

Comenius Project: 2009/2011

Multicultural Interdisciplinary Handbook: Tools for Learning

History and Geography in a Multicultural Prospective.

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Comparative Survey of History Textbooks

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Criteria used for analysis

The textbooks were chosen considering the following points: the level in the schooling system and the course of studies they cater for, their national or regional circulation, the recentness of publication and their conformity with reforms introduced in each of the countries (data provided by the publishers). The most widely-used textbooks (according to the ratings charts) for lower and upper secondary school both for history and geography were chosen, including, where possible geo-history books that have already been launched. The outcome of this first phase of selection was then checked against a list of the main reference types:

1. Authored textbooks, written by university professors, which an emphasis on content and up-to-date from a disciplinary point of view.
2. Teaching textbooks, edited by secondary school-teachers specialized in history/geography teaching with a modular structure and featuring a wide range of cognitive aids, assessment tools, worksheets, etc.
3. Simplified textbooks, written by secondary school teachers or “experts” in editing, aimed at providing a clear and quick overview of content, the topics are simplified and as is the vocabulary.

These types do not aim to represent the whole range of texts currently available in different countries, they should be seen as a way of classifying our sample of reference materials without losing the meaningfulness of our analysis.

HISTORY

In keeping with the three types outlined, for each history textbook, three criteria for analysis have been applied:

1. Historiographic Perspectives – scientific accuracy and recentness of thematic and methodological content.

Assessment Descriptors:

The text...

clearly communicates the notion of “history is a subject mediated by sources”	or	is based solely on a “historical discourse” and gives more space to a stream of thought and does not highlight the references to sources.
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The text re-works the ministerial guidelines into “narratives”...

that are easily understood.	or	are not easily understood by students.
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The text...

encompasses and re-works academic work and trends in the study of history for school adoption.	or	tends to preserve traditional, popular narratives, ignoring research in history.
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The text...

develops and transmits a sense of historical complexity, avoiding overschematization yet simplifying	or	simplifies and popularizes historical conceptual frameworks in order to provide easily-assimilated models that are not always correct.
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The text...

respects the specificity of “histories” and its means of communication.	or	lapses into encyclopedic Universal History
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The text...

follows the localization of historical events in order to avoid the absolutism of the event.	or	generalizes phenomena without taking into account spacial features.
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The text...

tends towards the integration of national history and the history of other countries in a European and Global perspective.	or	privileges national history in a solely Eurocentric perspective.
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The text...

tends towards social history by dealing with material life and daily life.	or	privileges the history of the ruling classes and ignores the history of other social groups.
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2. Historiographic Perspectives: potential – added value for teaching/learning

Descriptors:

The text...

has an innovative synchronic, thematic framework	or	privileges a 'conservative' linear, chronological, notion-based structure
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The text..

includes a wide range of linguistic functions with the purpose of explaining and aiding comprehension.	or	the backbone of the text is a single narrative of events
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The text...

features sections of didactic format sources	or	the sources are kept separate from the main body of the textbook.
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The body of images is tied to the “history tale” and is a reservoir of	or	The images are set apart from the text as an embellishment..
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source material		
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The time indicators (periodizations and dates) are always brought into relation with the spatial dimension, also through ad hoc maps.	or	Chronologies and periodization cover only temporal sequencing for locating events
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The text...

features a mediated link between past and present and its appraisal in every unit	or	Adopts a “once upon a time” approach, or short-circuits past & present with unexplained associations
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The text...

features glossaries and special boxes for linguistic and cognitive aids	or	takes for granted many historiographic concepts, which thus turn from learning goals into memorization tools.
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In the assessment sections the exercises tend to call on all the students' abilities and skills, setting tasks which step outside the textbook account (transfer)	or	The exercises stick to the content that can be found in the text and are limited to memorized knowledge.
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3. Political Perspectives: the hidden layers of the text – elements of civic education for the students.

Descriptors:

The text is aware of being the first (and in some cases, the only) means of historical education for the population (social function)	or	The historical account is geared solely towards the acquisition of knowledge and does not attempt to deal with the topics and issues of civic education.
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The text...

fulfils the need to 'construct' or 'redefine' national identity	or	caters for a traditional concept of identity by privileging the national
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		perspective alone.
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The text...

plays a part in moulding a national and European citizen and in preserving the public memory of different groups, including gender.	or	does not present historical events associating them with civic education or with gender awareness.
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The text...

