

Use of Text Sets

What are text sets?

- A text set is a collection of materials, composed of diverse resources on a specific subject matter, genre, or theme.
- Text sets can include information from online sources or can be print-based.
- A good text set offers materials at various reading levels.

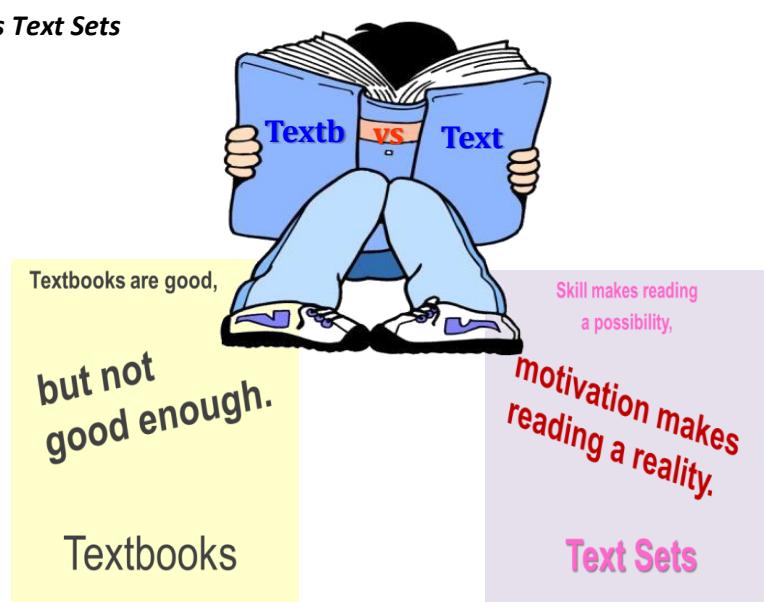
(adapted from Lent, 2012¹)

Why do we teach with text sets?

By selecting texts of various genres and different forms, teachers provide multiple ways for students to get the information they need, in the format that best suits them. If students cannot read (or are simply not interested in) the traditional English textbook, offering them other opportunities to gain the same content will enrich their learning. For instance, while a struggling primary four student may not be able to comprehend the food pyramid presented in a typical English textbook, he or she might love watching a video clip on making a healthy dish. The reasons for using text sets rather than textbooks and worksheets are to support an inquiry model that will:

- stimulate students' intellectual curiosity and interest in reading;
- enhance students' exposure and literacy development;
- validate each student's developmental level;
- facilitate inter-textual connection;
- reinforce and deepen concept understandings;
- enhance the interrelatedness of reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, thinking; and
- provide opportunities for authentic assessment and evaluation.

Textbooks vs Text Sets



¹ Lent, R. C. (2012). *Overcoming textbook fatigue: 21st-century tools to revitalise teaching and learning*. Alexandra, VA: ASCD.

What are the key features of a text set?

A text set often

- consists of authentic and age appropriate texts;
- includes multimodal and multi-genre texts;
- provides a range of accessible reading levels;
- grows in complexity from easy access texts to more difficult; and
- invites readers to think about the issues from multiple perspectives.

How do we create a text set unit?

Text sets build around themes that appeal to primary students and are closely relevant to their experiences. Each theme begins with a focus question and a set of related guiding questions. A focus question is the BIG question teachers hope that students can answer by the end of the unit. Guiding questions are the questions that guide students to answer the focus question. Guiding questions are usually scaffolded from literal to inferential to gradually encourage students think critically. Students explore these questions through reading relevant and challenging fiction and nonfiction, printed and digital selections. As students read, they analyse, interpret, compare, and synthesise information from the selections, always focusing on the focus question. In addition, students identify, practice, and apply specific critical thinking skills throughout their reading. Students react to the guiding questions through writing prompts, group discussions, and independent projects as they read. At the end of the reading experience, students respond to the focus question based on what they have learned.

