

A Comparative Study of Music Textbooks for First Grade Primary Schools in China and Russia

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ABSTRACT

This article compares the differences in first grade textbooks between China and Russia from three perspectives: textbook structure, textbook content, and textbook characteristics. Compared to Chinese textbooks, Russian textbooks have differences in terms of text volume, score, class schedule, number of exercises, difficulty coefficient, textbook illustrations, and related themes. Both countries attach great importance to patriotic education in their textbooks, and the proportion of domestic music used in the textbooks is similar to that of foreign music. Finally, the author analyzes the reasons for the differences and similarities between the textbooks of China and Russia.

Keywords: Music textbooks, Comparison of textbooks, Primary school music education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are the main basis for teaching activities, reflecting the specific requirements of curriculum standards. Therefore, the importance of textbooks is self-evident. The structure, content, and form of textbooks are systematic, scientific, targeted, contemporary, and national. By comparing different versions of textbooks, the basic logic and value orientation of textbook writing can be discovered. There are many comparative studies on music textbooks of different eras and versions in China today, and the relevant results reflect the internal evolution logic of music education in China. Among them, there are changes in the characteristics of the times, that is, with the development of the economy, the demands for talent in society also change. There are also regional differences, that is, different educational concepts in different regions of China. However, there is relatively less comparative research with foreign music textbooks, and more emphasis is placed on introducing foreign music education systems, educational theories, and innovative classrooms to China. As the main carrier of teaching content, textbooks can more intuitively reflect the differences in music education between China and foreign countries. The selection of music textbooks from China and Russia for comparative

research is due to the increasingly close relationship and historical accumulation of cultural exchange between the two countries. At the same time, it is also because the music education of the two countries has a similar orientation in their development history, which is to learn from the Western school education system while inheriting and promoting their own characteristics. Understanding the development achievements of music education in Russia has important reference value. This article selects the first grade music textbooks of the "Russian School" series from the Russian Education Press and the first grade (first and second volumes) music textbooks of the China People's Music Publishing House.¹

2. THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF RUSSIAN FIRST GRADE MUSIC TEXTBOOKS

2.1 Textbook Structure

The primary school first grade textbook of The Russian Education Press has a total of 127 pages, along with a 32 page exercise book. The textbook contains 229 illustrations and photos, and the exercise book contains 50 illustrations. This

1. The original Russian text is Серия "Школа России", Издательство "Просвещение".

textbook will be used for two semesters in first grade, and the content is rich and substantial. The directory of the textbook is relatively brief, dividing it into three parts: "Music Around Us", "Music and You", and "Your Music Dictionary". The directory of contents does not specifically indicate the title and page number of each unit, only the starting page number of each section is marked. In addition, the directory of contents also lists various symbols that appear in the textbook and explains their meanings. Firstly, the symbols for the exercises are "working independently", "listening to music", "thinking", "reading with parents", "creating work", and "playing music". Secondly, there is a symbol identification for each lesson topic. The textbook uses different colored blocks to distinguish, and each lesson has only one theme. Light blue represents "music knowledge", red represents "Russian ethnic folk music", light green represents "music of all ethnic groups in the world", pink represents "religious music", deep blue represents "classical music", purple represents "contemporary music culture", deep green represents "drama and film music", and yellow represents "music in life".

The first part of the textbook, "Music Around Us," includes 22 lessons, including 7 lessons on the theme of "music in life", 3 lessons on the theme of "music of all nations in the world", 3 lessons on the theme of "Russian ethnic folk music", 3 lessons on the theme of "classical music", 3 lessons on the theme of "music knowledge", 1 lesson on the theme of "contemporary music culture", 1 lesson on the theme of "religious music", and 1 lesson on the theme of "drama and film music". The second part of "Music and You" includes 26 lessons, including 7 lessons on the theme of "music in life", 5 lessons on the theme of "music of all nations in the world", 1 lesson on the theme of "Russian ethnic folk music", 4 lessons on the theme of "classical music", 3 lessons on the theme of "music knowledge", and 6 lessons on the theme of "drama and film music". The third part, "Your Music Dictionary," only has one lesson and belongs to the theme of "music knowledge". The additional exercise book contains 16 sets of exercises, which are different from the number of lessons in the textbook because not every lesson is equipped with written exercises after class. There are a total of 6 types of exercises, namely "reading", "singing", "playing", "drawing and coloring", "writing", and "cutting and pasting".

