

Diversity and Inclusivity in Thema v1.3

With the huge range of published books available to the reading and listening public, subject classification schemes are vital to help guide searches, allowing publishers, booksellers, librarians and educators to select titles around similar topics, as well as helping with the discoverability of titles by readers. Two aspects of book discoverability may be a desire to find books that increase an awareness of diversity and inclusivity, and books which themselves are exemplars of diversity and inclusion.

In book publishing for children and teenagers, one important aim is to help young people understand the world around them, as well as their own situation and life. For adult readers, it may reflect a desire to find books that they can identify with, or that help them expand their own horizons.

The *Thema* subject category scheme ¹ has always included certain elements that help identify such books, and the latest version (*Thema* v1.3) has strengthened these ². The most important aspect of *Thema* in this regard is its range of qualifiers. Qualifiers are used to add precision or nuance to a subject code – for example, a location, setting or milieu the book is set in, what style of music or what language the book is about, a group of people who feature in the book, or a group which might be particularly interested in reading it. The qualifiers provide not only nuance for a particular book, but also a bridge to related titles across a broader range of subjects.

Qualifiers in *Thema* are never used alone, but always alongside more conventional subject codes, but they can be important as a way of identifying, for example, a list of history books about a specific period, or of young adult novels of potential interest to an educator with a multicultural classroom or to a teenager trying to understand their own identity.

Interest qualifiers cover, *inter alia*, some aspects of diversity and inclusivity. There are codes that allow publishers to flag titles that are suitable for readers who may otherwise feel excluded from reading. These include:

5AR – For reluctant or struggling readers (children / teenagers) These are usually books with a higher interest age and a lower reading age. These titles are important for parents, educators and librarians *etc* who are trying to make sure children do not get left behind

5AX – For adult emergent readers another important flag. This allows publishers to indicate titles that are suitable for adults who have difficulty reading or who are ‘newly

¹ For further details of *Thema*, see <http://www.editeur.org/151/thema> – most particularly the executive briefing at http://www.editeur.org/files/Thema/20180426_Thema_briefing.pdf – and an interactive browser at <https://ns.editeur.org/thema>

² This note has been updated to reflect the final published version of *Thema* v1.3 (April 2018)

literate' – whether because of prior educational issues or because they are learning a second language

[5AZ – For people with learning / communication difficulties](#) this allows publishers to indicate titles that are specifically intended for readers with special needs, eg dyslexia, dementia, autism or learning disabilities

Another group of qualifier codes allows a publisher to flag titles that may be of interest to specific groups of people, under [5PB – Relating to peoples: ethnic groups, indigenous peoples, cultures, tribes & other groupings](#). Under this broad heading there are a whole series of different qualifiers allowing a publisher to flag that a title might be about or of interest to certain groups. These can be specific codes like:

[5PB-US-C – Relating to African American people](#)

[5PB-GB-AS – Relating to British South Asian people](#)

There are also codes that can indicate a relationship to particular religious groups and to groups based on gender or sexuality. These codes can be used by booksellers, librarians or educators to curate lists or highlight individual titles about or of particular interest to a certain group.

Within the main subject codes of *Thema*, there are many subject themes that are important for diversity / inclusivity. These are particularly critical for children /and teenagers, and the themes are reflected in a list of categories under [YX – Children's / Teenage: Personal & social topics](#)³. These codes can be used on their own for titles about one of these topics, or in conjunction with other codes including the [YF* – Children's / Teenage fiction & true stories](#) codes to indicate fiction titles that tackle these topics. When using combinations of codes in this way, care must be taken to ensure the code which is considered the *main* subject is clear (in ONIX 3.0, for example, by using the <MainSubect/> flag, for example). Fiction that heavily features the theme of multiculturalism should always have a fiction code as the 'main' subject code, whereas non-fiction about multiculturalism would have the non-fiction code as the main code.

Examples of these YX* codes include:

[YXB – Children's / Teenage personal & social topics: LGBT](#)

[YXC – Children's / Teenage personal & social topics: gender identity](#)

[YXK – Children's / Teenage personal & social topics: disability & special needs](#)

[YXN – Children's / Teenage personal & social topics: racism & multiculturalism](#)

[YXP – Children's / Teenage personal & social topics: diversity & inclusivity](#)

[YXPB – Children's / Teenage personal & social topics: prejudice & intolerance](#)

[YXZM – Children's / Teenage social issues: migration & refugees](#)

In particular, the note attached to code YXP specifies it can be used for *'books that deal with [diversity & inclusivity] and stories with a particularly diverse cast of characters, or which illustrate inclusivity within the context of the story without necessarily being the subject of the story. Use with: YF* codes for stories and values from 5P* INTEREST Qualifiers if*

³ These categories were labelled 'social issues' in 1.2, but are relabelled 'social topics' in version 1.3

appropriate'. This illustrates the building-block (post-coordinated) nature of *Thema* which allows subject codes to be combined to give a nuanced view of the subject and content of a book.

There are two codes that allow publishers to indicate titles where the theme or main characters are strongly linked to girlhood or boyhood:

YNMF – Children's / Teenage general interest: Girls & women use for books where girlhood / womanhood is a central theme

YNMH – Children's / Teenage general interest: Boys & men use for: books where boyhood / manhood is a central theme

Finally, *Thema* has a selection of codes for specific special features of *adult* fiction (eg satire or humour) and narrative themes (eg coming of age, death and grief *etc*). One of the latter is **FXS – Narrative theme: Social issues** which can be used with a relevant main genre fiction code, and further supplemented with an additional (non-fiction) code to highlight a particular social issue. So for example a novel that deals with social issues around discrimination could include the *Thema* code **JBFA – Social discrimination & equal treatment** alongside its main (adult fiction) subject code(s).

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