

Identity Inclusive Texts Rubric

For use in evaluating books which depict members of groups who have historically been marginalized or misrepresented in classroom resources and literature

Overall Perspectives

- What voices does this text include in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, ability, religion, place, immigration status, or LGBT identity?
- Which elements of this text, if any, provide an authentic account or reflection of people's' lived experiences? Setting, events, illustrations, characters, language
- Does the book contain current information or historically accurate information?
- If the book contains a fictionalized story or folktale set in a specific cultural context, are any notes included which help to explain the context?
- Do the themes appeal to all children?

Stereotypes (oversimplified portrayal of a complex person or group)

- Are genders portrayed equally and with nuance in a variety of ways?
- Are ethnic groups portrayed equally and with nuance in a variety of ways?
- Does the author account for different personalities and perspectives within a group?
- Are all characters (especially from minority groups) portrayed as genuine individuals with distinctive features?
- Is there diversity within the culture represented? (skin tone, gender, family structure, immigrant and nonimmigrant, showing that people from the depicted group are not all the same)
- Are members of ethnic groups given specific ethnicities (Cherokee or Korean), versus general labels (Native Am. or Asian)?
- Are traditions or cultural practices associated with specific ethnic groups, versus general racial groups?

Lifestyles and Relationships of Characters

- Are cultures portrayed in a genuine way?
- Are minorities depicted in a variety of settings?
- Are lifestyles outside the "norm" (white, middle-class suburbia) depicted positively?
- Do characters from non-dominant groups take leadership and make important decisions?
- If a family is separated, are societal conditions accounted for in the reason?
- Are a variety of families with differing relationships depicted?
- Are minority heroes defined based on their own concepts and struggles for justice, versus from achieving assimilated success?
- Do the minority heroes fight for the interests of their own people, even if that goes against dominant group expectations or norms?

Language

- Is language used to describe people, groups, and their habits in an accurate and asset-based way? (ex: not referring to 'broken' English or 'weird' traditions or practices, using positive descriptors for ethnic and other social groups)
- Are people who do not speak standard English portrayed positively?
- Do characters use language and dialects in ways appropriate to their identity and in a non-stereotypical way?

Story Line

- Are characters from various groups allowed to simply be people and not have the main focus be on their identity group?
- Does the book have a real ending that is not artificially happy?
- Are cultural values appreciated in how to "make it" in life, not just white middle-class standards for success?
- Are characters able to gain acceptance and approval, while maintaining individual and cultural patterns of behavior, versus having to conform to the same standards?
- Are any behavioral changes a clear part of the characters' development in a healthy way, versus being simply assimilating to dominant expectations?
- Are minority people considered to be part of the solution, not the problem?
- Do minorities solve their own problems in their own culturally appropriate ways, not just with white middle-class solutions?
- Are reasons for poverty and oppression explained?
- Is an unjust society depicted as a reason behind oppression?
- Is active resistance to oppression encouraged?
- Are the achievements of women based on their own initiative and intelligence?
- Could the same story be told if the gender roles were reversed?

Author/Illustrator Background

- Is there anything in the author's or illustrator's background that would recommend them to the themes of the book?
- Does the author share the perspective(s) of the characters of the book?

Overall Perspectives

Elements	Unacceptable	Approaching	Meeting
Voices in the text	The only voice in the text is that of the majority (white, middle class)	There is one voice of a minority race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, ability, religion, place, immigration status, or LGBT identity	There are multiple voices of minority groups in race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, ability, religion, place, immigration status, LGBT identity
Accurate textual elements	No authentic accounts or reflections of people's lived experiences regarding setting, events, illustrations, characters, and language	One or two elements (setting, events, illustrations, character, and language) provide an authentic account of people's lived experience	All elements (setting, events, illustrations, character, and language) provide an authentic account of people's lived experience
Current information and historical accuracy	None of the information is current and correct, or not historically accurate	Some of the information is current and correct or historically accurate	All of the information is current and correct or historically accurate
Themes	Themes do not appeal to any children	Themes appeals to few children	Themes appeal to most children (like friendship)

Stereotypes

Elements	Unacceptable	Approaching	Meeting
Gender	No gender portrayed equally and with nuance in a variety of ways	One gender portrayed equally and with nuance in a variety of ways	Genders portrayed equally and with nuance in a variety of ways
Ethnic Groups	No ethnic group portrayed equally and with nuance in a variety of ways, members of ethnic groups are given derogatory labels, and cultural practices do not fit the ethnicity	One ethnic group portrayed equally and with nuance in a variety of ways, members of ethnic groups are given general labels (Native American or Asian), cultural practices are associated with general racial groups	All ethnic groups portrayed equally and with nuance in a variety of ways, members of ethnic groups are give specific ethnicities (Cherokee or Korean), and cultural practices are associated with specific ethnic groups
Individuality	No characters from minority groups are portrayed as genuine individuals with distinctive features	Some characters from minority groups are portrayed as genuine individuals with distinctive features	All characters (especially from minority groups) are portrayed as genuine individuals with distinctive features
Diversity within a Culture	The author does not account for different personalities and perspectives <i>within</i> a group and diversity within the culture is not represented (skin tone, gender, family structure, immigration)	The author does accounts for one different personality and perspective <i>within</i> a group and some diversity within the culture is represented (skin tone, gender, family structure, immigration)	The author does accounts for many different personalities and perspectives <i>within</i> a group and diversity within the culture is represented (skin tone, gender, family structure, immigration)

