

**Rationale**

The formal study of Auslan contributes to the overall intellectual and social enrichment of both first language (L1) and second language (L2) learners by providing:

- opportunities for engagement with the Deaf community and insight into its rich cultural heritage
- opportunities to develop intercultural capabilities, understanding and respect for others, appreciation of diversity and openness to different perspectives and experiences.

This curriculum provides direction for an integrated, inclusive and meaningful approach to language education in Auslan for both first and second language learners.

**Rationale for first language learners**

This curriculum meets the need of young deaf people to formally learn their own language, and it recognises the significance of Auslan in the linguistic landscape of Australia. It provides deaf children, and potentially hearing children of deaf parents, with access to education in and about their first language, playing an important part in the development of a strong sense of self-esteem and identity and contributing in crucial ways to overall learning and achievements. It enables learners to develop a wider recognition and understanding of their language, culture and identity, thus contributing to their psychological wellbeing as well as to their academic development.

**Rationale for second language learners**

Many deaf children today are educated in inclusive school settings, thus raising the profile of Auslan in the wider community. The presence of deaf students and interpreting practitioners in schools creates a need and offers opportunities for a wider range of peer-group communication partners, and not all interactions can or should be mediated by an interpreting practitioner. One of the key reasons for introducing Auslan in schools, therefore, is for humanistic purposes: to increase opportunities for interaction between deaf children and their hearing or hard of hearing peers, and to reduce barriers to communication. Through learning Auslan, L2 learners gain access to additional knowledge and understanding of the nature and purpose of human languages and of the use of a different language modality. In addition, from a vocational perspective, greater participation of deaf people in society in a diverse range of occupations and breadth of community spheres creates possibilities for future career options and personal fulfilment for L2 learners. In general educational terms, learning Auslan as a second language enables students to engage meaningfully with a different language and culture and to enhance understanding of their own language and culture. Such intercultural learning is essential in the increasingly diverse and changing contexts in which they live and will work.

**For all learners**

- broadens students' understanding that each language is an integrated, evolving system for the framing and communication of meaning; and encourages understanding of the role of language as an expression of cultural and personal identity and a shaper of perspectives
- contributes to the overall curriculum intent by providing distinctive real-life and intellectual opportunities for students to expand their engagement with the wider world and to reflect on the cultural and social assumptions that underpin their own world view and language use. Such awareness of different perspectives is an integral part of effective communication
- contributes to the development of critical thinking and the ability to adapt to change and equips students with learning strategies and study habits that are the foundation not only for lifelong learning but also for any subsequent language learning.

The opportunity to learn Auslan formally is becoming available in an increasing number of Australian schools, and the aim of this national curriculum is to make this learning opportunity accessible in a systematic manner to students around Australia. Language learning is life enhancing. This national curriculum offers all Australian students the opportunity to benefit from the social, cultural, intellectual and emotional development that will result from learning the unique and sophisticated visual-gestural language of the Australian Deaf community.

**Aims**

The Australian Curriculum: Languages – Auslan aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable students to:

- communicate in Auslan
- understand language, culture and learning and their relationship, and thereby develop an intercultural capability in communication
- understand themselves as communicators
- develop a knowledge and an understanding of the diversity of Deaf experience and the nature of identity.

These aims are interrelated and provide the basis for two organising strands for learning Auslan: Communicating and Understanding.

**Key Ideas****Language and culture**

The interrelationship of language, culture and learning provides the foundation for the Australian Curriculum: Languages.

In the languages learning area the focus is on both language and culture, as students learn to communicate meaningfully across linguistic and cultural systems, and different contexts. This process involves reflection and analysis, as students move between the new language being learnt and their own existing language(s). It is a reciprocal and dynamic process which develops language use within intercultural dimensions of learning experiences. It is not a 'one plus one' relationship between two languages and cultures, where each language and culture stay separate and self-contained. Comparison and referencing between (at least) two languages and cultures build understanding of how languages 'work', how they relate to each other and how language and culture shape and reflect experience; that is, the experience of language using and language learning. The experience of being in two worlds at once involves noticing, questioning and developing awareness of how language and culture shape identity.

**Structure**

Learner background and time-on-task are two major variables that influence language learning and they provide the basis for the structure of the Australian Curriculum: Languages. These variables are addressed through the specification of content and the description of achievement standards according to pathways and learning sequences respectively.

