

# Texas History Textbooks

In 2010, the Texas State Board of Education ignited controversy over the content of public education in that state. It voted to adopt, along partisan political lines, a new “social studies and history curriculum that amends or waters down the teaching of the civil rights movement, slavery, America's relationship with the U.N. and hundreds of other items,” according to the Associated Press.

As this decision affects the education of approximately 4.8 million Texas schoolchildren, many political and civil rights groups were gravely concerned over the effect this could have on the development of political and cultural knowledge and ideology.

Moreover, the change in curriculum may have drastic effects on many children who do not live in Texas. Because the state is such a dominant consumer of textbooks, many textbook publishing companies produce books that conform to Texas curriculum requirements but which are then sold to districts across the country.

Of course, the potential content of education is nearly limitless. It is impossible to teach every event in human history – even only those that we know about. Therefore, decisions must be made about which events and ideas are meaningful, interesting, or otherwise worthy of inclusion in a curriculum.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Is it morally acceptable for policymakers to select a public education curriculum that reinforces their own ideology?
2. Given the impossibility of including every historical event in public school curriculum, how do we go about selecting which events in history ought to be included?