

# The criteria used

QUALITY, artistic flair and suitability.

These are among the criteria used to pick the best reading materials for the literature component of Bahasa Malaysia (or Komsas).

“This is to enable teachers to use a drama script, short story or poem as an educational tool that will shape the intellect and viewpoint of young Malaysians,” says Universiti Putra Malaysia Malay language department lecturer Associate Professor Dr Lim Swee Tin.

Lim is one of the authors and academicians involved in the Komsas reading materials evaluation process for in 2008.

The text chosen must contain good moral values — such as honesty, teamwork and tenacity — that young readers can apply to their daily lives.

It must also mirror the realities of life in Malaysia.

“It should get the message across to young people that being a part of a multicultural society requires understanding and respect for each other,” adds the poet and 2000 Southeast Asia Write Award winner.

To appeal to young readers, the material must also be “enjoyable to read”.

“It must have elements that will stimulate critical and creative thinking in students and written in a style that suits their age,” adds Lim.

Komsas was introduced in school as part of the literature component of Bahasa Malaysia (or Komsas) a

decade ago.

It aims to instil the reading habit in young Malaysians and promote a better appreciation of Malay literary works among them.

The literature component was first taught in Form One and Four classes in 2001. It is conducted twice a week during Bahasa Malaysia period which lasts 40 minutes.

The search for Komsas textbooks for the 2011-2020 period began four years ago when Education Ministry’s Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) invited all registered publishers to submit suitable materials to be considered.

It is reported that CDC received more than 700 poems, drama, traditional prose and novels, written by national laureates, winners of prestigious book awards and aspiring writers.

CDC also formed three review bodies to filter out poor submissions.

The first committee was responsible for picking the best text, whereas the second determined the number of text to be selected.

The second committee had reportedly met nine times over the course of a year.

The third panel, on the other hand, narrowed down the selection and submits a shortlist to CDC to make the final decision.

The CDC-approved reading material were published in 2009 and distributed to schools by the end of last year. — By SUZIEANA UDA NAGU