

Rationale

Through learning languages, students acquire:

- communication skills in the language being learnt
- an intercultural capability, and an understanding of the role of language and culture in communication
- a capability for reflection on language use and language learning.

Language learning provides the opportunity for students to engage with the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world and its peoples, to reflect on their understanding of experience in various aspects of social life, and on their own participation and ways of being in the world.

Learning languages broadens students' horizons in relation to the personal, social, cultural and employment opportunities that an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world presents. The interdependence of countries and communities means people in all spheres of life are required to negotiate experiences and meanings across languages and cultures. Despite its status as a world language, a capability in English only is no longer sufficient. A bilingual or plurilingual capability is the norm in most parts of the world.

Learning languages:

- extends the capability to communicate and extends literacy repertoires
- strengthens understanding of the nature of language, of culture, and of the processes of communication
- develops intercultural capability
- develops understanding of and respect for diversity and difference, and an openness to different experiences and perspectives
- develops understanding of how culture shapes worldviews and extends learners' understanding of themselves, their own heritage, values, culture and identity
- strengthens intellectual, analytical and reflective capabilities, and enhances creative and critical thinking.

Learning languages also contributes to strengthening the community's social, economic and international development capabilities. Language capabilities represent linguistic and cultural resources through which the community can engage socially, culturally and economically, in domains which include business, trade, science, law, education, tourism, diplomacy, international relations, health and communications.

Learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages meets the needs and rights of young people to learn their own languages and recognises their significance in the language ecology of Australia. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, learning their own languages is crucial to overall learning and achievements, to developing a sense of identity and recognition and understanding of language, culture, Country and Place. For all students, learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages provides a distinctive means of understanding the country in which they live, including the relationship between land, the environment and people. The ongoing and necessary reclamation and revitalisation of these languages also contribute to reconciliation.

Year 3 and 4 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 4, students use spoken and written Chinese to initiate interactions and to participate in short exchanges, for example, 你晚饭吃什么?, 我学汉语和英语, 站起来, 大家听老师说. They organise and convey factual information and share experiences in formal and informal situations, making appropriate choices of characters, words and pronunciation. They use demonstratives such as 这、那、那些 with measure words and verbs to indicate agreement (对、好的) and preferences (要、想、喜欢). They respond to and create short imaginative, informative and persuasive texts for familiar audiences and identified purposes. Students select from known speech patterns to meet routine, procedural and informal conversational needs.

Students know that Pinyin represents spoken language, and map Pinyin against their own speech. They distinguish between the contexts in which tones are expressed and those in which they are not. They identify features of the Chinese writing system, including the range of strokes and their sequences in character writing; and the relationship between components and sound and meaning. Students identify ways of structuring ideas in sentences, including the role of correct sequencing of time and place. They describe features of Chinese language and culture, and compare how ideas are conveyed across languages and cultures.

Aims

The Australian Curriculum: Languages aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure students:

- communicate in the target language
- understand language, culture, and learning and their relationship, and thereby develop an intercultural capability in communication
- understand themselves as communicators.

These three aims are interrelated and provide the basis for the two organising strands: Communicating and Understanding. The three aims are common to all languages.

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 3 and 4 Level Description**The nature of the learners**

Learners explore how they use more than one language in their daily lives, and use Chinese in relation to their personal world, countries where Chinese is spoken and the world of imagination.

Chinese language learning and use

Students engage with Chinese language through speaking, listening, reading, viewing and writing. They understand more words than they can say or write, and use this knowledge to attempt to say and spell unfamiliar words. Learners use Chinese to participate in action-related talk and to complete tasks. The focus of these activities is still on connecting their background oracy with their literacy.

Contexts of interaction

At this level, students are likely to focus on both formal and informal exchanges in familiar situations with familiar audiences, such as in a range of face-to-face and online/virtual environments where they are able to identify a range of responses. Likely contexts for interaction are situated within everyday educational experiences as well as students' personal, family and social environments. In these contexts they have opportunities to notice that there are similarities and differences in the ways people communicate both within and across cultural groups.

Texts and resources

Students are exposed to a wide range of voices and settings where Chinese is used, including some extended passages in written and oral form. Students are exposed to culturally valued texts, including traditional oral texts, fables, stories, songs and picture books. They encounter various types of print and digital texts, simple chapter books, rhyming verse, poetry, nonfiction, film, multimodal texts and dramatic performances.

Features of Chinese language use

Oral language use draws on topics and concepts encountered in other learning areas, building students' capacity to describe and explore these in Chinese. Students use Chinese to share everyday experiences with each other. They develop literacy skills by beginning to read fables and legends and write stories and recounts. Pinyin is used as a tool to develop students' pronunciation and to assist their understanding of the nature of the spoken language. Students begin to develop orthographic and morphological awareness by exploring the relationship between characters and morphemes.

Level of support

The teacher explores and enhances students' understanding of the similarities and differences between Chinese and English and supports their development of Chinese literacy and oracy. Vocabulary lists and model texts support literacy development.

The role of English

English is used for discussion, reflection and explanation to assist the continued development of learners' knowledge base and intercultural capability.

Year 3 and 4 Content Descriptions

Communicating		Understanding
<p>Socialising Interact and socialise with peers and teachers to exchange thoughts and feelings about home routines, leisure activities and community events. [Key concepts: recreation, routine, place; Key processes: discussing, sharing, transacting]</p> <p>Collaborate in and make decisions about group activities and learning experiences in familiar contexts. [Key concept: collaboration, public life ; Key processes: interpreting, exchanging]</p> <p>Informing Gather and organise factual information from familiar sources about countries and places. [Key concepts: information, fact; Key processes: obtaining, processing]</p> <p>Convey key points of information to familiar audiences. [Key concepts: information, significance; Key process: obtaining]</p>	<p>Creating Respond to simple fables and legends through discussion of characters and events. [Key concepts: morality; Key processes: creating, responding]</p> <p>Create short personal narratives and performances of poetry, song, dance or drama which reflect the culture and traditions of the Chinese community. [Key concepts: imagination, point of view; Key processes: responding, expressing]</p> <p>Translating Identify common spoken Chinese expressions and discuss examples of actions, words and phrases that do not readily translate into English. [Key concepts: equivalence, idiom; Key processes: translating, identifying, discussing]</p> <p>Translate simple English texts into Chinese and vice versa, using strategies for building vocabulary and interpreting intended meaning of words in English and Chinese. [Key concepts: morphology, bilingualism; Key processes: identifying, translating, interpreting]</p> <p>Reflecting Reflect on their reactions and responses to others when participating in learning and cultural experiences in Chinese and Australian contexts. [Key concepts: identity, place; Key processes: responding, identifying]</p>	<p>Systems of Language Recognise the tonal features of Chinese in own speech, and understand when and why some tones are not expressed in some contexts and how syllables are decoded from and encoded into Pinyin.</p> <p>Identify the form, composition and spacing within characters, relating components and their positions to their meaning and sound.</p> <p>Develop ways to structure sentences in Chinese to elaborate own ideas.</p> <p>Recognise similarities and differences in the structure of spoken and written texts that have the same purpose.</p> <p>Language variation and change Recognise how the context of interactions influences language choices.</p> <p>Explore diversity in dialects and in contexts in which Chinese is used in Australian communities.</p> <p>Role of language and culture Explore how the Chinese language represents cultural meanings in specific ways.</p>