Helps preserve the cultural heritage of the national and local communities	or	does not help the transmit cultural heritage of different collective memories.
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The text...

Plays an important role in aiding the 'integration ' of citizens from other countries by facilitating a multicultural dialogue.	or	does not feature a global perspective and therefore impedes multicultural dialogue.
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Political history is handled without any hint of ideological or religious bias	or	the text has been subjected to "revisionist" pressure in support of the political agenda of the governing elite.
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The History Textbook

At present, the history textbook is still the main, and in many cases only, vector of knowledge about the past for most citizens in each country. Deeply embedded in the minds of most adults is our recall of the events studied in 'our history book', given that once they have finished school they rarely go on reading up history either for pleasure or for study. The history textbook is thus fundamental in forging a bond between past and present, in shaping our temporal prospective and in harbouring or shedding prejudices or stereotypes that may colour an individual's mindset. The history textbook is not any old book, it is not designed to be simply read but to be studied, to be used as a source of information and food for thought. Differently from other school textbooks it has a narrative structure but it is not a mere tale, a story with a setting, which can be falsified or changed to fit the demands of its readership or a literary canon. Its purpose is to inform a nation's citizens about their own recent and distant

past and by doing so preserve their identity, their cultural heritage and their collective memory. Its function is to provide a tool for mass historical education, therefore it must provide aids and materials that can back up the account and interpretations given by the author of the textbook and pass them off as valid. This does not necessarily mean reconstructing “what actually happened”, chasing a legendary sole historical truth, rather, it means giving those who use the textbook the chance to discover proof of the authenticity of the information given. All too often, right up to the end of last century, the history textbook was just one, very long account of incidents and events linked to each other by cause and effect, a sort of *continuum* in which any pause or break would be simply swallowed up by the thread of the account, keeping the reader forever awaiting an end that never comes.

The historical overview, made up of a chronological flow of events, was most often written by a renowned historian, a research professional who served up a thinned-out version of his/her own historiographic perspective. In such texts, tools for handling sources, images and didactic mediation were rare. Even the layout showed that history texts had been written, broken down into chapters and sub-chapters that could aid memorization, designed to be 'studied' one after another so as not to lose the flow of historical development. The topics dealt with were generally the same, a predictable list of events and figures running from antiquity to the Middle Ages to the Modern Era to the end of the Second World War. The distinguishing feature of the text was the historian's angle, the narrative style used and the motives given for “explaining” phenomena that arose, the outbreak of a war or a revolution. These texts can still be read with interest where the historian has been able to present things in a lively or engaging way or if the historian's perspective coincides with the reader's. The reader could decide whether to agree or disagree with the historian's point of view, however it was not possible for all pupils to 'get their teeth into' the historian's trade, understand how the analysis is carried out or how the facts are pieced together. The historian's tools were kept hidden from view, the readers were not given the chance to see the historian at work: a shadow in the background, that could not be learnt about and eventually copied.

A big shift came about between the 80s and 90s, when academics began to think deeply about the way in which historical accounts were presented to young people. It was young people themselves who demanded that teachers and researchers up-date historical knowledge, in such a way as to make it more accessible and more relevant to today. About this time, *history teaching methodologies* first came on the scene in the wake of the example set by the French school of historical research, raising the issue of history teaching all over Europe. History textbooks entered a new phase, *with new authors*, a wider choice of publications offering a vaster range of source-materials while the array of topics widens to accommodate social and economic history. The new texts also include learning and assessment aids. The history textbook is no longer meant to be read and studied only but it is also for leafing through and looking things up. Modular teaching has done the rest: the chain of historical developments has been broken. Time-lines run parallel in different spatial contexts, an era is reconstructed as a social or cultural framework which allows us then to give a synoptic reading of a given period. Added to this is the advent of project work piloting new teaching methods and shifting focus onto the students' being able to do: by analysing source-material we are able to put the pieces together, pick out the most significant information, phenomena, events or points of view. A workshop can be either an actual place or simply a frame of mind where the tools of historical research are used, where an “event” codified by historiography can be de-constructed and pieced together, and by doing so it can be understood not only in its own context but also its relevance in relation to current affairs.

