

Table 10

Control and supply of school textbooks

This table outlines:

- who produces textbooks (state or commercial bodies)
- whether the State (or devolved authority) prescribes content etc. of textbooks
- whether the State (or devolved authority) draws up a list of authorised textbooks
- who selects textbooks for use in class
- whether textbooks are provided free by the State (or devolved authority), or whether parents are required to buy them.

	Textbook production	State provides list of approved textbooks	Choice of books for use in class	Textbook provision
England	Commercial	No	Teachers – free choice	School provides/lends
Ireland	Commercial. Ministry provides guidelines and may produce/commission materials for distribution.	No	Teachers – free choice	Parents usually buy or rent from schools. Some state subsidies available.
N. Ireland	Commercial	No	Teachers – free choice	School provides
Scotland	Commercial	No	Teachers – with consultation of school board	School provides
Wales	Commercial	No	Teachers – free choice	School provides (on loan)
France	Commercial – state approved. Local/regional associations and documentation centres may produce teaching materials to supplement those published for national use.	State prescribes content and format, approves all textbooks for use in schools, and provides list of approved texts.	Teachers – from list of approved textbooks	Compulsory education - school provides. Post-compulsory, parents usually buy.
Germany	Commercial – Länder approved	Each federal state (Land) prescribes cost, content, format and quality and provides list of approved textbooks. RE textbooks are approved with the agreement of the church authorities.	Teachers – from approved textbooks list. Sometimes subject to Schools' Inspectorate approval or consultation with representatives of parents and children.	School provides (on loan)
Hungary	Commercial (state approval). The State underwrites bank loans to publishing companies.	State generally prescribes content, approves and provides recommended list. Teachers are free to select other material, in addition.	Teachers – generally from recommended list, but can select additional material.	Parents buy (subsidised prices) (assistance for needy). Textbooks for minority language education must be provided by the State.
Italy	Commercial	State issues guidance on cost and frequency of updates, but does not prescribe or approve.	Council of teachers – free choice	Provided free at primary level. Parents usually buy thereafter; increasing financial assistance available to low income families.
Netherlands	Commercial	No (Ministry prescribes educational attainment targets but does not prescribe or produce specific teaching materials.)	Teachers – free choice	School provides at primary level (on loan). At secondary level, parents often buy books. Many schools may have book funds and provide loan books.

continued

	Textbook production	State provides list of approved textbooks	Choice of books for use in class	Textbook provision
Spain	Commercial under state supervision. Centre for Educational Research and Documentation (CIDE) assists in development/ dissemination of curriculum materials and teacher guides.	No general prescription, but the Autonomous Community (via the regional/local education authority) usually provides a recommended list.	Schools/teachers – usually from recommended list.	Parents usually buy. Increasing financial aid available for low income families.
Sweden	Commercial	No	Teachers - free choice	School provides.
• Switzerland	Cantons (compulsory phase)	Cantons usually prescribe content and provide recommended lists for compulsory phase.	Teachers – usually from recommended list; free choice for upper secondary.	School provides. Upper secondary (post-compulsory) parents buy.
• Australia	Mostly commercial. Boards of Studies may publish support materials.	No	Teachers – free choice	Parents generally buy (or pay a levy to schools for book hire).
• Canada	Commercial (by approval). Provinces produce and pilot books.	Province or territory usually provides recommended list of approved titles.	District or school usually from recommended list.	School usually provides free of charge
Japan	Commercial with state approval, or state-produced.	State-approved, commercially produced. (Some state-approved and state-produced textbooks with prescribed content.)	Local boards of education or headteachers determine which books will be used from prescribed list.	In compulsory education, all students receive new books, free, each year. Post-compulsory, parents/students buy.
Korea	State, or commercial with state authorisation or approval.	Ministry compiles some and authorises or approves other textbooks.	Single textbook replaced by range of government-copyrighted and approved textbooks for individual subjects, enabling teachers to choose.	Provided free at primary level (6-12) (and students may keep, as in Japan). Thereafter, parents buy but costs are kept low.
New Zealand	State and commercial. (Learning Media, a crown-owned company, publishes a range of resources free to schools. Use is not mandatory.)	No	Teachers - free choice	School provides (loaned, parents contribute for damage or loss). Parents buy supplementary materials, particularly at post-compulsory upper secondary level.
Singapore	State and commercial with state approval	State prescribes content and produces an annual approved Textbook List (ATL) for primary and secondary education.	Teachers - from ATL	Parents buy, free for needy
• South Africa	Commercial	Textbooks must be aligned to the national curriculum.	Procurement and delivery of textbooks is a provincial responsibility. In upper secondary, schools chose from a national catalogue.	School provides
• USA	Commercial (dominated by about ten main corporations).	About half of the States recommend textbooks after some process of review against State curriculum guidelines.	Teacher (or school committee) choice; in about half of the States from approved list. (In California, for example, schools may only opt out of the state-recommended textbook system with an official waiver.)	In most States, schools provide books to students free of charge. Some States charge all but the most needy. Others may request a contribution from students in high school (age 14+) in particular.

Notes

- England** There are, however, set texts for certain examination syllabuses. In addition, the programmes of study for English at Key Stages 1-4 contain criteria and categories from which to select the range of reading.
- Wales** There are, however, set texts for certain examination syllabuses. In addition, the programmes of study for English at Key Stages 1-4 contain criteria and categories from which to select the range of reading.
- Northern Ireland** There are, however, set texts for certain examination syllabuses.
- Sweden** Occasionally some post-compulsory schools (students aged 16+) may request a parental contribution for certain items.
- Korea** The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) is converting all paper textbooks to new digital versions which schools will be able to download from a central repository. It is expected that all schools will be using the digital editions by 2015.
- **South Africa** All learners in Grades 1 to 6 (six to 12 years of age) are supplied with workbooks containing teaching materials to ensure that all teachers have access to materials which support the new curriculum.

Sources/Further information

For more detailed information on of the content of these tables - see the following sections and subsections of the full Archive:

Curricula (age 3-19) ⇒ Select a phase of education ⇒ 5.x.6 Curriculum materials