

The Australian Curriculum

The development of the Australian Curriculum is guided by the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, adopted by the council of state and territory education ministers in December 2008. The *Melbourne Declaration* emphasises the importance of knowledge, understanding and skills of learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities as the basis for a curriculum designed to support 21st century learning.

The Australian Curriculum describes a learning entitlement for each Australian student that provides a foundation for successful, lifelong learning and participation in the Australian community. It acknowledges that the needs and interests of students will vary, and that schools and teachers will plan from the curriculum in ways that respond to those needs and interests. The Australian Curriculum acknowledges the changing ways in which young people will learn and the challenges that will continue to shape their learning in the future.

The Australian Curriculum will eventually be developed for all learning areas and subjects set out in the *Melbourne Declaration*: initially for English, mathematics, science and history; followed by geography, languages, the arts, economics, business, civics and citizenship, health and physical education, and information and communication technology and design and technology.

The Australian Curriculum sets out what all young people should be taught through the specification of curriculum content and the learning expected at points in their schooling through the specification of achievement standards.

Each learning area or subject includes:

- a statement of rationale and a set of aims
- an overview of how the learning area is organised
- year level descriptions
- content descriptions (knowledge, understanding and skills) specifying what teachers are expected to teach
- content elaborations to provide additional clarity by way of illustrative examples only
- achievement standards that describe the quality of learning (the depth of understanding, extent of knowledge and sophistication of skill) expected of students at points in their schooling
- annotated student work samples that illustrate the achievement standard at each year level. As the Australian Curriculum is implemented, the available work samples will be enhanced in both volume and range of forms.
- a glossary to support consistent understanding of terms used

Increasingly, in a world where knowledge itself is constantly growing and evolving, students need to develop a set of skills, behaviours and dispositions, or general capabilities that apply across discipline content and equip them to be lifelong learners able to operate with confidence in a complex, information-rich, globalised world.

The Australian Curriculum includes a focus on seven general capabilities (literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology competence, critical and creative thinking, ethical behaviour, personal and social competence and intercultural understanding) and three cross-curriculum priorities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia and Sustainability). Continua of learning have been developed for each, to describe the relevant knowledge, understanding and skills at particular points of schooling. These have been embedded where relevant and appropriate in each learning area and can be viewed explicitly in the curriculum online.

The Australian Curriculum is published online. This provides maximum flexibility in how the curriculum can be accessed and organised. For example, the curriculum may be viewed by learning area, by multiple year levels, or by year level across learning areas, and may be downloaded and printed in those views.

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