

**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 3 and 4 Achievement Standard**

By the end of Year 4, students participate in classroom routines and structured interactions with teachers and peers. They communicate about daily routines, interests and pastimes; recount personal experiences and classroom events; and describe people, experiences or activities using simple depicting signs, such as DS:run-around-oval THEN DS:sit-in-circle. They express preferences, follow directions and ask for clarification or help. They play games that involve making choices, exchanging information and negotiating turn-taking. They use non-manual features to indicate understanding, interest or lack of interest. They use culturally appropriate protocols, such as gaining attention by waving, tapping or pointing to alert third parties and maintain eye contact when communicating, for example PRO2 MEAN or ... RIGHT PRO1? They identify, summarise/paraphrase and retell key points of information in signed texts such as announcements, directions for a game or presentations by visitors, for example PRO1 FIRST YOUR-TURN. They recount in correct sequence the main points of an event or favourite elements of a signed story, using modified indicating verbs, such as POSS1 FAVOURITE PART PRO3 TAKE MONEY THEN RUN-that direction. They present routine class information, such as weather reports or daily schedules, using visual prompts and signed descriptions. They create their own simple imaginative texts and retell wordless animations using familiar signs, gestures, modelled language and visual supports. They translate high-frequency signs/words and expressions in simple texts. They reflect on their own cultural identity and ways of communicating in light of their experience of learning Auslan.

Students compare fingerspelling with written English, noticing that it can be used for whole words or for parts of words. They recognise that there are signs that have no single English word equivalent, and know that signs can be displaced in space for different purposes, such as to show locations or different participants in a verb. They know that signing involves telling, depicting or enacting. They recognise variation in how Auslan is used, for example by recognising regional dialects and differences in signing space. They identify different ways Deaf community members communicate with each other and with members of the wider hearing community, for example, face to face, via technology, social media and interpreters. They know that culture is closely related to language and to identity and involves both visible and invisible elements.

**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 3 and 4 Level Description

#### The nature of the learners

Learners at this level are developing their cognitive and social capabilities and their communicative repertoire in the language, as well as becoming increasingly aware of their social worlds and their membership of various groups, including their Auslan class. They are more independent and less egocentric, enjoying both competitive and cooperative activities. They are able to conceptualise and reason, and have better memory and focus. They benefit from varied, activity-based learning that builds on their interests and capabilities and makes connections with other areas of learning.

#### Auslan learning and use

Learners in this band engage in a range of activities in Auslan and share ideas about the language. They respond to teacher-generated questions about texts, participate in games and give brief presentations about topics such as family, pets, or a favourite game or object. They continue to build vocabulary for thinking and talking about school topics. The language used in routine activities is re-used and reinforced from lesson to lesson in different situations, making connections between what has been learnt and what is to be learnt. Learners follow instructions, watch stories and participate in creating short texts on topics relevant to their interests and enjoyment, such as family, pets, favourite activities or food. They recount experiences, interact with visitors, follow directions, negotiate roles in a group and retell important information.

#### Contexts of interaction

Learning occurs largely through interaction with peers and the teaching team in the language classroom and the broader school environment, with some sharing of their learning at home. They also have some access to the wider Deaf community and resources through virtual and digital technology. The familiarity and routine dimension of the classroom context provide scaffolding and opportunities for language practice and experimentation.

#### Texts and resources

Learners typically interact with teacher-generated materials, games and songs, and materials produced for learning Auslan, such as computer games or online videos. They may be exposed to texts developed for deaf children as a way of developing their cultural awareness.

#### Features of Auslan use

Learners at this stage are increasingly aware of differences between Auslan and English. They are developing a wide range of vocabulary and can use simple clause structures to generate their own ideas in structured tasks. They use depicting signs to talk about simple movements and shapes, and with support can represent the viewpoint of a single participant through constructed action. They begin modifying more indicating verbs for present referents and use specific time marking incorporating numerals in their recounts. They are learning to use NMFs to mark manner on verbs or to express negation. Students at this level explore cultural constructs and practices and the language associated with these. Metalinguistically, learners can describe differences between how to show or tell about an event, understand that adverbs modify verbs and that clauses contain what happened, who was involved and surrounding circumstances.

#### Level of support

The primary support for learners is the Auslan teacher, who provides instruction, explanation, examples, repetition, reinforcement and feedback. Learners create their own texts based on modelled language and teacher guidance. Form-focused activities, particularly those increasing metalinguistic awareness, build students' grammatical knowledge and support the development of accuracy and control in Auslan. Tasks and activities are carefully scaffolded and resourced with supports such as pictures, flashcards, gestures, objects and multimedia. Discussion supports learning and develops learners' conceptual frame for talking about systems of language and culture.

