



Textbook Analysis Methodology

April 2026

Methodology

Monitor Impact's research goal is to provide an accurate and comprehensive assessment of a national system's school curriculum, by analyzing a large quantity of textbooks using international standards based on UNESCO and UN declarations as well as other international recommendations and documents on education for peace and tolerance. During research, the textbooks are read thoroughly and individual examples are selected on the basis of relevance to research and criteria. The examples are then analyzed as is, without interpretation or paraphrasing, by trained experts and linguists, in terms of both their content and their didactic significance. Finally, the examples are generalized to establish the examples' significance in the overall narrative, determining the curriculum's adherence (or lack thereof) to international standards of peace and tolerance education.

Textbook research is a highly effective means to understand how the "Self" and the "Other" in a given society are conceptualized through educational materials. Two established approaches to qualitative textbook analysis are generally employed: *content* analysis, which examines the text itself, i.e. what it says in plain terms; and *discourse* analysis, which examines the language, narrative and context of the text, while paying close attention to omissions, contradictions and assumptions embedded in the text. This latter method provides insight into coded or implicit messaging. Elements of historical, political and religious background are also considered when they are deemed to provide further context. Monitor Impact research uses both methods simultaneously and in a complementary manner, thus allowing to reliably uncover the significance of the text and how it may be perceived by the intended reader, i.e. the student, and minimize the observer bias on the part of the researcher.

The diverse nature of textual analysis necessitates clearly defined scope and parameters. As such, the methods of textual analysis mentioned above are employed with a focus on pre-defined topics and themes. To assess compliance with international educational standards, textbooks are approached with attention to the conceptualization of the "Self" and the "Other" in environments of conflict, and messages involving violence and incitement to violence; hate and intolerance; and peace and peaceful conflict resolution. These issues may be identified with the help of research questions, which serve as suggested leads and prompts for the researcher in exploring the context, aspects, significance and potential ramifications of a specific content example.¹ Also explored are issues that arise from the source material itself, such as culture- or nation-specific issues. For example, the identity of the "Other" differs from one society to another, and in many cases there are multiple groups of people labeled as such; the "Other" may be ethnic, religious, racial, national, socio-economic, gender, sexual, or any combination of the above. As such, each corpus of textbooks requires a unique set of criteria for identifying and collating content examples.

To ensure accuracy, research is conducted while taking into account known limitations and constraints. Since the contents of school curricula are created by multiple individuals and inconsistencies may occur even within a single textbook, the sample of textbooks to be researched is generally aimed to be as large as possible, encompassing multiple school grades and subjects. Favoring large samples also allows for a more accurate analysis of discourse and narrative that can only be perceived on a macro level, to pinpoint gaps and oversights, reach meaningful conclusions and facilitate actionable recommendations. Textbooks are selected for research after a preliminary study, on the basis of their verified use within the national education system and their assessed potential for relevance to pre-defined research topics.

In its assessment of educational materials, Monitor Impact employs UNESCO and other UN declarations, as well as international recommendations and documents on education for peace and tolerance. The use of internationally-recognized standards allows for an objective, empirical and fair analysis of a wide range of educational materials from diverse

1 Annon Groiss, "Researching Schoolbooks of Societies in Conflict: Suggested Study Questions," 2013.

<https://www.impact-se.org/research-questions-2/>;

also see suggested frameworks for the application of research questions in identifying violence and intolerance in textbook research:

Georg Eckert Institute, "Inception Report for a Study on Palestinian Textbooks," 12 April 2019, pp. 20–21, deposited in UK Parliament Libraries 16 June 2020, ref. no. DEP2020-0322.