2.2 Textbook Content

The teaching content of this textbook covers almost all aspects of music activities, guiding students to understand rich music culture and experience the beauty of music from shallow to deep. The overall difficulty of the textbook is high. Not only do the selected songs contain classic works with profound artistic connotations, but also a large amount of historical knowledge, fairy tales, folklore, and poetry related to music are arranged. Therefore, it is necessary for students to actively think about problems, actively play and sing music, and examine music from the perspectives of both music lovers and performers. Through two semesters of studying this textbook, students will be able to understand domestic and foreign ethnic music works, religious and traditional music, European classical music and contemporary music, learn basic music theory knowledge, basic piano and harp performance, and understand the names and timbres of common instruments in bands.

The first part of the textbook mainly discusses the origin and development process of music, the naming of notes, rhythm and beat, music and cultural life, which belongs to the nature of introduction. This section allows students to have a preliminary understanding of the overall overview of music courses and recognize the close relationship between music and human life. This section is still of an introductory nature, only explaining the basic notes and rhythm. Therefore, there are not many lineage examples, only 9 lineage examples, all of which are relatively short and small, all of which are staff notation.

Table 1. Titles of Part 1

	Title	Topic type
1	The Eternal Muse Is with Me	Music in life
2	Poussette of Muse	Music of all nations in the world
3	Music Is Everywhere	Russian folk music
4	Soul of Music - Melody	Classical music
5	Autumn Music	Music in life
6	Everyone Needs Letters	Music in life
7	Music Letter	Music knowledge (introducing syllable names)
8	Music Letter	Music knowledge (introducing rhythm)
9	Composition Melody	Music in life
10	Instruments	Russian ethnic folk music
11	Sadko	Russian ethnic folk music
12	Instruments	Classical music
13	Sounds in Pictures	Music of all nations in the world
14	Play? Play!	Contemporary music
15	Music Letter	Music knowledge (introducing bar-line)
16	Why Do Bears Hibernate	Music in life
17	Christmas Is Coming and the Celebrations Begin	Religious music
18	Ancient National Customs and Habits	Music of all nations in the world
19	Happy Winter Vacation	Classical music
20	"The Nutcracker" by Tchaikovsky	Drama and film music
21	Our Bands	Music in life
22	I'm an Actor/Actress	Music in life

As shown in "Table 1", the first part consists of 22 lessons, which are the teaching content of the first semester of the first grade. The first part selected 32 pieces of music, including 10 foreign pieces and 22 Russian pieces². The selected music works are all very classic and globally renowned, such as works by Tchaikovsky, Rimsky Korsakov, Beethoven, and Bach. All song textbooks do not provide complete score examples, only fragments of music scores for a few songs. In order to help students better understand music and appreciate the emotions in music, each lesson has illustrations and photos related to music content, and key words that can summarize the characteristics of music are also listed next to the illustrations. For example, in the lesson "Happy Winter Vacation", it is necessary to play Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" ballet to students. The textbook provides four key words, namely "joy", "brightness", "love", and "kindness". The textbook requires students to read a large amount of text, and basically each lesson is accompanied by short texts, poems, stories, or

explanations of musical terms. For example, in the lesson "Autumn Music", the text is a poem about autumn created by Pushkin and Plesheyev. For example, in the lesson "Sadko", there are four pages of text that students need to read. This lesson mainly introduces Rimsky Korsakov's opera "Sadko", which is a famous Russian epic story called "Sadko". In addition to songs that students need to learn to sing, there is also training in instrument performance. For example, in the lesson "Our Bands", students need to form a small band to rehearse and present in class. The textbook provides a simple ensemble score, consisting of four parts: human voice, snare drum, bell drum, triangle iron, and sand hammer. Students need to use percussion instruments to play relatively simple rhythms as vocal accompaniment.

