

**TEXTBOOKS: ADVANTAGES AND
DISADVANTAGES**

As you visit classrooms, you probably notice that most, if not all, of those classrooms use a standard textbook series. The reasons for this are many, depending on the design and focus of the curriculum, the mandates of the administration, and/or the level of expertise on the part of classroom teachers.

Provide you with several advantages in the classroom:

- Textbooks are especially helpful for beginning teachers. The material to be covered and the design of each lesson are carefully spelled out in detail.
- Textbooks provide organized units of work. A textbook gives you all the plans and lessons you need to cover a topic in some detail.
- A textbook series provides you with a balanced, chronological presentation of information.
- Textbooks are a detailed sequence of teaching procedures that tell you what to do and when to do it. There are no surprises—everything is carefully spelled out.
- Textbooks provide administrators and teachers with a complete program. The series is typically based on the latest research and teaching strategies.
- Good textbooks are excellent teaching aids. They're a resource for both teachers and students.

Use Textbooks Wisely

A textbook is only as good as the teacher who uses it. And it's important to remember that a textbook is just one tool, perhaps a very important tool, in your teaching arsenal. Sometimes, teachers over-rely on textbooks and don't consider other aids or other materials for the classroom. Some teachers reject a textbook approach to learning because the textbook is outdated or insufficiently covers a topic or subject area.

As a teacher, you'll need to make many decisions, and one of those is how you want to use the textbook. As good as they may appear on the surface, textbooks do have some limitations. The following table lists some of the most common weaknesses of textbooks, along with ways of overcoming those difficulties.

Weakness	Student Difficulty	Ways of Overcoming Problem
The textbook is designed as a the sole source of information.	Students only see one perspective on a concept or issue.	Provide students with lots of information sources such as trade books, CD-ROMs, websites, encyclopedias, etc.
Textbook is old or outdated.	Information shared with students is not current or relevant.	Use textbook sparingly or supplement with other materials.
Textbook questions tend to be low level or fact-based.	Students assume that learning is simply a collection of facts and figures.	Ask higher-level questions and provide creative thinking and problem-solving activities.
Textbook doesn't take students' background knowledge into account.	Teacher does not tailor lessons to the specific attributes and interests of students.	Discover what students know about a topic prior to teaching. Design the lesson based on that knowledge.
Reading level of the textbook is too difficult.	Students cannot read or understand important concepts.	Use lots of supplemental materials such as library books, Internet, CD-ROMs, etc.
The textbook has all the answer to all the questions.	Students tend to see learning as an accumulation of correct answers.	Involve students in problem-solving activities, higher-level thinking questions, and extending activities.

Think of a Textbook as a Tool

I like to think of textbooks as tools—they are only as good as the person using them. A hammer in the hands of a competent carpenter can be used to create a great cathedral or an exquisite piece of furniture. In the hands of someone else, the result may be a rundown shack or a rickety bench. How you decide to use textbooks will depend on many factors.

When thinking about how you want to use textbooks, consider the following:

- Use the textbook as a resource for students, but not the only resource.
- Use a textbook as a guide, not a mandate, for instruction.
- Be free to modify, change, eliminate, or add to the material in the textbook.
- Supplement the textbook with lots of outside readings.
- Supplement teacher information in the textbook with teacher resource books; attendance at local, regional, or national conferences; articles in professional periodicals; and conversations with experienced teachers.

Remember, no textbook is perfect, and no textbook is complete. It is but one resource at your disposal. Use it as a blueprint, a guidebook, or an outline

textbook is a collection of the knowledge, concepts, and principles of a selected topic or course. It's usually written by one or more teachers, college professors, or education experts who are authorities in a specific field. Most textbooks are accompanied by teacher guides, which provide you with supplemental teaching materials, ideas, and activities to use throughout the academic year

Reference

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/curriculum-planning/new-teacher/48347.html#ixzz1drjkuyqY>