<https://depositedpapers.parliament.uk/depositedpaper/2282265/files>

societies, mitigating political, national or religious biases on the part of the researcher and preventing prejudice towards any particular group of people. The use of these standards for evaluating educational content has been endorsed by bodies of the European Union, among others.² These standards are as follows:

1. **RESPECT:** The curriculum should promote tolerance, understanding and respect toward the “Other,” his or her culture, achievements, values and way of life.³
2. **INDIVIDUAL OTHER:** The curriculum should foster personal attachment toward the “Other” as an individual, his or her desire to be familiar, loved and appreciated.⁴
3. **NO HATE:** The curriculum should be free of wording, imagery and ideologies likely to create prejudices, misconceptions, stereotypes, misunderstandings, mistrust, racial hatred, religious bigotry and national hatred, as well as any other form of hatred or contempt for other groups or peoples.⁵
4. **NO INCITEMENT:** The curriculum should be free of language, content, and imagery that disseminate ideas or theories which justify or promote acts and expressions of violence, incitement to violence, hostility, harm and hatred toward other national, ethnic, racial or religious groups.⁶
5. **PEACEMAKING:** The curriculum should develop capabilities for non-violent conflict resolution and promote peace.⁷
6. **UNBIASED INFORMATION:** Educational materials (textbooks, workbooks, teachers’ guides, maps, illustrations, aids) should be up-to-date, accurate, complete, balanced and unprejudiced, and use equal standards to promote mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples.⁸
7. **GENDER IDENTITY AND REPRESENTATION:** The curriculum should foster equality, mutual respect, and should aim for equal representation between individuals regardless of their gender identity. It should also refrain from language, content, and imagery that depicts limiting and/or exclusionary gender roles.⁹
8. **SEXUAL ORIENTATION:** The curriculum should be free of language, content, and imagery that promulgates violence or discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.¹⁰

2 European Parliament, Resolution with Observations Forming an Integral Part of the Decisions on Discharge in Respect of the Implementation of the General Budget of the European Union for the Financial Year 2022, Section III – Commission and Executive Agencies (2023/2129(DEC)), 11 April 2024, item no. 198.

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0228_EN.pdf

3 As defined in the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance Proclaimed and signed by Member States of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, Articles 1, 4.2. See also the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding Between Peoples (1965), Principles I, III. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

4 The goal of education for peace is the development of universally recognized values in an individual, regardless of different socio-cultural contexts. See *Ibid.*, Article 6. See also, on exchanges between youth, the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965), Principles IV, V.

5 Based on *Ibid.*, Articles III.6, IV.7 and VII.39; and on the Integrated Framework for Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-eighth session, Paris, November 1995, Article 18.2.

6 As defined in Article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2106 (XX) on December 21, 1965. See also Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) on December 16, 1966.

7 Based on the Integrated Framework for Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-eighth session, Paris, November 1995, Article 9; and on the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by member states of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, Article 5.

8 Based on UNESCO recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session, Paris, November 19, 1974, Article V.14.

9 The preamble to the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by member states of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, notes the Convention on the Elimination of Any Form of Discrimination against Women and emphasizes respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to gender.

10 Based on Resolutions 32/2 (adopted June 30, 2016) and 17/19 (adopted July 14, 2011) of the UN Human Rights Council, and numerous UN General Assembly resolutions expressing concern and condemnation of laws and practices around the world which target individuals based on their gender identity and/or sexual orientation for discrimination, violence, and even extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions—all of which contradict the most basic principles of the UN and have no place in education.

9. SOUND PROSPERITY and COOPERATION: The curriculum should educate for sound and sustainable economic conduct and preservation of the environment for future generations. It should encourage regional and local cooperation to that effect.¹¹

The abovementioned standards are applied by the researcher in conjunction with specific guidelines for textbook development promoted by UNESCO itself. These include the following:

1. Treating textbooks as a tool for facilitating teaching and learning processes that foster peace, equality and mutual understanding;¹²
2. The integration of human rights principles and pedagogical processes that teach peaceful conflict resolution, non-discrimination and other practices and attitudes for “learning to live together”;¹³
3. Incorporation of content that is free from harmful gender, religious and other stereotypes,¹⁴ or generalizations that may oversimplify the representation of other groups or set one group against the other,¹⁵ with the recognition that hate speech can be particularly dangerous in conflict situations, as it fuels violence and atrocity crimes.¹⁶ Instead, educational materials should actively aim to challenge and eradicate underlying prejudices and stereotypes and contribute to overcoming their consequences,¹⁷ and confront essentialist, generalizing ascriptions to entire populations;¹⁸
4. Adherence to factual information on other groups in a manner that facilitates understanding, providing neutral information about controversies,¹⁹ alerting students to and “prebunking” conspiracy theories,²⁰ and rejecting denial or distortion of proven historical facts;²¹
5. Avoiding a dominant narrative voice associated with one particular ethno-racial or national structure, but critically question dominant narratives by means of counter-narratives and present the perspectives of different groups on current affairs and historical controversies;²²
6. The promotion of peace, with attention to the emotive level of words, attitudes to different groups of people and nations, identifying and countering hate speech, and managing conflict through dialogue,²³

