



Senior Secondary English – Information Sheet

What are the subjects in the senior secondary Australian Curriculum for English?

There are **FOUR** senior secondary subjects for English as part of the Australian Curriculum:

English is a study of literature, media and language in which students critically and creatively engage with a variety of texts in all language modes. *English* extends students' language, literature and literacy skills for a range of purposes and audiences. They learn how to analyse different interpretations of texts and how to use language modes to achieve specific effects.

Essential English is designed to develop students' literacy skills in a more practical way. Students examine the purpose and language of a range of texts, expanding their ability to understand, evaluate and communicate effectively in and for a range of contexts. *Essential English* develops and refines students' language, literature and literacy skills to enable them to interact confidently and effectively with others in everyday, community, social and applied learning contexts.

Literature is a study of literature at an intensive level and aims to engage students in the detailed study of literary texts. *Literature* deepens students' understanding of conventions common to different types of composition and refines their understanding of the effects of language through shared experience of texts and the creative process. Learning to appreciate literary texts, and to create their own, enriches students' understanding of human experiences and the capacity for language to communicate those experiences.

English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) is designed to develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills in Standard Australian English (SAE). Explicit teaching of the structure, linguistic features and sociolinguistic and sociocultural aspects of SAE will benefit students in all curriculum areas. It provides a variety of language, literature and literacy experiences to accommodate the diverse range of starting points. EAL/D focuses on developing oral language skills; how language and texts can vary in structure and usage depending on cultural and social context;

and how language can change according to audience and purpose.

How are the senior secondary Australian Curriculum English subjects structured?

The senior secondary Australian Curriculum for each English subject specifies content and achievement standards:

- The content describes the knowledge, understanding and skills that are to be taught and learned within a given subject.
- The achievement standards describe the quality of learning (the depth of understanding, extent of knowledge and sophistication of skill) expected of students who have studied the content for the subject.

The curriculum for each senior secondary subject is organised into four units with the last two units cognitively more challenging than the first two. Each unit is designed to be taught in about half a 'school year' of senior secondary studies.

EAL/D has an additional four units called Bridging Units that are intended for students who have had limited exposure to Standard Australian English, are new to the Australian educational setting or who have had little or no prior formal education.

Content has been specified for each unit, and achievement standards are described for each pair of units, that is, Units 1 and 2, and Units 3 and 4.

The curriculum also includes a rationale and a set of aims for the subject, a description of how the subject is organised, how general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are represented, and a glossary of key terms used.

How do the senior secondary English subjects align with the F-10 Australian Curriculum?

The Australian Curriculum English subjects draw upon, develop and emphasise different knowledge, understandings, skills and processes related to the strands of Language, Literature and Literacy used in the Foundation to Year 10 curriculum.



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The emphasis differs according to the nature of each subject.

While each senior secondary English subject places a different emphasis on the three strands, each subject is expected to advance skills in each of the strands. For example, while students are exposed to a wide range of literary texts in *EAL/D*, the prime focus is on language learning and the development of oral language and literacy skills in SAE. In *Essential English*, although literature is important, the primary focus is on the development and demonstration of literacy and language skills in everyday, social and community contexts. *English* retains a balance of each strand whereas *Literature* has as its primary focus, engagement with and analysis of literary texts.

The senior secondary subjects continue to develop the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities introduced across Foundation to Year 10. Each subject includes a description of the opportunities for students to continue to develop their general capabilities and understanding of cross-curriculum priorities in ways that are relevant to the subject.

How do the senior secondary English subjects relate to each other?

The Australian Curriculum English subjects are not hierarchical. They are different subjects that cater for different student interests and needs. They have been designed so students could move between subjects or undertake them concurrently.

Why are suggested texts included and who determines which texts are to be studied?

Examples of suitable texts for each subject are included to stimulate thinking about teaching resources in relation to the subject content and are not intended to be prescriptive.

State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities are responsible for determining any arrangements related to any inclusion of suggested or required texts.

How do the senior secondary English subjects differ from senior secondary courses in states and territories?

There are varied approaches to senior secondary English across the country. The four Australian Curriculum English subjects define commonly agreed knowledge and skills and express them with enough flexibility to allow more detailed courses of study to be developed to suit the interests and needs of particular groups of students.

The Australian Curriculum English subjects differ because they are national, and they articulate principles and expectations that serve to define who we are and what we value as a nation in our literature and language. Each subject promotes the study of literature, particularly Australian literature and encourages the use of digital texts.

As states and territories have continuing responsibility for pedagogy, assessment and reporting, their English courses may also include detailed assessment information and eligibility requirements where appropriate.

What national and international curricula and research was drawn upon to develop the senior secondary Australian Curriculum for English?

In developing the senior secondary Australian Curriculum for English, ACARA reviewed state and territory English curriculum.

The development of the Australian Curriculum English subjects has taken into account curriculum documents from Canada (Ontario), Finland, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

In addition, as part of ACARA's curriculum development process and a focus on high standard quality curriculum, the senior secondary Australian Curriculum subjects were reviewed by eminent overseas experts and international curriculum authorities.