These are general guidelines for selecting resources based on the cognitive, social, and emotional development of students. Stages of development will vary by individual , and teachers should get to know their students before selecting resources.

Who are grade 8 and 9 students?

Grades 8 and 9: Student Profile
Students are: ▪ perceptive and insightful   ▪ able to grasp abstract concepts and consider hypothetical situations   ▪ able to think deeply and analyse moral and ethical questions   ▪ increasingly aware of their feelings   ▪ deeply interested in, and may be influenced by, what their peers think of them   ▪ conscious of their physical appearance and gender norms, they may be intolerant to differences   ▪ developing their own opinions about social issues and eager to discuss them   ▪ able to empathize with a variety of situations presented in texts   ▪ beginning to understand civic engagement and broader ethical and moral concepts about their place and role in the world   ▪ handle representations of mildly scary situations but still experience bad dreams   ▪ intensely upset by depictions of sexual assault or the threat of sexual assault   ▪ sometimes swayed by unsupported opinions and one-sided arguments   ▪ able to learn from negative situations, especially in historical contexts   ▪ able to begin thinking about more complex social issues, such as poverty, crime, and discrimination   ▪ able to understand the author's purpose when analysing text   ▪ likely to rebel by using "forbidden" language such as swearing and may copy language found in texts   Students need: ▪ content that shows diverse experiences and people, and portrayals of history and the future   ▪ exposure to a variety of experiences and perspectives in relation to a topic   ▪ support identifying and understanding subtle themes and messages

What is developmentally appropriate for grades 8 and 9?

The information below is intended to provide guidance to teachers in the selection of resources for grades 8 and 9. Resources selected need to align with course outcomes and content needs to be reviewed by the teacher to ensure it is developmentally appropriate for their students' learning needs. Teachers should know their students; if they have students who have experienced trauma, it is important to use resources in a way that does not retraumatize or cause further harm.

	✔ Use resources that:	✘ Avoid resources that:
Violence and Conflict *Violence and conflict refer to any incidence of physical, emotional, or psychological harm, including aggression between individuals, gender-based violence, sexual violence, war, armed conflict, gang violence, domestic violence, mass casualty events, etc.*	- depict gender-based or sexualized violence only if the portrayal emphasizes the destructive effects - include strategies for confronting or coping with the harm of violence - provide opportunities to think about the ethical implications of violent actions - provide context for historical uses of violence	- include content that contains scenes of torture, graphic, gratuitous or sexualized violence - use violence as entertainment
Discrimination and Stereotypes *Discrimination refers to the unfair or unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on certain characteristics such as race, gender, age, or other factors. Stereotypes are oversimplified and generalized beliefs or ideas about people based on their perceived characteristics or group membership.*	- include representations of individuals who do not conform to stereotypes, including in their professional aspirations - include representations of boys and men expressing emotions in constructive ways - Include representations of girls and women voicing their own needs - show diverse interests and characteristics within and among social groups - provide opportunities to think critically about the impacts of stereotypes and other demeaning representations - model positive, inclusive language and behaviours - encourage students to critically question stereotypical portrayals of individuals or groups	- use stereotypical representations of people in a way that reinforces harmful social norms - depict discriminatory behavoir that does not show its harm

	✓ Use resources that:	✗ Avoid resources that:
	▪ positive representations of social differences and content that provides insight into conditions experienced by different groups	
Risky and Unhealthy Behaviours *Risky and unhealthy behaviors refer to actions and choices that have a detrimental impact on one's physical or mental health like smoking, substance misuse, suicide, self-harm, or disordered eating.*	▪ provide opportunities to discuss the harms of drinking, smoking, and substance misuse ▪ make clear the differences between realistic and glamourized portrayals of substance misuse ▪ portrayals of appropriate behaviour and opportunities to discuss what makes choices right or wrong ▪ discuss about healthy eating and self-image ▪ emphasize body positivity ▪ address common misconceptions and stereotypes related to body image ▪ focus on nutrients, cooking, and the love of whole, unprocessed, or minimally processed foods ▪ encourage open dialogues about mental health ▪ emphasize that suicide is preventable; although suicidal feelings are intense, they do pass and are treatable ▪ provide examples of people or characters who seek help when experiencing suicidal feelings ▪ use appropriate language, like a suicide, taken his/her/their life, ended his/her/their life, suicide attempt, person at risk of suicide	▪ depict substance misuse without showing its harm ▪ glamorize or romanticize substance misuse or addiction, including humorous depictions of actions associated with being high or drunk ▪ discuss eating disorders ▪ labeling foods as 'good' and 'bad' ▪ discuss dieting, calories, weight, etc. ▪ disparage people in bigger bodies and promote fat phobia ▪ include explicit details about the method of suicide ▪ discuss unusual methods of suicide ▪ allow students to identify with people or characters who die by suicide ▪ describe a suicide method is quick, easy, painless, or certain to result in death ▪ oversimplify the causes of suicide, particularly ones that suggest a single event "triggers" suicide ▪ contain aftermath-blame talk, like framing suicide as a selfish act that ruins the lives of loved ones ▪ glorify suicide by promoting the idea that suicide achieves results or that suicide is positive