**Pathways**

In the Australian Curriculum: Languages, pathways for second language learners, background language learners and first language learners have been developed as appropriate to cater for the dominant group(s) of students learning each specific language within the current Australian context. For the majority of languages, one curriculum pathway has been developed for Years F–10, catering for the dominant cohort of learners for that language in the current Australian context. For Chinese, pathways have been developed for three learner groups: first language learners, background language learners and second language learners.

The Framework for Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages includes three learner pathways:

- first language learner pathway
- revival language learner pathway
- second language learner pathway.

**Sequences of learning**

The design of the Australian Curriculum: Languages takes account of different entry points into language learning across Foundation – Year 10, which reflects current practice in languages.

For the second language learner pathway and the background language learner pathway, there are two learning sequences:

- Foundation–Year 10 sequence
- Years 7–10 (Year 7 Entry) sequence.

For the first language learner pathway, there is one learning sequence:

- Years 7–10 (Year 7 Entry) sequence.

Content and achievement standards are described initially in a three-year band for Foundation–Year 2 followed by two-year bands of learning: Years 3–4; Years 5–6, Years 7–8 and Years 9–10.

The Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages is written in the bands Foundation – Year 2, Years 3–6 and Years 7–10. In the absence of pedagogical evidence across the country for all these languages, the broader band distinctions provide maximum local flexibility in curriculum development.

**Year 7 and 8 Achievement Standard**

By the end of Year 8, students interact to share ideas and interests and to offer opinions, using compound and complex sentences, for example by using lexical conjunctions as well as non-manual features (NMFs). They participate in discussions and debates, acknowledging others' opinions and developing and supporting arguments. They collaborate in activities that involve planning, project design and problem-solving, for example, G:WELL RIGHT-YEAH , BUT I WANT ADD COMMENT. They use evaluative language to reflect on learning activities and to provide feedback to others. They follow protocols for interacting with sign language interpreters in various contexts. Students locate, collate, summarise and analyse ideas and information from a variety of sources, such as interviews, documentaries or speeches, and they use such information in new forms. They use primary or secondary signed sources in their research, for example, when exploring significant events in Deaf history. They use specialised language to create texts such as vlogs, advertisements or research-based factual reports designed to convince or persuade others. They analyse elements of different imaginative texts such as poetry, performances, signed stories, skits and sketches, and explain how sign choice, NMFs and the use of different stylistic techniques combine to convey ideas and emotions. They create imaginative and expressive texts that draw from their experience as Auslan users and members of the Deaf community, including metaphorical iconicity to create particular effects and to engage interest. Students translate and interpret unfamiliar texts in Auslan or English and compare their own translations to those of their classmates, considering why there might be differences between them. They create bilingual texts to use in the wider school community. They describe how the concept and the experience of Deafhood and visual ways of being apply to themselves and others. They reflect on how their own ways of communicating may be interpreted when interacting with hearing people, and on their use of different communication strategies and behaviours, such as their use of gesture, facial expression and body language.

Students know that signs can be iconic in a number of ways, and identify iconic signs that represent a whole object or part of an object. They distinguish between character and observer space, classify verb types according to how they use space, and identify constructed action in a text. They explain the form and function of a range of clause types, including what NMFs are used, for example, questions, topicalisation, negation or conditionals. They identify all the ways a signer refers to the same referent throughout a text to create cohesion. They recognise that Auslan is constantly evolving and changing, for example, by identifying changes to Auslan that reflect changes in social relationships, community attitudes and changing technology. Students reflect on how all ways of language use are influenced by communities' world views and identities, for example by comparing the cultural concept of Deaf identity with the medical model of deafness.

**Content structure**

The content of the Australian Curriculum: Languages is organised through two interrelated strands which realise the three aims. The two strands are:

- Communicating: using language for communicative purposes in interpreting, creating and exchanging meaning
- Understanding: analysing language and culture as a resource for interpreting and creating meaning.

The strands reflect three important aspects of language learning:

- 1) communication
- 2) analysis of aspects of language and culture
- 3) reflection that involves
  - reflection on the experience of communicating
  - reflection on comparative dimensions of the languages available in students' repertoires (for example, the first language in relation to second language and self in relation to others).

