpretation of new evidence;
 - (c) ascertain and explain the extent to which historical documents and archives reflect contemporary attitudes, values and passions;
 - (d) present logical and coherent arguments through the proper selection and organisation of historical data;
 - (e) search for, select, analyse and synthesise information through various means, including the Internet, and consider various ways of arriving at conclusions and making appraisals; and
 - (f) apply historical knowledge and skills in everyday life.
- Students are expected to foster proper values and attitudes that will enable them to:
- (a) appreciate the difficulties and challenges that humankind faced in the past, and to understand the attitudes and values that influence human behaviour;
 - (b) tolerate and respect different opinions, and to recognise the fact that although different communities have different experiences and beliefs, there are values and ideals that are commonly shared by all humankind;
 - (c) develop and maintain an inquisitive attitude towards human culture; and
 - (d) become responsible citizens with a sense of national identity and a global perspective.

3. Guiding Principles

3.1 Bridging the curriculum

- The content should show bridging relation with the Basic Education.

Before receiving senior secondary education, students have already acquired prior knowledge of the development of historical trends in different periods and developed their global perspective from General Studies in primary level and junior secondary subjects such as History and Integrated Humanities. Senior Secondary History textbooks should build on this junior secondary learning foundation to further enrich students' historical knowledge, enhance their ability to study history, develop positive attitude and promote lifelong learning.

3.2 Content

- The content should cover the Introduction and all topics in Theme A and Theme B in the curriculum.
- The content should be useful to the learning and teaching process and will facilitate students' active participation and their balanced development in the three aspects of knowledge construction, use of integration skills and fostering of proper values and attitudes.
- While the historical information provided should be accurate, adequate and systematically organised, due emphasis should be placed to the development of students' historical concepts and skills.
- To enhance students' understanding of History as a dynamic and lively subject, the content should be able to provide students with authentic, valid and up-to-date materials and sources which can stimulate curiosity, empathy and a sense of reality in the learning of history.
- Illustrations such as maps, pictures and diagrams, etc. should be included where they can help to stimulate interest or reinforce understanding, and their contents and positions should match the text. Relevant illustrations and information should be authentic, objective and valid, and avoid using materials with strong subjective stance and biases.
- In the description of historical events, objectivity, impartiality and professionalism should be exercised and different perspectives should be provided. Supporting evidence for the description should be quoted from reliable and credible sources, and the origin of sources should be provided as far as possible. Facts and views/opinions should be distinguished from each other.
- Diverse standpoints and perspectives in understanding and interpreting the past should be provided.
- Headings should align with contents.

- The content should be accurate and systematically organised. It should align with the suggested allocation of time in the curriculum guide in order to avoid too heavy contents.

3.3 Learning and Teaching

- A variety of appropriate learning tasks, activities and exercises should be devised to stimulate students' enquiry, empathy and imagination, and realise the related learning elements recommended in the *Curriculum Framework of National Security Education in Hong Kong* and the *History Curriculum Framework of National Security Education (SI – 6)*. Source-based exercises should be employed to develop students' abilities to comprehend and analyse the information. Other learning activities such as questioning, discussion, role-play, simulation games, project work, information collecting, etc. could also be suggested. Exercises should not be too examination oriented and those solely focusing on drilling examination skills should be avoided. Life-wide learning activities which align with the curriculum can be proposed.
- To facilitate students' self-directed learning, various supplementary reference materials and extended reading in each chapter should be provided. Extended learning exercises could also be provided in order to enrich students' knowledge of historical development.
- The design of learning activities and assessment items should align sufficiently to the aims, objectives and contents of the curriculum and provide historical sources from diversified perspectives and appropriate guidance so as to facilitate students to study history and make judgements from concrete historical knowledge. 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 lead students to make general responses with limited sources and personal understanding, thereby deviating from the curriculum objectives.
- Learning activities should be challenging enough in view of students' ability. Activities that require students to copy mechanically from the text or that focus largely on students' reading comprehension ability should be avoided.
- The design of the learning activities should allow flexibility to cater for the diversity of students' interests and abilities.

3.4 Structure and Organisation

- The content sequence should be appropriate and logical. Key words and concepts are identified and highlighted.

- The structure of the content should be made apparent by means of functional devices including table of content, chapter titles, headings and outlines.
- An overview can be put at the beginning and a summary or conclusion at the end of each chapter. It should mainly aim to introduce the basic content of the chapter and the major trends of historical development, so that students can grasp the historical knowledge holistically and understand the major patterns of historical development.

3.5 Language

- The level of difficulty of the language used in the textbook should be commensurate with the language ability of students. [*An English-Chinese Glossary of Terms Commonly Used in the Teaching of History in Secondary Schools* \(2018\)](#) should be referred to where applicable.
- Pinyin should be adopted for Chinese names and places.
- Where appropriate, guidance on pronunciation could be provided to facilitate student learning. For translated Chinese names and places, they can be accompanied by their original terms.

3.6 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 animations to illustrate some famous historical events and figures in more interesting and impressive ways.
- Provision of interactive maps to show the changes of boundaries of countries, relating to different historical events and period.
- Provision of virtual field trips to relatively inaccessible field sites.
- Provision of interactive time-lines and mind-maps to better illustrate some historical concepts.
- Provision of copyright cleared or appropriate hyperlinks to copyright-free virtual field trips.
- Multimedia, such as photographs, illustrations, pictures, graphs, videos and simulations should be relevant to the e-textbook content and be accurate with appropriate descriptions to stimulate and facilitate learning. They should serve to direct students to the instructional focus rather than to distract them from them.
- Interactive assessment tasks could be included in e-textbook to facilitate assessment for learning.

3.7 Learning Elements / Skills Not Replaceable by Digital Means

- Tours and visits should not be completely replaced by digital means. Museum visits, community visits and heritage tours by students in person can promote life-wide learning and develop their historical imagination and empathy through firsthand experience.

3.8 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 in developing maps of China.

(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 Reports for the previously submitted version should be duly followed before submission.

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