



Australian Curriculum: Languages

Language-specific curriculum

The Australian Curriculum: Languages is designed to enable all students to engage in learning a language in addition to English.

The design of the Australian Curriculum: Languages recognises the features that languages share as well as the distinctiveness of specific languages.

The Australian Curriculum: Languages includes both language-specific curricula and a *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*.

The key concepts of language, culture, and learning underpin the learning area and provide the basis for a common rationale and set of aims that apply to all languages.

Why is learning languages important in schools?

The study of languages contributes to the general education of all students. It operates from the fundamental principle that for all students, learning to communicate in two or more languages is a rich, challenging experience of engaging with and participating in the linguistic and cultural diversity of our interconnected world.

The Australian Curriculum recognises Australia's distinctive and dynamic migration history. Language learning builds upon students' intercultural understanding and sense of identity as they are encouraged to explore and recognise their own linguistic, social, and cultural practices and identities as well as those associated with speakers of the language being learnt.

Learning languages also develops students' overall literacy, strengthening literacy-related capabilities that are transferable across learning areas.

What languages are being developed for the Australian Curriculum: Languages?

The languages for which F-10 Australian Curriculum will be developed by the end of 2013-early 2014 are:

- Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish and Vietnamese.
- *A Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*

Further work is underway to determine the process and timelines for developing Australian Curriculum in additional languages beyond those listed above (in the first instance, for Auslan, Classical languages, Hindi and Turkish).

What type of learner will the Australian Curriculum: Languages be aimed at?

For the majority of languages, the Foundation to Year 10 curriculum is pitched to the dominant cohort of learners for that language in the current Australian context. Teachers may differentiate learning to cater for students of different backgrounds by making appropriate adjustments to the curriculum.

For F-10 Chinese, pathways are being developed for three learner groups – second language learners, background language learners and first language learners. For Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages, a framework is being developed that caters for different learner pathways that also take account of the state of the particular language.

What is the structure of the Australian Curriculum: Languages?

Two major variables influence the curriculum architecture: learner background and time-on-task. These two variables, taken together, influence the structuring of the curriculum and, more specifically, curriculum content and achievement standards.

The design of the Australian Curriculum: Languages takes account of the different entry points into languages, across Foundation to Year 10, which reflects current practice. This means that in each language (except for the first language learner pathway in Chinese), there is a sequence for Foundation to Year 10 and a sequence for Years 7–10.

The content in the Australian Curriculum: Languages is organised by two interrelated strands:

Communicating: using language for communicative purposes in interpreting, creating, and exchanging meaning; and

Understanding: using language for communicative purposes in interpreting, creating and exchanging meaning.

Content descriptions aim to ensure that students develop the skills, knowledge, and understanding



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required to communicate in the target language, to understand language and culture and to develop an intercultural capability in communication.

Achievement standards describe what students are expected to achieve and how well.

The Languages curriculum - content and achievement standards - is organised in bands for each sequence of learning:

Foundation – Year 10 Sequence

- Foundation–Year 2
- Years 3–4
- Years 5–6
- Years 7–8
- Years 9–10

Years 7–10 (Year 7 Entry) Sequence

- Years 7–8
- Years 9–10

For the primary years, the curriculum content is described for Foundation to Year 2, Years 3–4 and Years 5–6. This takes into account literacy development as a key consideration. This curriculum structure provides flexibility for schools to make program arrangements best suited to their local context and needs.

Achievement standards are specific to each language, pathway and sequence.

What national and international curricula and research were drawn upon to develop the Australian Curriculum: Languages?

Languages curricula from all Australian states and territories have informed the development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages.

The development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages has taken account of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) and curriculum documents from Finland, Hong Kong, Japan, Ontario, Scotland, Singapore and the United Kingdom, and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACFTL).

A list of references used in developing the Australian Curriculum: Languages can be found in the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages*.

Is this curriculum for generalist or specialist teachers?

The Australian Curriculum: Languages is written for use by teachers with specialist language expertise.

Are there indicative hours for the Australian Curriculum: Languages?

The curriculum has been developed based on an indicative allocation of hours. These indicative hours represent an assumption about time-on-task made only for the purposes of curriculum development.

ACARA provided an indicative time allocation of 350 hours for Foundation to Year 6 and a further 160 hours for each of Years 7-8 and Years 9-10 as a guide for writers in developing the curriculum.

The provision of indicative hours is not designed to establish time allocations or sequences of learning for teaching and learning in schools. Schools and school authorities will make policy decisions regarding time and sequences of learning when implementing the curriculum.

How does the Australian Curriculum: Languages compare with current curricula in states and territories?

The Australian Curriculum: Languages draws on current Languages curricula in each state and territory and reflects best practice in language education nationally. There are many features of the curriculum that teachers will find familiar.

What is the timeline for development and implementation?

The F-10 Australian Curriculum: Languages is being developed and consulted on during 2013-2014.

It is anticipated that the Australian Curriculum: Languages will be endorsed by Ministers and published in early 2014. The curricula will be available for implementation by state and territory education authorities following publication. Decisions about implementation timelines are the responsibility of state and territory education authorities.