

**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.

**Year 7 and 8 Achievement Standard**

By the end of Year 8, students use Auslan to interact and to exchange information, experiences, interests and opinions with teachers, peers and others. They initiate and maintain conversations and use strategies such as fingerspelling to replace unknown signs to support continued interaction, such as PRO2 MEAN [FINGERSPELL]? They engage in different processes of collaborative learning, including planning, negotiating, and problem-solving, using familiar and some spontaneous language, for example PRO1 AGREE-NOT, PRO1 THINK DIFFERENT. Students participate in class discussions, explaining and clarifying positions, asking follow-up questions, using non-manual features (NMFs) for topicalisation or negation. They use appropriate protocols to join or leave conversations, for example, waiting for eye gaze or for the signer to finish, not asking for a full recount when arriving mid-conversation, and providing context for a new participant joining a conversation. Students locate, interpret and analyse information from a variety of texts, such as signed announcements, interviews or media reports, using context and familiar language to work out unfamiliar meaning. They demonstrate understanding of different types of signed texts by paraphrasing, summarising and explaining main ideas, key themes or sequences of events. They interpret different types of creative and imaginative texts, such as Deaf performances or expressive art forms, describing and comparing their responses. They plan, draft and present informative and imaginative texts, linking and sequencing ideas using connectives, such as BUT, WHEN or WELL, and strategies such as repetition, stress and pausing for emphasis. They create bilingual texts to use in the wider school community, for example by captioning short stories, poems or interviews with members of the Deaf community. Students reflect on how their own ways of communicating may be interpreted when interacting with deaf people; and they modify elements of their behaviour such as eye contact, facial expression or body language as appropriate.

Students identify and describe the different types of NMFs, and understand their function and how they interact with clause type. They identify iconic signs and discuss how these match their referents, such as COMPUTER-MOUSE. They understand how handshape and movement represent different things in each type of depicting sign (DS). They identify and categorise instances of signers using spatial modifications to signs and know that signs can be iconic in a number of ways. They analyse clauses to see where signers create composite utterances with elements of constructed action (CA), DSs, points and fully-lexical signs in the same utterance. 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. They understand that the most unifying factor of the Deaf community is the use of Auslan. 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.

**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.

**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. There is a need for continuity through change in relation to their language learning. Students in this pathway are continuing to study Auslan, bringing with them a capability to communicate, with some assistance, about their immediate world and the Deaf community. They have experience in analysing the major features of the language system and in considering intercultural exchanges, including their role in these. However, learners at this level may find themselves in classes that include learners with a range of previous experience with Auslan and Deaf culture. A multilevel and differentiated approach to teaching and task design responds to this diversity of prior experience.

At this level, students bring a range of learning strategies to their language learning. They are increasingly aware of the world beyond their own and are engaging with broader issues of youth and society, land and environment, education and identity, while establishing a balance between increasing personal independence and social responsibilities. They are considering their future pathways and choices, including how Auslan might be part of these.

### Auslan learning and use

Learners interact using Auslan in classroom routines and communicative tasks. They use Auslan to compare and contrast, sign instructions, problem-solve, make announcements, persuade, and recount experiences in increasing detail. They are able to express their feelings and emotions creatively in Auslan.

### Contexts of interaction

The primary context for learning remains the Auslan class; however, there may be opportunities for interacting with deaf students from other schools and with other learners of Auslan, for example through technology and sister-school relationships. Learners may be exposed to Auslan signers from the Deaf community through visiting speakers, media and community events.

### Texts and resources

Learners engage with a range of increasingly complex live and digital signed texts designed for learning Auslan in school. Authentic texts created for Deaf people, such as websites, provide extra opportunities to extend understanding of language and culture. Texts come from a range of domains or genres, such as community announcements, vlogs and stories, and serve a variety of purposes, such as informative, transactional, communicative, imaginative and expressive. The Deaf community is the most important resource for learning because it is the origin of most of the texts and communicative situations engaged with by learners.

### Features of Auslan use

Learners are extending their grammatical knowledge, such as how language structures and features are used in texts. They are using more elaborate sentence structures, including conjoining clauses, and are increasingly making their texts cohesive by setting up and maintaining referents in signing space. Learners are exploring non-manual features (NMFs) and their relationship with clause types, and are beginning to use constructed action to represent multiple participants in a text. They are increasingly aware of connections between language and culture, comparing them to concepts in their own language and culture. They are learning to reflect on their own language and culture and on how identity impacts on intercultural experiences.

