

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 5 and 6 students?

Grades 5 and 6: Student Profile

Students are:

- developing the ability to think abstractly and engage in speculative reasoning
- beginning to grapple with moral and ethical questions
- still easily influenced by naive opinions and one-sided arguments
- feeling pressure to conform to gender norms and are intolerant of cross-gender mannerisms and behaviour
- susceptible to engaging in risky behaviour
- becoming conscious of their body image
- able to comprehend longer stories with implicit moral lessons
- able to learn from positive role models as well as negative ones who suffer consequences
- able to draw their own conclusions but may need help understanding situations with shades of gray
- able to understand the plot of a story

Students need:

- help identifying subtle themes or messages in longer narratives
- content that shows a diversity of experience and ethnicity as well as portrayals of history and projections of the future

What is developmentally appropriate for Grades 5 and 6?

The information below is intended to provide guidance to teachers in the selection of resources for grades 5 and 6. Resources need 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:
<p>Violence and Conflict</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ show the harm of violence as pain and suffering ▪ discuss the real-world harm of mean and aggressive behaviours, both for the victim and aggressor ▪ contain nuanced representations of violent situations ▪ contain information of where to go for help ▪ grapple with historical contexts of violence, including violence experienced by particular social groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ depict the results of violent behaviour as triumphant ▪ depict sexualized violence
<p>Discrimination and Stereotypes</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ include characters who are good role models ▪ feature diverse characters as the central character (seen and heard in the text) ▪ feature diverse role models in many different careers and prominent roles ▪ contain authentic representations and storylines to help break down stereotypes and misunderstandings ▪ depict positive representations of social differences and offer insight into conditions experienced by different groups ▪ send the message that worth and happiness don't come from appearance (especially 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ contain stereotypical representations (even in humor) ▪ depicts discriminatory behaviour without showing the harm it causes

	✓ Use resources that:	✗ Avoid resources that:
	<p>important for female characters) or from physical strength (especially important for male characters)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ show role models who display both feminine and masculine behaviors and interests ▪ depict healthy, supportive, and fulfilling cross-gender friendships and relationships ▪ depicts discriminatory behaviour with and the harm it causes (either pain for the victim or punishment for the aggressor) 	
<p>Risky and Unhealthy Behaviours</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ show the harm of risky and unhealthy behaviours ▪ reinforce the concept of body positivity ▪ teach students about the importance of balanced nutrition ▪ focus on building self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ contain any depictions of drinking, smoking, substance misuse, or risky stunts without showing the harm they cause ▪ portray risky or unhealthy behaviours without the harm they cause as glamorous or funny ▪ contain depictions of heroic or attractive characters engaged in drinking, smoking, or substance misuse ▪ label foods as 'good' and 'bad' ▪ shame or compare people's bodies ▪ include the subject of suicide
<p>Language Use</p> <p><i>Language use refers to the presence of derogatory terms or profanities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ include respectful and accurate language to describe differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ include any instances of racial or other kinds of slurs, hate speech ▪ contain lots of put-downs and insults meant to be humorous ▪ include instances of swearing beyond mild profanity

	✓ Use resources that:	✗ Avoid resources that:
<p>Sexual Content</p> <p><i>Sexual content refers to any material, images, or information that depicts romantic relationships and sexual behaviour.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ include kissing and dating between same-age peers ▪ talk about what healthy relationships look like, emphasizing communication, consent, and mutual respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ include serious/advanced sexual behaviour ▪ depict disrespectful or humorous portrayals of characters as sexual objects or as sexual aggressors ▪ include highly sexualized behaviour
<p>Gender Identity and Sexuality</p> <p><i>Gender identity refers to a person's sense of their own gender.</i></p> <p><i>Sexuality refers to an individual's sexual orientation, which encompasses who they are attracted to romantically, emotionally, and/or sexually.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ depict people expressing themselves differently, including ways that break conventional stereotypes ▪ basic concepts of gender and sexual orientation, for instance, that gender is not just and being a boy or girl, and that people can have different feelings and identities regarding their gender ▪ teach the importance of respecting everyone's gender identity and sexual orientation ▪ promote the use of inclusive language that does not assume someone's gender or sexual orientation ▪ discuss different types of loving and caring families and relationships ▪ contain stories of various individuals who have made positive contributions to society, emphasizing that anyone can achieve their goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ depict stereotypical representations of gender identity and sexual orientation ▪ include examples of disrespectful behaviour towards a person's gender identity and/or sexual orientation

	✓ Use resources that:	✗ Avoid resources that:
<p>Climate Change</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ explain that climate change is caused by human activities, like burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes that release greenhouse gases ▪ help students understand the negative effects of climate change, like changes in the environment, food and water scarcity, displacement of communities, and endangered species ▪ encourage eco-friendly habits and support clean energy ▪ discuss solutions such as renewable energy and international cooperation to mitigate climate change ▪ inspire hope through stories of individuals and communities taking positive actions to combat climate change and how students can make a difference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ instill fear for the future or a sense of guilt ▪ 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
<p>Scariness</p> <p><i>Scariness is a quality or attribute associated with something that induces fear, anxiety, or a sense of dread in individuals.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ contain non-abusive emotional conflict and mild horror as long as there is a resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ contain realistic content like current news content, particularly images, associated with child abductions, mass shootings, or indiscriminate violence