Lifestyles and Relationships of Characters

Elements	Unacceptable	Approaching	Meeting
Culture	Cultures are portrayed in an inaccurate way	Some elements of cultures are portrayed in a genuine way	All elements of cultures are portrayed in a genuine way
Setting	Minorities are only depicted in a stereotypical setting	Minorities are depicted in a few settings	Minorities are depicted in a variety of settings
Lifestyle	Lifestyles outside the "norm" (white, middle-class, suburbia) are depicted negatively	Lifestyles outside the "norm" (white, middle-class, suburbia) are depicted neutrally	Lifestyles outside the "norm" (white, middle-class, suburbia) are depicted positively
Actions Taken	Only characters from dominant groups (white, male, etc) take leadership and make important decisions	Some characters from non-dominant groups take leadership and make important decisions	Characters from non-dominant groups take leadership and make important decisions
Families	Only normative families are depicted (heterosexual, white, middle-class, suburbia) and "broken" families are depicted in a purely negative way	Some variety of families with differing relationships are depicted and separated families are depicted somewhat positively	A large variety of families with differing relationships are depicted and societal conditions are accounted for in the reasons for separated families
Heroes	Minority heroes fight for the white, middle-class majority for assimilated success	Minority heroes are defined by some majority and some minority concepts	Minority heroes fight for the interests of their own people based on their own concepts and struggles for justice

Language

Elements	Unacceptable	Approaching	Meeting
General Language	Language is used to describe people, groups, and their habits in an inaccurate and negative way	Language is used to describe people, groups, and their habits in an accurate and negative way	Language is used to describe people, groups, and their habits in an accurate and asset-based way
Language of Minority Groups	Characters who do not speak standard English properly are portrayed negatively and characters use language and dialects in ways inappropriate to their identity in a stereotypical way	Characters who do not speak standard English properly are portrayed in a neutral way and characters use language and dialects in ways somewhat appropriate to their identity in a somewhat stereotypical way	Characters who do not speak standard English properly are portrayed in a positive way and characters use language and dialects in ways appropriate to their identity in a non-stereotypical way

Story Line			
Elements	Unacceptable	Approaching	Meeting
Focus of Characters	The main focus of characters from various groups is their identity group	The main focus of characters from various groups is partially their identity group and partially their individuality	Characters from various groups are allowed to simply be people
Ending	The ending is artificially happy	The ending is somewhat artificially happy	The ending is realistic
Standards for Success	Only white, middle-class standards for success are appreciated, characters are only able to gain acceptance and approval by conforming to the same standards, and behavior changes of characters are simply assimilating to dominant expectations	Some cultural values are appreciated in how to "make it" in life, some characters are able to gain acceptance and approval while maintaining individual and cultural patterns of behavior, and some behavioral changes are part of characters' development in a healthy way	All cultural values are appreciated in how to "make it" in life, all characters are able to gain acceptance and approval while maintaining individual and cultural patterns of behavior, and all behavioral changes are part of characters' development in a healthy way
Problem Resolution	Minority groups are considered to be part of the problem and the majority solves the problems	Minority groups are considered to be partially problematic and minorities solve their own problems with white, middle-class solutions	Minority groups are considered part of the solution and minorities solve their own problems in their own culturally appropriate ways
Societal Considerations	Oppression is encouraged and the reasons for poverty and oppression are unexplained or explained in an inaccurate way	Oppression is depicted in a neutral ways and some reasons for poverty and oppression are explained	Active resistance to oppression is encouraged and reasons for poverty and oppression are explained with an unjust society being one of the reasons
Gender Roles	The achievements of women and girls are based on good looks or relationship with boys and the same story could not be told if the sex roles were reversed	The achievements of women and girls are based somewhat on good looks or relationship with boys and somewhat on their own initiative and intelligence and the same story could be told if the sex roles were reversed	The achievements of women and girls are based on their own initiative and intelligence and the same story could be told if the sex roles were reversed

Author/Illustrator Background			
Elements	Unacceptable	Approaching	Meeting
Author/Illustrator Background	Nothing in the author's or illustrator's background would recommend them to the themes of the book and neither share the perspective of the characters of the book	Some events or experiences of the author or illustrator would recommend them to the themes of the book and one shares the perspective of the characters of the book	The author's or illustrator's background would recommend them to the themes of the book and they share the perspectives of the characters of the book