The second part of the textbook delves deeper into music theory, allowing students to watch the staff play and sing simple music pieces after learning. Secondly, it has broadened the breadth of music knowledge, introducing music from various life scenes, foreign music culture, patriotic music, contemporary film and animation music.

2. The works of Ukrainian and Belarusian composers are included in Russian songs here, as both Ukraine and Belarus belong to tsarist Russia or the Soviet Union in their respective eras.

Table 2. Titles of Part 2

	Title	Topic type
1	The Land You Live in	Music of all nations in the world
2	Sounds of the Earth	Music of all nations in the world
3	Poets, Artists, Composers	Music in life
4	Morning Music	Classical music
5	Night Music	Classical music
6	Characterization of Music	Music in life
7	Performing Fairy Tales	Russian ethnic folk music
8	Music Letter	Music knowledge (introducing treble clef and bass clef)
9	Everyone Has Their Own Instrument	Music of all nations in the world
10	Our Bands	Music of all nations in the world
11	The Muse Is Not Silent	Music in life
12	National Memories	Music in life
13	Instruments	Music knowledge
14	Mother's Day	Music in life
15	Instruments	Classical music
16	Wonderful Lute	Music of all nations in the world
17	Sounds in Pictures	Classical music
18	Musical Notation	Music knowledge (introducing mode and tonality)
19	Music in the Circus	Music in life
20	Houses That Make sounds	Drama and film music (introducing theaters)
21	Fairy Opera	Drama and film music
22	Music in Drama	Drama and film music
23	Children Music Theater	Drama and film music
24	There Is Nothing Better than This in the World...	Drama and film music
25	Magic Screen	Drama and film music
26	I'm an Actor/Actress	Music in life

As shown in "Table 2", the second part includes 26 lessons, which are the teaching content for the second semester of the first grade. The second part selected 33 music works, including 5 foreign music and 28 Russian music. The second part is a representative lesson on "National Memories", which introduces students to music related to the Great Patriotic War. It belongs to patriotic education and aims to enhance students' national identity. In contrast to the first part, the lesson "Christmas Is Coming and the Celebrations Begin" is divided into the theme type of "religious music". For Russia, religious education also serves the construction of mainstream national ideology, enhances students' cultural identity with the country, and strengthens national cohesion. The last few lessons in the textbook mainly focus on the music in drama and movies, guiding students to actively participate in social and cultural life. The last lesson of the textbook teaches students how to design posters and program lists, and requires them to rehearse a party as the end of semester assessment.

They can invite friends and parents to watch. The program requirements for the evening party are relatively broad, including singing songs, dancing, drama, opera, and marching band performances.

The third part of the textbook is only 4 pages long, listing commonly used music terms and instrument names, with illustrations for each term, which is simple and clear.

2.3 Classroom and After-school Exercises

Each lesson in the textbook is accompanied by classroom and after-school exercises, and exercises can be divided into the following categories: the first is to learn to sing or learn to play. For example, in the lesson "Soul of Music - Melody", the exercise requires students to remember the melody of a song from Tchaikovsky's "Children's Collection" and try humming the melody or playing it on a harp. The second is to think and propose students' own ideas for a particular problem. For example, in the lesson "Sadko", students need to

determine the personality and emotions of the music after listening to it, and think about which plot of the story matches the music. For example, in the lesson "Wonderful Lute", students need to think about how to use music to introduce their country to foreigners. The third is to rehearse with classmates and hold small concerts or competitions. The fourth is to enjoy music with parents or classmates. For example, in the class "Children Music Theater", it is necessary to watch clips of children's operas online with parents and share them with classmates during class.