## Year 7 and 8 Level Description

### The nature of the learners

The transition to secondary schooling involves social and academic demands that coincide with a period of maturational and physical change. Learners are adjusting to a new school culture with sharper divisions between curriculum areas. Learners in this pathway have had little or no experience with Auslan, but are learning it with the expectation that it will be their primary language in the future. They have a range of experience with other signed or spoken languages, or a home gesture system, but may not be fluent in any standard language, and may have associated cognitive challenges. A multilevel and differentiated approach to teaching and task design responding to this diversity of prior experience is necessary, including using as much visual support as possible.

Auslan is learnt in parallel with English literacy. Learners in this sequence and pathway have little experience of English and are learning English literacy simultaneously to Auslan. As they have no access to spoken English, this poses particular challenges. The learning of Auslan supports and enriches deaf students' learning of English.

### Auslan learning and use

Rich language input characterises the first stages of learning. Learners engage in a range of activities designed to immerse them in language scaffolded to their level of linguistic and cognitive development. They build vocabulary for thinking and talking about school and home, routines and social worlds. They interact in structured routines and activities with their peers, family members and as many fluent signing adults as possible. They are supported to use Auslan for different language functions, such as asking and responding to questions, expressing wishes, responding to directions, and taking turns in games and simple shared learning activities. Learners may initially need time to watch Auslan without pressure to respond, until they feel comfortable with the situation and context. When they produce Auslan, they use well-known phrases to participate in familiar routines and structured conversations. Over this band, they continue to develop confidence in communicating about the here and now, and gradually begin to talk about the past or future and non-present entities or events.

### Contexts of interaction

Learners at this level are given as much opportunity as possible to interact with their peers, the teaching team and members of the Deaf community for additional enrichment and authentication of their language learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) resources provide extra access to Auslan and to the cultural experience of deafness. A key expectation in the L1 pathway is that students will have opportunities to interact with a variety of native or near-native signing models. The familiarity and routine dimension of the classroom context provide scaffolding and opportunities for language practice and experimentation. Language development and use are incorporated into structured collaborative and interactive learning experiences, games and activities.

### Texts and resources

Learners engage with a variety of signed texts, live and recorded. They watch the teacher signing, share ideas and join in activities, stories and conversational exchanges. They become familiar with ways of recording Auslan, either through film, photos of signs, line drawings of signs or simple symbols. An important source of texts is the Deaf community and older members of it.

### Features of Auslan use

Learners in Years 7–8 can identify the handshape movement and location of signs. Depending on their access to home-sign systems, they make use of varying levels of handling or SASS depicting signs, gradually learning the conventions of Auslan. They learn to use entity depicting signs to discuss movement and location, decreasing their signing space to the conventional area. Learners at this stage use simple clause structures, modifying some verbs for present referents, and begin to understand and ask basic questions.

### Level of support

The early stage of language learning is supported by extensive use of concrete materials and resources, gestures and body language. If the student has existing idiosyncratic gestures or home signs the teacher can access, these are used to scaffold their learning of Auslan. Learning is also supported through the provision of experiences that are challenging but achievable with appropriate scaffolding and support. This involves modelling, monitoring and moderating by the teacher; provision of multiple and varied sources of input; opportunities for revisiting, recycling and reviewing; and continuous cueing, feedback, response and encouragement. Use of recounting and retelling assists in establishing early language skills based on real-life experiences. The teacher provides implicit and explicit modelling and scaffolding in relation to meaningful language use in a range of contexts.

### The role of English

Auslan is the language of all classroom interactions, routines and activities. Because these students do not have any English, they cannot make comparisons between English and Auslan. Research work in English is not an option for these learners. The students' learning is focused primarily on developing Auslan capabilities as intensively as possible with a view to progressing to a state of communicative competence as soon as possible.