### Level of support

Particular support is required at this stage of learning to manage the transition to secondary schooling and to encourage continued engagement with language learning. Opportunities to review and consolidate prior learning are balanced against provision of engaging and relevant new experiences and tasks that are more challenging. Learners require modelled language use and explicit instruction in grammatical knowledge, with comparison between English and Auslan. They need support in using dictionaries, particularly in determining base signs and choosing appropriate meanings for the context. Learners continue to access visual glossaries, charts and examples to support their receptive and productive language use. The teacher continues to provide implicit and explicit modelling and scaffolding in relation to meaningful language use in a range of contexts, and explicit instruction and explanation in relation to language structures, grammatical functions, vocabulary and abstract cultural concepts. Learners at this level are encouraged to self-monitor, for example, by keeping records of feedback and through peer support, and to self-review and adjust language in response to their experiences in different contexts.

### The role of English

Auslan is used for classroom interaction, language learning tasks and experiences, and, with support, reflection on learning. Auslan may also be used for learning new content drawn from other learning areas. English is used for analysis, comparison and reflection in relation to abstract concepts and more substantive discussion. English may also be used to research cultural issues where a source text is not available in Auslan. Learners continue to develop a metalanguage for thinking and talking about language, culture, identity and about the experience of learning and using Auslan.

## Year 7 and 8 Content Descriptions

### Communicating

#### Socialising

Interact appropriately with people in different contexts, sharing experiences, interests and opinions about current events or school and community experience.

[Key concepts: protocol, turn-taking, interaction; Key processes: socialising, comparing, turn-taking, clarifying]

Engage in different processes of collaborative learning, including planning, problem-solving, task completion and evaluation.

[Key concepts: design, communication, reflection; Key processes: collaborating, designing, creating, presenting, problem-solving, reflecting]

Participate in extended interactions by explaining and clarifying answers, responding to others' contributions, asking follow-up questions and observing protocols in and beyond the classroom.

[Key concepts: interaction, signing space, discussion, context, environment, protocols; Key processes: responding, commenting, adjusting, contextualising]

#### Informing

Collate and analyse information accessed through a variety of signed texts to present an overview or develop a position on issues or interests.

[Key concepts: perspective, representation; Key processes: collating, analysing, researching, interviewing, evaluating, surveying]

Present information on different events or experiences to inform, report, promote, instruct or invite action.

[Key concepts: action, experience; Key processes: instructing, reporting, persuading, inviting]

#### Creating

Interpret different types of texts that involve the expression of feelings or experiences and the representation of imagined people, places and scenarios, sharing and comparing their responses to different elements.

[Key concepts: expression, manner, metaphorical iconicity; Key processes: comparing, evaluating, describing, exploring, profiling]

Create and present entertaining individual or collaborative texts that reflect real or imagined people, places or experiences.

[Key concepts: improvisation, diorama, role-play, theme; Key processes: creating, improvising, collaborating, re-creating, role-playing]

#### Translating

Translate and interpret less familiar short texts and compare their translations 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, meaning, interpretation, culture, ethics; Key processes: translating, interpreting, comparing, paraphrasing, summarising]

Create bilingual texts to use in the wider school community, identifying words/signs or expressions that carry specific cultural meaning in either language.

[Key concepts: equivalence, bilingualism; Key processes: captioning, creating]

#### Identity

Consider their own and each other's cultural experiences and ways of expressing identity and reflect on the role of Auslan in building and expressing identity for Deaf people.

[Key concepts: identity, perspective, belonging, wellbeing; Key processes: reflecting, comparing, describing, discussing, investigating, analysing]

#### Reflecting

Reflect on their intercultural interactions and experiences, for example by considering their responses when engaging with Auslan users or digital resources, and on how these responses reflect their own languages and cultures.

[Key concepts: intercultural experience, ways of knowing and being, discrimination; Key processes: comparing, analysing, explaining, reflecting, exploring]

### Understanding

#### Systems of Language

Identify different types of non-manual features and characteristics of signs, including iconicity, and explore the use of software to transcribe and annotate signed texts.

[Key concepts: iconicity, annotation, transcription; Key processes: identifying, classifying, glossing, annotating, transcribing]

Develop knowledge of additional elements of the Auslan grammatical system, analysing indicating verbs, depicting signs and constructed action.

[Key concepts: grammatical use of space, depicting signs; Key processes: understanding, distinguishing, analysing]

Understand and control additional elements of Auslan grammar, such as the use of non-manual features for negation or conditional forms, and understand how signers use constructed action and depicting signs in composite utterances.

[Key concepts: clause types and their NMFs, composite utterances; Key processes: recognising, analysing]

Expand understanding of grammatical features and cohesive devices used in a range of personal, informative and imaginative texts designed to suit different audiences, contexts and purposes.

[Key concepts: text purpose, choice, coherence; Key processes: identifying, applying, analysing]

#### Language variation and change

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]

#### Language awareness

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 evolution, endangerment; Key processes: researching, investigating, exploring, describing, analysing, comparing]

#### Role of language and culture

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]