These trends in teaching further speeded up the transformation of text books, which also changed to meet the demands of new school curricula geared towards implementing the new approach to teaching. Often it was the actual teachers who pushed for these changes. Many of the new generation of textbook were, in fact, written by teachers with expert knowledge of teaching methodologies. The resulting books give ample space to the transmissive aspect of the subject, splicing the text with indexes and explanatory notes in order to facilitate comprehension. The textbook hence becomes something not unlike a hypertext, featuring, alongside the narrative backbone, a wide array of worksheets, boxes, glossaries, exercises, in-depth sections, time-lines, thematic maps and even histograms and all sorts of graphs. This said, the feature that most distinguishes the history textbook of today from those of the past is the number and variety of images. Images showing works of art, documents, photographs, illustrations, geo-thematic maps and charts which turn the book into a mini-archive of materials that the teacher can delve into in class, offering the teacher the chance to go off the beaten track, in search of stimulating and engaging courses.

This brief overview of history textbooks and the changes they have undergone in recent years holds true for all the partner countries; although each one differs in terms of timing, the current situation regards teaching methodologies is almost astonishingly uniform. As can be expected, each country has its very own perspectives on national history, varying slightly in terms of themes and topics, but the basic structure of textbooks is practically standard – the only distinguishing feature being the presence or lack of a brief account of general history that links all of the other elements.

The changes have had some unforeseen outcomes that have not always been positive. By paying so much attention to the methodological aspect of transmission, the quantity of informational content has been reduced and there has also been an over-simplification of complex historical dynamics. Many textbooks printed in recent years, especially for lower secondary schools, present topics and issues in a facilitated format, with the aim of making learning quicker and in some cases more superficial, all in the name of making something considered complex and boring more accessible. This entails, however, sacrificing one of the characteristics of historical knowledge, that is, its complexity, the very skill that could teach pupils how to deal with today's world. Moreover, such a process could also lead to widening the gap between “schoolbook” history and the academic history, the only discipline able to up-date, through research, the ways in which the past is represented, making it more serviceable and well-suited to the needs of today's generation..

The analysis factsheet

A standard checklist for analysis has been used for each of the textbooks chosen, it is broken down into four areas, one for each of the points singled out:

- graphic features
- linguistic structures and the teaching-method frame of reference
- the public use of history
- historiographic content and index of currentness

For an at-a-glance comparison between the texts under analysis, colour coding has been used: RED, the brightest colour, denotes VERY, DEEP BLUE, again a bright colour, denotes NOTHING, a lighter shade of red PINK/ORANGE denotes QUITE, while GREEN/LIGHT BLUE denotes little. In the top part of the factsheet all of the data regarding the names of the authors, the title of the book or of the series, the publisher, the number of pages and the place of publication are given.

The factsheet has the following features:

- the use of colour allows for at-a-glance analysis
- the breakdown into four areas of analysis allows us to make comparisons both between texts and single aspects of the texts
- the ratings ranging from one to four can be given simply by ticking a box making it user-friendly
- the significant elements are recapped using set indicators and descriptors
- considers all of the features of the text including its apparatus and accessory sections

The textbooks deal exclusively with the history of the 1800's and 1900's, the periodization covered by the digital module later created.

ANALYSIS FACTSHEET

table of analysis							
TITLE	EDITOR	PUBLISHING LOCATION	YEAR OF EDITION	PAGES	NOTES:		
g r a p h i c s	PICTURES	presence of iconigraphic sources	presence of illustrations and designs	presence of photo	presence of reproduction of works of art	quality of pictures	quantity of pictures
	PICTURES AND TEXT	captions explaining the pictures	captions taking up the text	new informations regarding the text	links between pictures and text		
	MAPS	anthropic maps	geopolitic maps	thematic maps	topographic maps	graphic	map's dimensions
	SOURCES AND DOCUMENTS	presence of captions	patterns of analysis	author	new informations regarding the text	update	
	MAPS, GRAPHS, TABLES	presence of maps	presence of graphs and histograms	presence of tables	presence of patterns	chronologies	time lines
	HIGHLIGHTING, BOX, PATTERNS	lexical highlighting in the text	conceptual highlighting in the text	box in depth knowledge	frames and marginal notes	textual links	
m e t h o d o l o g i c a l a n d d i d a c t i c a l f r a m e w o r k	LINGUISTIC STRUCTURE	suitability regarding the age and the level of preparation	clarity of exposition	time sequences	clarity's level of key concepts	narrative style	presence of other linguistic functions
	USE OF HISTOGRAPHIC LEXICON	use of necessary technicalities	presence of anachronisms	glossary	use of terminology from other disciplines	explanation of abbreviations	
	USE OF COGNITIVE MEDIATORS	the sources are contexted	presence of indications regarding historian's work	presence of indications regarding the method of historical research	explanation of histographic concepts	explanation of causal links	
	EVALUTATION OF THE TEXT IN ITS ENTIRITY	the text respects the topics of national curricula	links of other disciplines	references to preceding and following chapters	connections with citizens education	network structure	linear structure
	TESTS AND EXERCISES	the exercises regarding only the content as far as mnemonic knowledge	the tests and exercises propose problems and tranfer informations	the tests and exercises demonstrate the student's ability	presence of tests preparing for state exams		proposal of operative field research
P U B L I C U S E S O F H I S T O R Y	HISTORICAL BASIC TRAINING	elements of civic and social function	national identity	intercultural dialogue	europaean dimension	world dimension	local dimension
	POLITICAL USE OF HISTORY	presence of "silence strategies" regarding some events or problems	some events are delt in uncorrect way	elements of revisionism or negazionism	some national events are emphasised	the differente memories are respected	