	✔ Use resources that:	✘ Avoid resources that:
		• use inappropriate language like, commit suicide, suicide victim, suicide epidemic or wave, cry for help, a successful, unsuccessful or failed suicide attempt • superficial examinations of suicide in the context of Indigenous experiences
Language Use *Language use refers to the presence of derogatory terms or profanities.*	• include opportunities to discuss appropriate and inappropriate language use in different contexts • use appropriate and context specific language to discuss identities (e.g. race, class, gender expression, ability, etc.), relationships, bodies, etc.	• include racial and other kinds of slurs or hate speech • portray characters using put-downs, and other kinds of insults without showing their harm, or as a form of humour/entertainment • use historical language associated with racialized groups, without having first discussed why the language is no longer used and is inappropriate in today's context • include swearing beyond mild profanity
Sexual Content *Sexual content refers to any material, images, or information that depicts romantic relationships and sexual behaviour.*	• provide opportunities to discuss thoughts and feelings around a range of sexual behaviours from romantic to violent • portray healthy romantic relationships • discuss problems related to pressure or coercion to have sex , or present opportunities to critically evaluate those behaviours if they are presented as romantic or attractive	• present behaviours such as coercion, stalking, or exploitation as romantic or part of a loving relationship • pair sex and violence for entertainment • portray the pursuit of sexual partners as normalized or that treat sexual conquests as humorous • portray individuals as sexual objects or sexual aggressors

	✓ Use resources that:	✗ Avoid resources that:
Gender Identity and Sexuality *Gender identity refers to a person's sense of their own gender.* *Sexuality refers to an individual's sexual orientation, which encompasses who they are attracted to romantically, emotionally, and/or sexually.*	▪ use respectful, accurate language about gender identities and sexual orientations ▪ provide opportunities to discuss puberty, relationships, and the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities ▪ represent straight boys and men being kind and friendly to gender-diverse individuals ▪ represent healthy, supportive, and fulfilling cross-gender friendships and relationships ▪ include positive, affirming, and non-stereotypical representations of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations ▪ provides a historical and cultural context for the 2SLGBTQ2IA+ community's achievements and struggles to promote empathy and understanding	▪ use homophobic or transphobic language, attitudes, or behaviours without depiction of the harm it causes
Climate Change *Climate change refers to long-term alteration in the average weather patterns of a region, including shifts in temperature, precipitation, and other climatic factors, largely driven by human activities. These changes can have far-reaching impacts on ecosystems, and lead to extreme weather events.*	▪ include accurate information about climate science, included causes and effects of climate change ▪ include strategies and actions students, organizations, and governments can take to promote sustainable practices and mitigate or adapt to climate change ▪ highlight the importance of global cooperation in responding to climate change ▪ validate feelings of climate anxiety and provide strategies to manage feelings of anxiety	▪ include inaccurate or misleading information about the causes of climate change, including presenting climate change as a myth ▪ depict effects of climate change in ways that are hopeless or intended to exploit the audience's emotional vulnerability

	✅ Use resources that:	❌ Avoid resources that:
Scariness *Scariness is a quality or attribute associated with something that induces fear, anxiety, or a sense of dread in individuals.*	- involve supernatural or horror themes, such as ghost stories, suspenseful mysteries, or mild horror elements - include science fiction and dystopian themes that have elements of danger or suspense - include realistic yet challenging themes, such as social issues, personal struggles, or moral dilemmas	- present real-world scenarios in ways that sensationalize events to evoke anxiety or fear in the audience