In addition to the exercises in the textbook, additional exercise books also need to be completed by students after class. The types of questions in the exercise book are relatively simple and interesting. Compared to simple line drawing, coloring the picture, playing crossword puzzles, and doing handicrafts, the exercises in the exercise book mainly serve as auxiliary functions to enhance students' interest in learning music. Exercises are often associated with other subjects to expand students' comprehensive literacy. While learning music, exercise painting skills, color perception, and hands-on abilities, students can expand their Russian vocabulary, and enhance their reading comprehension.

3. THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF CHINESE FIRST GRADE MUSIC TEXTBOOKS

3.1 Textbook Structure

The textbooks for the first grade of primary school by China People's Music Publishing House

are divided into two volumes, one for each semester. The first volume consists of 65 pages and comes with a 4-page exercise book. The second volume also has a total of 65 pages, and comes with a 4-page exercise book. Each page of the textbook is accompanied by background panel illustrations, but no photos are used. The catalog of contents of the textbook is clear, indicating the title, track name, knowledge points, and teaching content of each lesson. The catalog of contents also lists the symbols that will appear in the textbooks, each representing a different teaching content. Monkeys represent "listening", frogs represent "singing", goats represent "knowledge and skills", and dolphins represent "creative activities". The first volume is the same as the second volume, with each volume containing 9 formal courses and two additional courses.

3.2 Textbook Content

The teaching content of this textbook mainly involves the following aspects, namely "understanding nature", "understanding society", "understanding the motherland", and "playing games". The music works included in the textbook cover children's songs, contemporary music, ethnic minority music, local folk songs, and foreign classic music. The music concert that needs to be listened to should indicate the basic information of the music, such as the composer, lyricist, and singing form, and provide illustrations to remind students of the content of the work, but without music score. Songs that students need to learn to sing are provided with simplified notation.

Table 3. Titles and knowledge points of volume 1

	Title	Knowledge point
1	Good Friends	Singing posture
2	A Happy Day	Knowing crotchet and quaver
3	Hello Motherland	Tone dynamics
4	Cute Animals	Knowing wooden fish, bump bell
5	Love Labor	Knowing Minim
6	Elfin	Knowing castanets
7	Little Musicians	Tone length
8	Celebrating the New Year	Knowing gongs, drums, small cymbals
9	Small Stage	
Additional course	Game House	
Additional course	Happy Valley	

As shown in "Table 3", there are a total of 9 lessons in the first semester of first grade, which are the teaching content of the first semester of first grade. The first volume selected a total of 38 pieces of music, including 25 pieces of Chinese music and 12 pieces of foreign music. 21 songs require students to learn how to sing, and 17 songs require listening and appreciation. In addition to providing the score of the song, the textbook also includes singing tips to guide students in learning the song step by step. For example, in Lesson 3 "Hello Motherland", it is necessary to learn to sing "National Flag, National Flag, It Is So Beautiful". At the end of the score, it is written "as the teacher sings the melody with 'lu'," accompanied by palm

movements - opening and closing hands as the pitch changes. At the same time, the textbook also includes simple teaching of instrument performance. For example, in the lesson of "Love Labor", while learning to sing "Wash Handkerchief", students should also try to use wooden fish and bump bell as accompaniment to the song. The first volume mainly teaches students to understand the rhythm of music, and students can use different movements to play rhythm with the music. For example, in the lesson "Little Musicians", students are required to hit the table with their fists on the rephotograph while hitting the table with their fingers on weak beats.

Table 4. Titles and knowledge points of volume 2

	Title	Knowledge point
1	Spring	Knowing the triangle, vocalization practice
2	Herding	Knowing double barrel
3	Hands in hands	Vocalization practice
4	Long Nose	Speed of music
5	Games	Vocalization practice
6	Wonderful Night	Height of Tone
7	Dab Dab Hands	Knowing maracas
8	Songs of Time	Knowing sleigh bell, vocalization practice
9	Happy Dolls	
Additional course	Game House	
Additional course	Happy Valley	