11 Based on UNESCO recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session, Paris, November 19, 1974, Articles III.6, and IV.7. On the imperative for developing “systematic and rational tolerance teaching methods that will address the cultural, social, economic, political and religious sources of intolerance,” see the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by member states of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, Article 4.2. On education for international cooperation, see also the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965), Principle II.

12 *Textbooks and Learning Resources: Guidelines for Developers and Users* (Paris: UNESCO, 2014), p. 12. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000226135_eng

13 *A Comprehensive Strategy for Textbooks and Learning Materials* (Paris: UNESCO, 2005), p. 11. https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/UNESCO-Comprehensive_Strategy_for_Textbooks_2005.pdf

14 Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, *Textbooks for Sustainable Development: A Guide to Embedding* (New Delhi: UNESCO, 2017), p. 29. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259932>

15 *Making Textbook Content Inclusive: A Focus on Religion, Gender, and Culture* (Paris: UNESCO, 2017), p. 13. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247337>

16 *Addressing Hate Speech through Education: A Guide for Policy-makers* (Paris: UNESCO, 2023), pp. 13, 14. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384872>

17 *Recommendation on Education for Peace and Human Rights, International Understanding, Cooperation, Fundamental Freedoms, Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development* (UNESCO: Paris, 2023), p. 11. <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-education-peace-and-human-rights-international-understanding-cooperation-fundamental?hub=87862>

18 *Unmasking Racism: Guidelines for Educational Materials* (UNESCO: Paris, 2024), p. 27.

19 *Making Textbook Content Inclusive: A Focus on Religion, Gender, and Culture* (Paris: UNESCO, 2017), pp. 15–16. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247337>

20 *Addressing Hate Speech through Education: A Guide for Policy-makers* (Paris: UNESCO, 2023), pp. 32–33. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384872>

21 *Recommendation on Education for Peace and Human Rights, International Understanding, Cooperation, Fundamental Freedoms, Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development* (UNESCO: Paris, 2023), p. 9. <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-education-peace-and-human-rights-international-understanding-cooperation-fundamental?hub=87862>

22 *Unmasking Racism: Guidelines for Educational Materials* (UNESCO: Paris, 2024), pp. 53, 61.

23 Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, *Textbooks for Sustainable Development: A Guide to Embedding* (New Delhi: UNESCO, 2017), p. 166. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259932>

7. The promotion of peace-building, that is, a broader concept of “positive peace” that is an expression of the fundamental dignity of and respect for life;²⁴
8. Recognition of past violence and crimes, both local and global, such as the Holocaust, and discussion of the dynamics of identity-based hate that caused them;²⁵
9. The use of tools such as literature to foster tolerance and empathy, helping students to see the world from the perspective of other people and to experience how others feel;²⁶
10. The incorporation of real-life examples in science and mathematics to promote sustainable development, discarding impertinent political, violent, or conflict-oriented messaging,²⁷ and employing STEM subjects to build bridges between communities and transcend frontiers;²⁸
11. Combating sexism and unequal gender representation in textbooks;²⁹
12. Appropriateness to age, developmental needs and the mental wellbeing of students.³⁰

In addition to UNESCO recommendations, Monitor Impact takes the following two criteria into consideration when assessing educational materials' compliance with international standards:

1. Educational material should respect international law, relevant resolutions, previous agreements and obligations. This may include, for example, the principle of a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
2. Educational material should be void of antisemitic content, which is to be evaluated on the basis of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism.³¹ While UNESCO has not adopted this nor any other single definition of antisemitism,³² it has recommended teaching about contemporary

