



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 the Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages and also the Framework for Classical Languages.

The key concepts of language and culture 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: 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.

Languages developed for the Australian Curriculum: Languages

Languages included:

- Arabic, Auslan, Chinese, Classical Greek, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Modern Greek, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese.
- the Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages
- the Framework for Classical Languages.

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

For the majority of languages, the Foundation – 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 have been 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 has been developed, which caters for different learner pathways that also take account of the state of the particular language. There are three learner groups – first language learners, second language learners and language revival learners.

For Auslan (Australian Sign Language), two pathways have been developed – first language learners, a pathway for deaf children and second language learners – a pathway for hearing children to communicate in Auslan.

What is the structure of the Australian Curriculum: Languages?

Two 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 – Year 10, which reflects current practice. This means that in most languages, there is a sequence for Foundation – Year 10 and a sequence for Years 7–10.

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

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

understanding: analysing language and culture as a resource for interpreting and creating meaning.



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The two interrelated strands for Classical Languages are:

engaging with texts: engaging with the language, culture and history of the classical world through the interpretation, analysis and translation of texts; and

understanding: analysing classical language and culture as resources for understanding meaning and interpreting the ancient and modern worlds.

Content descriptions aim to ensure that students develop the skills, knowledge, and understanding 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages, the bands are organised in the following sequence of learning:

Foundation – Year 10 sequence

- Foundation – Year 2
- Years 3–6
- Years 7–10

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

Is this curriculum for generalist or specialist teachers?

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

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

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

The development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages also took into account 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.

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 – 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.