As shown in "Table 4", the second semester of the first grade consists of 9 lessons, which are the teaching content of the second semester of the first grade. In the volume 2, a total of 39 pieces of music are selected, including 26 pieces of Chinese music and 13 pieces of foreign music. 23 songs require students to learn how to sing, and 16 songs require students to listen and appreciate. The knowledge points in the second volume are connected to those in the first volume. After learning simple rhythms in the first semester, students begin to experience pitch in the second semester. In the lesson "Beautiful Night", the students first need to listen to the teacher playing the piano, using gestures to indicate the pitch and singing a model. Then students listen to the sounds in life and distinguish between the high and low sounds. The first and second volumes are both about simple percussion instruments, such as maracas and wooden fish, which are commonly used instruments in music classes and are relatively easy to use. The second volume also arranges 4 classes of vocal exercises, where students only need to sing melodies using

onomatopoeic words, aiming to cultivate scientific vocal skills and correctly sing the pitch and rhythm in the music score. For example, in the "Song of Time" lesson, students use "di" and "da" to model singing melodies.

3.3 Classroom Exercises and Exercise Books

Each lesson in the textbook has classroom exercises to help students consolidate their knowledge points. Classroom exercises mainly include the following categories: the first is to sing the melody with the teacher. For example, in the lesson "Cute Elephants", students are required to sing "Two Elephants" with the teacher. The second is to follow the music and do movements. This exercise mainly allows students to experience the rhythm of the music. For example, in the lesson "Cute Animals", students are required to learn the lively and cute movements of the little kangaroo based on the strength and weakness of the music. The third is to use simple percussion instruments as

music accompaniment, allowing students to experience the rhythm of the music through changes in percussion intensity. For example, in the lesson of "Herding", students are required to use a triangle iron and a double horn to accompany the Slovak folk song "Shepherd Boy". The fourth is to think and express one's own viewpoint. For example, in the lesson "Love Labor", students are first asked to listen to a song and express their emotions, and then tell the truth from the story "Three Monks".

The number of questions in the exercise book is relatively small, with only 1-2 questions per lesson. There are many exercises related to rhythm, such as Lesson 3 in the second volume of the exercise set, which requires students to find the appropriate rhythm and connect it with lines. And the number of knowledge-based questions comes second, such as Lesson 8 in the first volume, which requires students to connect the pictures of musical instruments with the corresponding names using lines. The number of singing exercises is the smallest, for example, in Lesson 2 of the second volume, students are required to look at the score and sing the melody.

4. COMPARISON OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FIRST GRADE MUSIC TEXTBOOKS BETWEEN CHINA AND RUSSIA

Textbooks are written based on the actual needs of the country, taking into account many factors, such as the demand for talent in society, the quality of education in the region, students' acceptance ability, the teaching progress of related subjects, and the cultural characteristics of the country. Therefore, the music textbooks of China and Russia have their own unique characteristics, but due to historical and political and economic reasons, the music textbooks of the two countries also have some similarities. Through a comparative study of music textbooks for first grade primary schools in China and Russia, the following differences can be found:

The first is the difference in text volume. There are many texts that students need to read in Russian first grade music textbooks, in addition to poetry and proverbs, as well as long historical stories, fairy tales, and legends. However, in Chinese textbooks, there is only a small amount of narrative text. When encountering content related to fairy tales, the teachers usually directly dictate or play videos or slides, rather than presenting the content as text in

the textbook. Through a vast amount of textual content, Russian music textbooks not only introduce students to music itself, but also involve the cultural background behind music, and even form a linkage with courses such as Chinese and history. The use of textbooks tests the comprehensive literacy of teachers, while students need to spend more energy and patience reading texts, which puts some learning pressure on first grade students.

The second is the differences in genealogy. Firstly, the number of score examples is higher in Chinese first grade textbooks than in Russian textbooks. Chinese music textbooks provide complete scores for the songs that need to be sung, while Russian textbooks either do not provide scores or only provide scores for representative segments. Therefore, Russian students need to follow the audio or learn songs under the guidance of teachers, while Chinese students who have already mastered some music basics in advance can learn to sing by watching the score on their own. With the coordination of sheet music, one can have a more intuitive understanding of the structure of music. Secondly, there are differences in the types of music scores. The music scores in Russian textbooks are based on the staff notation, while those in the textbooks of the China People's Music Publishing House use the simplified notation.³ The difficulty of learning sheet music is lower, but if students want to further learn instrument performance or understand classic foreign music works, they must have knowledge of the staff.