#### The role of English

Learners use Auslan for classroom routines and structured learning tasks, and for watching texts. They are supported by the teacher to notice and discuss aspects of Auslan and Deaf culture, and to compare Auslan to other known languages and cultures. English is used for class discussions when noticing, comparing and reflecting on both English and Auslan, as well as for accessing some printed material related to topics in the Understanding strand.

### Year 3 and 4 Content Descriptions

#### Communicating

##### Socialising

Communicate with each other and with teachers about aspects of their personal worlds, daily routines, preferences and pastimes.

[Key concepts: routines, interests, personal worlds; Key processes: recounting, describing, expressing preferences]

Participate in shared learning activities that involve planning, transacting and problem-solving, using simple signed statements, questions and directions.

[Key concepts: task, role, responsibility, clarification, encouragement; Key processes: collaborating, following directions, negotiating, asking for help]

Respond to questions, directions and requests, using non-manual features and simple questions and statements to ask for help, to indicate understanding or agreement and to negotiate turn-taking.

[Key concepts: instruction, clarification, turn-taking, back-channel, attention, eye contact; Key processes: responding, asking for help, turn-taking, using back-channel, gaining attention]

##### Informing

Organise and summarise key points of information obtained from different types of Auslan texts.

[Key concepts: sequence, information, format; Key processes: organising, summarising, identifying, surveying, retelling, recording]

Present information associated with their home, school and community activities and routines, using signed descriptions and visual prompts.

[Key concepts: recount, description, sequence; Key processes: presenting, demonstrating, recounting]

##### Creating

Engage with different types of imaginative texts, identifying favourite elements, characters and events and responding through modelled signing, actions and drawing.

[Key concepts: story, character, response; Key processes: responding, comparing, retelling, drawing]

Create simple texts that demonstrate imagination and playfulness, using familiar signs, gestures, modelled language and visual supports.

[Key concepts: play, imagination, character; Key processes: creating, performing, retelling]

##### Translating

Translate high-frequency signs/words and expressions in simple texts such as repeated lines in a story, noticing which ones are difficult to interpret.

[Key concepts: similarity, difference, meaning; Key processes: matching, noticing, identifying, translating]

Create bilingual versions of texts such as English captioned recordings of Auslan phrases.

[Key concepts: meaning, representation; Key processes: creating]

##### Identity

Consider how their ways of communicating and responding to each other shape and reflect their sense of identity.

[Key concepts: identity, similarity, difference, community, membership, communication; Key processes: observing, identifying, creating, noticing, discussing, comparing]

##### Reflecting

Describe ways in which communicating and behaving when using Auslan are similar to or different from their use of their own language(s) and forms of cultural expression.

[Key concepts: language, culture, values, similarity, difference, communication; Key processes: noticing, comparing, describing, explaining, questioning, reflecting]

#### Understanding

##### Systems of Language

Identify the movement and location of different signs and notice how they combine with handshape to form signs, and understand that Auslan can be videoed and transcribed to assist learning.

[Key concepts: orientation, hand dominance, iconicity, non-manual features, recording language; Key processes: identifying, recognising, comparing]

Understand how space is used in Auslan to show who is involved in an event through the meaningful location of nouns and verbs, the use of depicting signs and enacting.

[Key concepts: signing space, numeral incorporation, verb modification; Key processes: recognising, discussing, comparing]

Understand that clauses can be enriched through the use of adjectives and adverbs (when, where, how), often produced with non-manual features.

[Key concepts: verb types, adverbs, clause structure, questions; Key processes: recognising, distinguishing, observing]

Understand how signers make different language choices in different types of texts and compare this with English versions of text types, and notice how texts build cohesion.

[Key concepts: textual features, similarity, difference, cohesion; Key processes: recognising, discussing, comparing]

##### Language variation and change

Recognise that there is variation in Auslan use, for example in different locations or physical environments.

[Key concepts: variation, adaptation; Key processes: identifying, recognising, exploring, considering]

##### Language Awareness

Develop awareness of the social and cultural nature and context of Auslan and other sign languages, of their different modes of expression and of the related issue of language vitality.

[Key concepts: communication, language vitality, culture, accessibility; Key processes: identifying, describing, recognising]

##### Role of language and culture

Explore connections between identity and cultural values and beliefs and the expression of these connections in Auslan.

[Key concepts: language, culture, identity, symbol; Key processes: exploring, understanding, noticing, recognising, questioning, making connections]