## Year 7 and 8 Content Descriptions

Communicating		Understanding
<p><b>Socialising</b> Initiate and sustain interactions to share ideas and interests, report on experiences, offer opinions and connect with events in their school and local community. [Key concepts: ideas, interests, community, issues; Key processes: comparing, contrasting, discussing, expressing]</p> <p>Engage in collaborative activities that involve planning, project design, problem-solving and evaluation of events or activities. [Key concepts: project design, procedure, direction; Key processes: creating, showcasing, reporting, evaluating]</p> <p>Use interactions to support discussion and debate and to demonstrate culturally appropriate behaviours in and beyond the classroom. [Key concepts: protocol, debate, role, feedback; Key processes: debating, clarifying, eliciting, evaluating]</p> <p><b>Informing</b> Investigate and synthesise information collected from a range of perspectives and sources, identifying how culture and context affect how information is presented. [Key concepts: perspective, culture, context, source, representation; Key processes: researching, comparing, critically reviewing, profiling, summarising]</p> <p>Exchange/provide information, opinions and experiences in either formal or informal contexts. [Key concepts: debate, persuasive text, perspective, critical review; Key processes: summarising, comparing, evaluating]</p>	<p><b>Creating</b> Interpret a range of texts that involve the creative expression of emotions or ideas and the imaginative representation of people, events and cultural experiences. [Key concepts: imagination, representation, characterisation, artistic practice, Deaf experience; Key processes: paraphrasing, evaluating, exploring, analysing, profiling, shadowing]</p> <p>Create imaginative and expressive texts that draw from their experience as Auslan users and members of the Deaf community and which support the experience of younger learners. [Key concepts: Deaf experience, emotional expression, signed theatre, signed space; Key processes: composing, performing, creating, re-creating]</p> <p><b>Translating</b> Translate and interpret unfamiliar texts in Auslan or English and compare their translation to those of their classmates, considering why there might be differences in interpretation and how language reflects elements of culture and experience. [Key concepts: equivalence, representation, meaning, interpretation; Key processes: translating, interpreting, creating, paraphrasing, summarising, shadowing, comparing, explaining, role-playing]</p> <p>Create bilingual texts to use in the wider school community, identifying words/signs or expressions that carry specific cultural meaning in either Auslan or English. [Key concepts: equivalence, interpretation; Key processes: creating, captioning, transcribing]</p> <p><b>Identity</b> Explore the relationship between identity, community and visual ways of being and the nature and significance of relationship between people, culture and place/space. [Key concepts: identity, relationship, Deafhood, place, space, responsibility, ownership, Deaf gain, story, guidance; Key processes: comparing, describing, exploring, discussing, investigating]</p> <p><b>Reflecting</b> Participate in and reflect on intercultural interactions and experiences, for example by considering and comparing their responses and strategies when engaging with hearing people. [Key concepts: intercultural experience, ways of knowing and being, discrimination; Key processes: comparing, analysing, explaining, reflecting, exploring]</p>	<p><b>Systems of Language</b> Investigate and explain why signs are structured as they are, including with respect to iconicity, and compare transcription of Auslan video annotation software with glosses. [Key concepts: levels and types of iconicity, transcription; Key processes: identifying, recognising, glossing, annotating]</p> <p>Distinguish between character and observer space, categorise different verb types and identify constructed action in a text. [Key concepts: fully- or partly-lexical signs, character and observer space, depicting signs; Key processes: recognising, distinguishing, classifying, observing]</p> <p>Understand that utterances in Auslan can consist of a mix of gestural and signed components, and that non-manual features are often used to link clauses into equal or unequal relationships. [Key concepts: clause types, sign order, conjunctions; Key processes: recognising, observing, analysing]</p> <p>Explain the structure and organisation of particular types of texts, such as conversations or information reports, and identify language features used by signers to meet specific purposes and to create cohesion. [Key concepts: grammar, choice, coherence; Key processes: identifying, applying, analysing]</p> <p><b>Language variation and change</b> Understand that Auslan has evolved and developed through different periods of influence and cultural and societal change. [Key concepts: change, evolution, contact, technology; Key processes: identifying, recognising, researching]</p> <p><b>Language awareness</b> Understand historical and contemporary factors that impact on awareness, support and use of Auslan and its vitality in contemporary Australia, comparing it with that of other signed languages around the world. [Key concepts: influence, transmission, vitality, evolution, endangerment; Key processes: investigating, exploring, describing, comparing, analysing, reflecting]</p> <p><b>Role of language and culture</b> Reflect on how language use is influenced by communities' world views and sense of identity and on how language and culture influence each other. [Key concepts: culture, knowledge, value, transmission; Key processes: explaining, reflecting, exploring, analysing, comparing]</p>