The third is the differences in teaching arrangement. The Russian textbooks arrange a larger number of class hours and meticulously plan various music activities in the classroom. However, Chinese textbooks arrange fewer music activities, and teachers need to design their own activities to enrich the classroom. For example, there are clear regulations in Russian textbooks for competitions, concerts, rehearsals, poster production, etc. This may be related to the importance of music subjects in the primary and secondary education systems of both countries, and it is necessary to consider their relationship with other subjects, as students have limited time and energy.

The fourth is the differences in the number of exercises. The number of exercises in Russian textbooks is relatively large and diverse, and the

3. The primary school music textbooks of People's Music Publishing House also have versions of staff notation, but the usage rate is lower than that of numbered musical notation.

exercises in the attached exercise book are also more complex. In addition to the questions that need to be practiced with the teacher in class, there are also tasks that need to be completed with parents after class. The title is not only related to music performance and appreciation, but also involves thinking about phenomena, expressing viewpoints, and participating in social activities. These trainings are beneficial for improving students' comprehensive literacy, cultivating cooperative abilities, and critical thinking.

The fifth is the differences in difficulty. Compared to Chinese textbooks, Russian textbooks are more difficult. Firstly, Russian textbooks use the staff notation, which is more difficult to learn than the simplified notation. Moreover, Russian textbooks list a large number of music terms that students need to memorize. Secondly, Russian first grade textbooks already require students to play piano and harp, and even rehearse for small bands. Chinese textbooks mainly focus on rhythm training and singing training, and only require learning to use simple percussion instruments for accompaniment. This is because of the differences in educational resources within China, which require consideration of the hardware facilities of schools in economically underdeveloped areas.

The sixth is the differences in textbook illustrations. There are both illustrations and photos in Russian textbooks. However, there are only illustrations in Chinese textbooks. More diverse illustrations can suggest the background story and emotions contained in music to students, helping them understand the music. The reason why Russian textbooks also come with photos is because the themes of the textbooks involve many real-life scenes, and presenting them in the form of photos is more realistic and can accurately reproduce real-life scenes.

The seventh is the differences involved in themes. Russian textbooks cover a wider range of topics, mainly due to the increased arrangement of class hours, which can cover various aspects of music activities. In terms of music selection in textbooks, Russian textbooks use more Western classical music works, while Chinese textbooks mainly use children's songs and folk songs. This is closely related to the cultural background and historical conditions of both countries.

The textbooks of the two countries have similarities in the following two aspects:

Firstly, there are both contents related to patriotism. In Russian textbooks, music related to the Great Patriotic War is introduced to help students remember history and love their motherland. At the same time, a special section for religious music is designed to strengthen ethnic and cultural identity. In Chinese textbooks, songs praising the national flag and appreciating folk songs of various ethnic minorities are taught to help students establish their understanding of the motherland.

Secondly, in the music selected in the textbook, the proportion of domestic music to foreign music is similar. This is because both countries have a long history and excellent cultural traditions, while also being multi-ethnic countries. However, compared to Western European countries, both China and Russia are latecomers and need to learn and draw on the experience of the West. Therefore, there is the same basis for arranging the repertoire.

5. CONCLUSION

Russia has a world-renowned music education system, which not only has a high level of professional music education, but also has distinctive basic and universal music education. After studying the advanced education system in Western Europe, Russia has established a music education system that meets its own social needs. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, it also drew on the excellent achievements of the Soviet Union in various fields. Therefore, music education between China and Russia has had intricate connections throughout history, as well as differences formed after the evolution of endogeneity. The stones from other mountains can be used to attack jade. Through a comparative study of first grade music textbooks in primary schools between China and Russia, it is hoped to reflect the differences in basic music education between the two countries and provide reference for the development of music textbooks in China.

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