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTENTS & UPDATES	HISTORIOGRAPHIC UPDATES	critical index	respect for plurality of histories	respect for the gender difference	respect for the plurality of subjects	conservation of stereotypes	present and past link
	EPISTEMOLOGY STRUCTURE	respect for the temporal and spatial coordinates	the historical events are dealt like processes	respect for the traditional periodic orders	every phenomenon and event has its periodic order	the History has only one order and causality	the History offers a relative point of view
	HISTORICAL TOOLS	quantity of sources	presence of some types of sources	presence of historian's texts		indications about actual historiographic debates	informations about the principal historiographic trends
ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS	A TEACHER'S HANDBOOK	EXERCISES AND PRATICAL WORK	A SMALL HISTORICAL ATLAS	INTERNET RESEARCH	CD OR MULTIMEDIAL SUPPORTS	BIBLIOGRAPHY	
LEGEND		A LOT					
		ENOUGH					
		LITTLE					
		NONE					

(factsheet developed by Silvana Bianchi and Cinzia Crivellari)

The features of textbooks for each partner nation

POLAND

Textbook analysed:

Sniegocki R., **Historia Burzliwy Wiek XX**, Nowa Era, Warszawa, 2009

Kaminnski M., Panko G., Sniegocki R., **Historia Sredniowiecze**, Nowa Era, Warszawa, 2009

Updated editions

Age range: 16/17 – 17/18 – 18/19

The four texts analysed all share the same basic features, although the *Historia 2 and 3* series, aimed at upper secondary schools, appears to be more innovative when compared with the other textbooks in use. The above-mentioned series is richly illustrated with a large number of photographs and high-quality images of works of art. Alongside the images, there are brief factsheets which refer to the text and to other topics covered in the section, adding further information about historical figures or events that play an important role in the period being

dealt with. A fair number of thematic maps are also included, widely used for locating military incidents or geo-political transformations. The use of graphs and time-lines is limited. All of the source material provided is contextualized and accompanied by factsheets and captions, otherwise it is set in in-depth boxes. The narrative account of general history is broken up into chapters and paragraphs and is structured in linear and easily-understood fashion, however little emphasis is given to problem-solving for the issues. The history lexis is used accurately, avoiding anachronisms and comprehension is facilitated through the use of glossaries and highlighting for key concepts. The topics covered are those set by the national curriculum. Only a few pages are set aside for historical research methods and the features of a historiographical account, however, causal ties and the use of specific conceptualizations are scattered throughout the text. In the last volume, which covers the 20th Century, a wide range of historiographical texts are provided. There is no trace of revisionist or negationist leanings.

The teaching apparatus set aside for exercises is not very rich, the assessment tasks tend to focus on content provided in the text, thus favouring a primarily mnemonic study. Alongside these exercises there are others which require the answers to answer open-ended questions aimed at test their skills in handling more complex issues. There are no sections, however, covering final-exam style questions.

The special characteristics of national history, and any references to civic education play a minor role compared to the European dimension (the history of Eastern and Western Europe) which is the backbone of the book. Some chapters cover non European areas and provide the opportunity to venture into topics such as mondialization and intercultural dialogue. The sphere of local history is extremely limited.