24 *Textbooks and Learning Resources: A Framework for Policy Development* (Paris: UNESCO, 2014), p. 21.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232222>

25 *Addressing Hate Speech through Education: A Guide for Policy-makers* (Paris: UNESCO, 2023), pp. 33–34, 42, 45, 46.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384872>

26 Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, *Textbooks for Sustainable Development: A Guide to Embedding* (New Delhi: UNESCO, 2017), p. 175.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259932>

27 Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, *Textbooks for Sustainable Development: A Guide to Embedding* (New Delhi: UNESCO, 2017), pp. 37–42, 67–100.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259932>

28 *Recommendation on Education for Peace and Human Rights, International Understanding, Cooperation, Fundamental Freedoms, Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development* (UNESCO: Paris, 2023), p. 9.

<https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-education-peace-and-human-rights-international-understanding-cooperation-fundamental?hub=87862>

29 Carole Brugeilles and Sylvie Cromer, *Promoting Gender Equality through Textbooks: A Methodological Guide* (Paris: UNESCO, 2009).

https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000158897_eng

30 *Recommendation on Education for Peace and Human Rights, International Understanding, Cooperation, Fundamental Freedoms, Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development* (UNESCO: Paris, 2023), pp. 8, 10, 11.

<https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-education-peace-and-human-rights-international-understanding-cooperation-fundamental?hub=87862>

31 International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), Non-Legally Binding Working Definition of Antisemitism.

<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>

Endorsed by the European Commission, Council, and Parliament as a “useful tool, in particular for education and training purposes for teachers, NGOs, state authorities and the media”

European Commission, “Definition of antisemitism”, 2021;

https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/definition-antisemitism_en

European Parliament, Resolution on combating anti-Semitism (2017/2692(RSP)), 1 June 2017;

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0243_EN.html

Council of the European Union, “Fight against antisemitism: Council declaration,” 6 December 2018.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/12/06/fight-against-antisemitism-council-declaration/>

32 *Addressing Anti-Semitism through Education: Guidelines for Policymakers* (OSCE/ODIHR: Warsaw, 2018), p. 13.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000263702>

(post-1945) manifestations of antisemitism,³³ with specific examples including Holocaust denial and the characterization of Western support for the State of Israel in that context,³⁴ asking Jews to disavow their connection with Israel,³⁵ and criticism of Israel in cases where it is informed by antisemitic assumptions and beliefs that are simply applied to Zionism, Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.³⁶ UNESCO has also recommended teaching about the Jewish Holocaust,³⁷ local Jewish heritage,³⁸ the diversity of Jewish beliefs, commonalities with other communities, and positive contributions of Jewish individuals, as well as using a multi-perspective approach to teaching about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.³⁹

33 *Strategies to Counter Antisemitism: A Handbook for Educators* (Paris: UNESCO, 2025), pp. 14–15.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000396116>

34 *Addressing Anti-Semitism through Education: Guidelines for Policymakers* (OSCE/ODIHR: Warsaw, 2018), p. 22.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000263702>

35 *Addressing Anti-Semitism through Education: Guidelines for Policymakers* (OSCE/ODIHR: Warsaw, 2018), p. 81.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000263702>

36 *Addressing Anti-Semitism through Education: Guidelines for Policymakers* (OSCE/ODIHR: Warsaw, 2018), p. 24.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000263702>

37 *Addressing Anti-Semitism through Education: A Guide for Policy-makers* (Paris: UNESCO, 2023), pp. 14, 33, 34, 46.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000263702>

38 *Strategies to Counter Antisemitism: A Handbook for Educators* (Paris: UNESCO, 2025), pp. 21–23.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000396116>

39 *Addressing Anti-Semitism through Education: Guidelines for Policymakers* (OSCE/ODIHR: Warsaw, 2018), p. 41.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000263702>



A Al Bateen Tower C6 Bainunah, ADIB Building, Street 34, Abu Dhabi

T +971-2207-6776 | **E** info@monitorimpact.ae.org | www.monitorimpact.ae.org