

Guidance for the Publishing of Geography Teaching Resources

Introduction

This document is written for authors and publishers of geography teaching resources for school-age pupils. It will also be useful for teachers and other interested parties. It outlines the features which are associated with high-quality resources, in line with domestic and international research.

The term 'teaching resources' covers anything that is published to support the teaching of geography. This includes textbooks, workbooks, teacher's guides and other materials, in print or digital form.

A description of well-written resources is set out below under the following headings:

1. General principles
2. Geographical content
3. Tasks and exercises
4. Representation and design
5. Supporting teachers
6. Assessment and review
7. Primary resources
8. Textbook authors and editors

In writing these guidelines the working group is aiming to *enhance* the current teaching resource culture with a particular view to *improving* the geographical content, aims, coherence and depth of geography textbooks. We have therefore sought to avoid a set of guidelines that are so broad that they can be applied to all teaching resources.

Teaching resources have most impact when supported by high quality teacher professional development.

1. General principles

A high-quality geographical resource:

- 1.1 Has a clear author's voice and narrative that tells a 'geographical story', thus illustrating geographical thinking.
- 1.2 Is written with a disciplinary framework in mind – outlining aims and explaining to pupils how the book contributes to geographical knowledge by developing understanding of spatial patterns, places and environments.
- 1.3 Should aim to broaden pupils' geographical knowledge and understanding beyond minimum examination requirements. While textbooks may take a particular approach to geography and should take note of examination needs, they should not be narrowly targeted on particular specifications as this may lead to a focus purely on passing the test.
- 1.4 Materials may be online or in hard copy or a combination of the two. Both have their strengths and uses, offering different pedagogical opportunities.

2. Geographical content

The content of a high-quality geographical resource:

- 2.1 Will normally include an introduction to the text, showing how the different chapters/sections fit together and outlining how the content develops understanding of the variation and interaction of physical and human phenomena across the surface of the world.
- 2.2 Should provide a depth of knowledge – a text should be an authoritative account of the topic.
- 2.3 Should provide a breadth of knowledge, although the scope will vary depending upon the nature and aims of the resource. There is a place for resources that are focused on a particular aspect of geography (e.g. an issue/region/resource) and resources that are more comprehensive in scope.
- 2.4 Is organised for progression – topics, knowledge and skills should be organised into a logical and pedagogically coherent order.
- 2.5 Should align with the appropriate national guidelines (National Curriculum, GCSE Subject Content and AS/A level Subject Content), but not be limited to examination requirements.
- 2.6 Will provide a geographical narrative that illustrates writing at length, in depth and in language that facilitates and expands pupils' comprehension of geographical terminology and ideas.
- 2.7 Accurate and comprehensive data should be used to illustrate geographical patterns, trends and change.
- 2.8. Will often raise significant ethical and political issues (like population growth and energy consumption), while avoiding bias. Issues should be approached from a geographer's perspective and presented as open to discussion.
- 2.9 Real life case studies/locational examples will add context and deeper meaning to theoretical content.
- 2.10 Resources produced in hard copy will often include direction to websites where it is possible to study topics/issues/places in greater depth or to explore more recent examples.

3. Tasks and exercises

High-quality geographical tasks and exercises:

- 3.1 Will be closely related to geographical content.
- 3.2 Require pupils to comment on data, to draw conclusions, make generalisations and offer reasoned arguments.
- 3.3 Should challenge pupils to build upon, and think beyond, what they already know.
- 3.4 Will demand active engagement with text and graphics.
- 3.5 Should encourage pupils to respond to the text/graphics and verbalise their thinking.
- 3.5 Will integrate the development of knowledge and skills, including data handling.
- 3.6 Should engage pupils to read, interpret and analyse maps.
- 3.7 Will usually offer opportunities for geographical enquiry, further study and discussion of ethical and political issues.

4. Representation and design

A high-quality geographical resource:

- 4.1 Should include high quality colour photographs and other graphics to illustrate geographical features and processes.
- 4.2 Illustrations should be integrated with, but not overwhelm, the text. Pages should be easy for pupils to follow.

- 4.3 Should include high quality maps, aerial photographs and/or satellite images, at different scales and of different countries and of different types of geographical features and land use, as appropriate to the aims of the text.
- 4.4 Diagrams and other graphics will be employed to simplify concepts, helping pupils visualise features and processes.
- 4.5 Where there are both print textbooks and digital materials as part of a single course, they adopt a coherent and consistent approach. Different ways of presenting ideas reinforce one another by exploiting the advantages of each medium.

5. Supporting teachers

A high-quality geographical resource supports teachers:

- 5.1 When it provides an authoritative account of an aspect of the subject and presents knowledge in a pedagogically coherent manner.
- 5.2 Additional supporting materials will sometimes be published specifically for teachers. These will make explicit the principles underpinning the pupils' text by explaining the pedagogical framework of the text and discussing the geography in greater detail.
- 5.3 Supporting materials will usually offer teachers guidance on where they can find additional materials to supplement the text or to learn about the topic in more depth.
- 5.4 Supporting materials should allow teachers flexibility to use the text in their own way.

6. Assessment and review

A high-quality geographical resource supports good assessment practice by providing:

- 6.1 Formative and summative assessment questions and activities should be embedded to evaluate what pupils have learnt from the text.
- 6.2 The main concepts, skills and ideas developed in each chapter will be addressed through assessment activities, helping both pupils and teachers to focus on the key content and skills.
- 6.3 Supplemental online assessment activities can also be employed to aid both pupil understanding and teacher assessment.
- 6.4 Assessments give both pupils and teachers the opportunity to check pupils' understanding. This applies to pupils' ability to apply understanding in new or unfamiliar contexts. Assessments allow both pupils and teachers to measure progress and inform future teaching.

7. Primary resources

A high-quality geography resource:

- 7.1 Includes materials which support the effective teaching of geography by non-subject specialist teachers.¹
- 7.2 Develops geographical vocabulary and concept formation through both text and graphics.
- 7.3 Poses questions about where features, places and landmarks are, why they are located where they are, how they are related to surrounding things, how and why they are changing and what it is like in different places.
- 7.4 Introduces pupils to places and countries beyond the local and national scales.
- 7.5 Takes pupils from their horizontal, eye-level view of their world through low to higher angle oblique views to the vertical view.

¹ Primary teachers may benefit from parallel Continuing Professional Development and/or 'primer' texts that illustrate and explain the geography.



7.6 Introduces mapping conventions such as symbols, direction and scale.

8. Textbook authors and editors

A high-quality geography resource is:

- 8.1 Authored and reviewed by people with expert knowledge, experience, skills and credibility.
- 8.2 Subject to stringent quality assurance measures.
- 8.3 Authored and edited by experts who draw on research evidence and accrued professional experience; people who represent best practice along with the ability to add flexible value-added elements to a quality baseline.
- 8.4 Materials are trialled and refined in the light of trial data, wherever it is possible to do so.