AUSTRIA

History textbook:

Ebenhoch Ulrike, Scheucher Abis, Wald Anton, **Zeitbilder 4**, Wien, 2009

Lemberger Michael, **VG4 neu**, Linz, 2009

Update editions

Age target : 14/15 years

Both textbooks are based on the curriculum with the latest amendments published for the subjects *History, Social and Civic Education* in September 2008. Both textbooks are authored with a strong view to didactics and the learning environment. The textbooks clearly communicate the notion that history is mediated by its sources and reworks national guidelines into a comprehensible narrative, presenting the most recent historical research. The textbooks include numerous glossaries which provide linguistic and conceptual clarification.

The images are strictly related to the historical narrative and support the learning process.

The narration does not only present the view of the ruling class and it does not neglect the history of individuals. Temporal indications are related to their spatial context *most of the time*, combining national with European and world dimension. Historical events are framed in their local settings. The importance of the relationship between the past and present-day life is not really shown. The texts differ in structure and language: one is innovative and offers a language that supports the comprehension of historical processes; other shows in parts an accumulation of facts and uses a language that be considered “slangy”.

ITALY

History textbook:

Giardina A., Sabbattucci G., Vidotto V., **Guida alla storia**, Laterza, Roma - Bari, 2007
Brancati A., Pagliarani T., **Il nuovo dialogo con la storia**, La Nuova Italia, Milano 2007
Calvani V., **Scambi tra civiltà**, Arnoldo Mondadori, Milano, 2007
Paolucci S., Signorini G., **L’ora di storia**, Zanichelli, Bologna, 2008

Update editions

Age target: 12/13 – 18/19

All the textbooks respect the topics of national curricula. The main body of the iconographic apparatus is pictures and photos generally with captions and factsheets which give new information regarding the text. The presence of maps is relevant in the first grade school textbooks while in the other case, the geographic indications are scarce. Chronologies are widely used and in few cases also time lines. The text highlights information and dates and the in-depth knowledge boxes are very numerous. The text uses a narrative style and linear structure with explanations of causal links. The linguistic structure is clear and suitable for the age level only for the high school textbooks. In the other cases the vocabulary is very difficult and the key concepts are not well-explained, especially the historiographic terms. The sources are contextualised even if an outline of the method of historian's work and research are not present. The exercises focus especially on the content of the textbook and include some specific revision tests for the state exams. In both textbooks, the national events and dimensions are dominant even if also some European and world history facts and contexts are analysed. In the high school textbooks, the local dimension is minor; moreover, links with civic educations are not well-explained. There are no clues to revisionism or “silence strategies”. The texts lack a number of features: firstly different memories are not respected, critical index of the contents and of the points of view vary little, the plurality of subjects and histories is not emphasized; there are, however, some references regarding women's history. The historical facts are set in the time/space dimension with some windows on the present. Overall the use of time order is traditional and the order and causality of events is unique, although the different durations of events and phenomena are underlined.

There are many types of sources and, only in the high school book, there are also historiographic texts. That said, political history prevails over other branches of history. The indications regarding historiographical trends and debates are scarce.

FRANCE

History textbook:

- Ivernel M., **Histoire Géographie 4^{ème}**, Hatier, Paris, 2006
- Azzouz R., Gache L., **Histoire – Géographie 4^{ème}**, Magnard, 2006
- Cote S., Dunlop J., **Histoire – Géographie 4^{ème}**, Nathan, Paris, 2006
- Azzouz R., Gache M. L., **Histoire Géographie 3^{ème}**, Magnard, Paris, 2007
- Chaudron E., Knafou R., **Histoire Géographie 4^{ème}**, Belin, Paris, 2007
- Chaudron E., Knafou R., Arias S., Carton J. L., Damongeot I., Fratissier M., Lérou H., Ruhlmann, **Histoire Géographie 5^{ème}**, Belin, Paris, 2008
- Ivernel M., **Histoire Géographie 6^{ème}**, Hatier, Paris, 2009
- Azzouz R., Gache M.L., **Histoire Géographie 6^{ème}**, Magnard, Paris, 2009

Updated editions

Age target : 11/12 – 12/13 – 13/14

The iconographic and cartographic framework is enriched with different types of maps, drawings, illustrations, photos and reproductions of works of art. The pictures and the documents are explained by captions, factsheets following the text and time-lines are given. Chronologies feature rarely. The text features lexical and conceptual highlighting. Two textbooks present textual links, frames and marginal notes.

