

the MEL GABLERS'
Educational Research Analysts
newsletter

Inside ...
Sample Textbook
Standard Review Criteria

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And we will make the most of it, with God's help

THE GOLDEN AGE OF TEXTBOOK REFORM IS JUST AHEAD

Publishers are learning to heed our textbook reviews because their sales often match our rankings. This year, the two Grade 5 Science programs that we ranked "better" took 69% Texas market share, and one of those outsold the two we called "poor" by two to one. Our analyses noted that Texas does not require these series to discuss evolution ... but that it does say they must explain scientific strengths *and weaknesses* of whatever scientific theories they include. These two "better" series may be the best public school Science textbooks ever on scientific theories.

Textbook sales *repeatedly show* that rank-and-file educators, who actually adopt textbooks, are *much less politically correct* than the non-representative focus groups assembled by professional organizations to tell publishers "what teachers want." When mainstream classroom teachers see the academically sound, intellectually respectable documentation for our rankings, they as a whole almost always opt for the more moderate materials. Our lists of obvious factual errors give pause to those still skeptical of our findings on substantive subject-matter content.

"... who knoweth whither thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" — Esther 4:14

For instance: The Texas Council for the Social Studies (TCSS) poses as the mouthpiece of Texas Social Studies teachers. According to a former president in 1996, TCSS has about 3000 members. But the Texas Education Agency database showed there were 16,918 Grades 7-12 Social Studies teachers in Texas public schools. TCSS membership is thus under 18% of this total — and much less even than that if you count elementary Social Studies teachers. We empower the vast silent majority of educators who are voiceless except at textbook-adoption time.

Why are publishers now more open to textbook reform, the media friendlier, and foes quieter, than ever before? Because we have learned that if you define the terms of debate you are halfway to winning; that textbook editors may be unaware of our side and we must logically explain it; that standard review criteria let you talk *with* people instead of *at* them; that knowing others' mindset may make possible reasoning from their assumptions to your conclusions; and that if you force liberals to tell both sides on objectionable issues, they will often drop the subject.

"... be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." — Matthew 10:16

Our standard review criteria on the next page showcase these insights. Another example is to omit evidence for intelligent design or a young earth when attacking the *mandated* teaching of evolution in textbooks. This accepts (for debate's sake) the myth that evolution is scientific and creation is religious. But citing only non-theistic, non-creation related, naturalistic weaknesses in evolution puts you on a risk-free offensive. It lets you attack evolutionists without their attacking creation. You need not mention creation to prove it; you just have to discredit evolution.

Publishers have always competed on the basis of textbook *teaching aids*. Now some are also competing on the basis of *subject matter content*. This profound shift in the industry should accelerate as defectors from the old liberal monopoly on interpreting textbook rules reap higher profits. And in contrast to the outcry against other states' disclaimers on evolution in the front of Science books, opponents' silence over these Texas developments means they know they are constitutional. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we will make them irresistible.

you need our

standard review criteria

When judging textbooks, well thought-out objections put you on the attack and foes on the defensive. Our standard review criteria give you this edge. They also help rank textbooks fairly.

Below are sample standard review criteria. These are not comprehensive course outlines, but lists of what textbooks often censor on major topics. You cannot beat something with nothing.

U.S. HISTORY

"States' rights" *under* the Constitution differed from "state sovereignty" *over* the Constitution.

- "States' rights" accepted the constitutional principle of divided sovereignty. It strictly interpreted enumerated powers and the elastic clause. Examples of its exercise were:
 - *Maryland's attempt to tax the 2nd Bank of the U.S.*
Since the Bank was not *absolutely necessary* to the carrying out of delegated federal powers, but only *convenient*, Jeffersonians said it was unconstitutional.
 - *Established state churches*
In *Barron v. Baltimore* (1833), the Supreme Court ruled that the Bill of Rights limits the federal government, not the states. Thus despite the First Amendment, Connecticut had an established church until 1818, and Massachusetts until 1833.
- "State sovereignty" rejected the constitutional principle of divided sovereignty. Instances of its expression included:
 - *Nullification*
Georgia ignored a Supreme Court ruling against its authority over Cherokee lands. South Carolina's bid to stop collection of tariffs in Charleston brought an ultimatum from strict-constructionist, states'-rights nationalist Andrew Jackson.
 - *Secession*
Secession was a question of where sovereignty ultimately lay. If a state could secede, it was sovereign; if it could not, the federal government was sovereign. The Constitution was silent on the right to secede because it divided sovereignty.

U.S. GOVERNMENT

Discuss strict and loose construction equally.

- Give both interpretations of the "necessary and proper" and the "general welfare" clauses. Note that both views believe in implied powers, but construe them differently.
- Explain the difference between strict and loose construction of judicial review. Strict constructionists believe the judiciary should determine only whether the executive or legislature has a power under the Constitution. Loose constructionists believe the courts should also decide if these other branches have properly exercised their powers.

ECONOMICS

Benefits of free enterprise include:

- *Private property*
 - counts private property as a human right
 - makes individuals and families independent
 - fosters efficient allocation of resources and their payments
- *Growing net wealth*
 - dispels the zero-sum notion of wealth that some must grow poorer if others grow richer
 - creates a larger economic pie instead of transferring claims to an existing one
 - expands all classes' purchasing power
- *Market price mechanism*
 - adjusts supply and demand automatically
 - avoids shortages and surpluses
 - equalizes production and consumption

We have many more standard review criteria on most of these subjects.