The text covers the topics of national curricula and is suitable for the age target and the level of preparation. The text boasts clear and coherent presentation with explanation of key concepts. Moreover, The discipline's lexicon is used in a correct way (no anachronisms / glossary support) and it follows a linear structure and narrative style. Other linguistic functions are present, too and sources are contextualized. On the downside, the indications regarding historical research are scarce. Historiographic concepts are not well-explained. However, the tests and exercises propose problem-solving and information transfer in order to demonstrate the students' ability. There are some revision tests for state exams. The geo-historical contents are connected with civic education, and the civic and social function of humanistic subjects is clearly indicated. The national and the European dimension are given more space than the world and local dimension and the text offers only few elements of intercultural dialogue. Some national events are given particular prominence. There are no elements suggesting revisionism or negationism but some problems are dealt through “silence strategy”

The critical index of the contents and of the points of view is scarce and the links between past and present are few. Moreover, the plurality of histories, memories and subjects is not widely respected neither is gender difference. Stereotypes do not feature, though. The historical facts are set in time/space dimension while the use of periodization is traditional, however the diverse durations of events and phenomena are underlined. The order and causality of events are unique. While there are many types of sources, the number of historiographic texts is limited and, above all, there are no indications regarding present-day historiographic debates and trends.

GERMANY

History textbook: 3 course of history – volumes 8

Baumgartner K., Fieberg K., **Horizonte** (Course of History), Westermann, Braunschweig, 2008

Sauer M., **Geschichte und Geschehen**, Klett, Stuttgart, 2009

Zeiten und Menschen 3, Hrsg. Hans-Jürgen Lenzian, Paderborn: Schöningh-Verlag.

Update editions

Age target: 12 years and up

Textbooks have many pictures, illustrations, photos and reproductions of work of art. The iconographic and cartographic framework is enriched with captions, factsheets following the text, chronologies and time lines.

All texts cover the topics of the national curricula and they are suitable for the age and the level of students' preparation. The presentation is clear and coherent with the explanation of the key concepts and causal links. The lexis used is specific to history and also other disciplines and there are also other linguistic functions. The abbreviations are explained. The text follows a linear structure and narrative style. The sources are contextualized and well-described sources. An introduction to historian's work is also present. The exercises involve problem-solving and information transfer informations and aim at activating students' abilities.

Those using the books can grasp that history has civil and social function and is connected with citizen education. The European, world and the national dimension are given equal importance, while the other dimensions are vary in prominence in each textbook. Some national events are given greater space and in some cases the “strategy's silence” is present, however there are no clues suggesting negationism or revisionism.

The critical index of the contents is good and the plurality of histories, subjects and points of view are respected as is the gender difference. Stereotypes do not feature.

The historical facts are inserted in time/space dimension and the time orders follow the diverse durations and processes of events and phenomena. History is a “construction” and the facts are interpretable. The links between past and present are highlighted.

Both the variety and number of sources and historiographic texts are large and the texts also cover the historian's work and research. Additional materials: teacher's handbook, exercises and practical work, internet research, multimedial support, bibliography.

SPAIN

History textbook:

Autores varios, **Historia de España**, Akal, Madrid, 2009

Autores varios, **Geografía e Historia**, Santillana, Madrid, 2007

Autores varios, **Historia 1º Bachillerato**, Santillana, Madrid, 2008

Update editions

Age target: 12 years and up

The textbooks have many pictures, illustrations, photos and reproductions of works of art. The iconographic and cartographic framework is enriched with captions, patterns of analysis following the text, chronologies, time-lines and graphs. The general history text features graphic and lexical references, the concepts presented are suitable for the students' level and is presented in a clear and linear fashion, the style is narrative. Events are presented in a framework of traditional periodization and space-time references, paying particular attention to processes and their duration. The terminology of history and other social sciences is used in a relevant way, avoiding anachronisms or over-conceptualization. The source-materials are always contextualized with teaching aids and factsheets. The conceptualizations are made explicit, even in their causal effects and are linked with the work of historical research, which can be seen in the choice of significant examples of historiographic work. However, the different points of view which feature in today's historiography do not feature.

Overall, the textbooks cover the national curriculum topics and also branch out to touch on topics dealt with in civic education.

The exercises set the students task that are aimed at assessing the skills that they have acquired, inviting them to use information not immediately available in the text. There are no revision tests for the State exam.

The national and European dimension prevail, although some space is given to the global and local spheres too. Events in contemporary history are dealt with in all their complexity and there are no clues suggesting negationism or revisionism.

A variety of histories, subjects and points of view are recognised, without being underlined, while stereotypes do not feature.

The textbooks are issued along with a teacher's book, a small historical atlas, an exercise and activity book and multimedial and bibliographical reference.