

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 7 and 8 (Year 7 Entry) Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 8, students use spoken and written Chinese to interact in a range of familiar contexts. They respond to instructions, questions and directions. They use known phrases to exchange personal information (for example, 我叫...; 我的爸爸是澳大利亚人), seek clarification (for example, 对不起, 我听不懂, 你说什么?), and transact and make arrangements, for example, 你要来我家吗? They use the question particle 吗 and familiar question words (什么, 谁, 哪儿, 几). Students approximate tone, intonation and rhythm but meaning remains clear. They use gesture and some formulaic expressions to support oral interaction. They employ learnt vocabulary to express personal insights and compare experiences on topics of personal interest and significance. They connect ideas using basic cohesive devices (for example, 和, 可是, 所以), express opinions using 喜欢 and 觉得, and give reasons using 因为. In writing, students organise their ideas using time expressions and phrases which mark sequence, for example, 第一, 第二... They apply 不 and 没有 in familiar phrases. They respond to and create simple informative and imaginative texts for known audiences and purposes. They use a range of verbs, including verbs of identification and existence such as 是, and a range of action verbs to describe interests and events, for example, 踢足球, 打乒乓球, 听音乐. They access and organise information from a range of spoken, audiovisual and printed texts. Students use simple sentences and paragraphs, and produce simple descriptions using intensifiers such as 很, 非常, 最. They reflect on their interactions when using and learning languages.

Students are aware of the key features of the Chinese writing system and its differences to the English writing system. They recognise the function of tone-syllables and Pinyin. They explain the word order of Chinese sentences and the layout and construction of simple familiar Chinese texts in comparison to their English equivalents. They recognise and describe diversity within the Chinese spoken and written language, and consider the influence of culture on everyday communication, for example, concepts such as respect, politeness and the importance of family. They are aware that literal translation between languages is not always possible, and that aspects of interpretation and translation are affected by context, culture, and intercultural experience.

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).

Strands and sub-strands

A set of sub-strands has been identified within each strand, which reflects dimensions of language use and the related content to be taught and learned. The strands and sub-strands do not operate in isolation but are integrated in relation to language use for different purposes in different contexts. The relative contribution of each sub-strand differs for described languages, pathways and bands of learning. The sub-strands are further differentiated according to a set of 'threads' that support the internal organisation of content in each sub-strand. These 'threads' are designed to capture (1) range and variety in the scope of learning and (2) a means for expressing the progression of content across the learning sequences.

Year 7 and 8 (Year 7 Entry) Level Description**The nature of the learners**

Students are beginning their study of Chinese and typically have had little prior exposure to the language and associated cultures. Many will have learnt an additional language in primary school, some have proficiency in different home languages and bring existing language learning strategies and intercultural awareness to the new experience of learning Chinese. Students' textual knowledge developed through English literacy learning supports their ability to access similar text types in Chinese. Skills in analysing, comparing and reflecting on language and culture in both languages are mutually supportive. Students may need encouragement to take risks in learning a new language at this stage of social development and to consider issues of how the experience impacts on their sense of 'norms' associated with their first language and culture.

Chinese language learning and use

The systems of spoken and written language in Chinese are distinct. They are also quite distinct from the English language system. Because of the role of character learning and its impact on reading and writing, learners' spoken language use is more advanced than their written language use; therefore, students will be immersed in the sights and sounds of Chinese. They develop oral language through active listening, observing interactions between native speakers, and using the spoken language for purposes such as socialising, transacting and getting things done, sharing information and engaging in imaginative performance. They are likely to understand more words than they can say or write. They use Pinyin as a resource to support learning, prepare drafts of oral and written texts, and learn new oral vocabulary.

Contexts of interaction

Likely contexts for interaction are familiar classroom routines and structured and scaffolded settings. Students engage with resources and materials, and interact and exchange information and ideas with the teacher and peers.

Texts and resources

Students listen to, read, view and interact with a variety of short modified informative, imaginative and persuasive Chinese texts, including texts that are valued within Chinese culture and community. Texts written in characters may include a Pinyin glossary or character/vocabulary lists as appropriate.

Features of Chinese language use

Learning is conceptual and reflective as students develop their ability to share ideas about language and culture systems and develop their skills in mediating between languages and cultures. Learning and use focus on active exploration of the Chinese language system, which students draw upon to communicate their own ideas and engage in collaborative decision making and action.

Level of support

Correct language use is continuously modelled by the teacher. Students also utilise a range of resources, including online support materials, as well as dictionaries, character lists and glossaries.

The role of English

English is used when appropriate to allow for explanation and discussion and to reflect on students' experiences in Chinese, comparing their everyday communication and experiences to those observed in Chinese language communities.

Year 7 and 8 (Year 7 Entry) Content Descriptions

Communicating		Understanding
<p>Socialising Exchange feelings, ideas and opinions, establish and maintain friendships and participate in group action. [Key concepts: naming, friendship, politeness, family; Key processes: interacting, exchanging, describing]</p> <p>Correspond and collaborate with peers, relating aspects of their daily experiences and arranging sporting and leisure activities. [Key concepts: time, etiquette, place, collaboration; Key processes: exchanging, corresponding]</p> <p>Informing Locate and share with known audiences factual information about people, places and events from a range of oral texts. [Key concepts: time, place, number, audience, purpose; Key processes: summarising, synthesising]</p> <p>Locate factual information about life in other communities and about aspects of Australian life, including data from graphs and tables, and convey this information to known audiences. [Key concepts: fact, time, place, number, valued knowledge; Key processes: informing, obtaining, processing, stating]</p>	<p>Creating Express opinions about imagined characters and events seen and heard in contemporary media and performances, and create own portrayals of characters using gesture, action, stress, and modelled phrases. [Key concepts: experience, emotion, character; Key processes: performing, expressing, responding]</p> <p>Respond to simple narratives and create short texts about imagined characters and events. [Key concepts: experience, imagination; Key processes: recounting, responding]</p> <p>Translating Translate simple texts from Chinese to English and vice versa, identifying words and phrases in Chinese that do not readily translate into English, using contextual cues, action and gesture to assist translation. [Key concept: politeness symbols; Key processes: translating, interpreting]</p> <p>Interpret common colloquial phrases and culturally specific practices from Chinese contexts into Australian contexts and vice versa, identifying contextual restraints and considering alternatives. [Key concepts: equivalence, representation; Key process: translating]</p> <p>Reflecting Reflect on personal experiences and observations of using and learning Chinese language in familiar contexts, and use these reflections to improve communication. [Key concepts: respect, context; Key processes: reflecting, observing]</p>	<p>Systems of Language Recognise the tone-syllable nature of the spoken language, discriminate use of tones, rhythm, and sound flow in interactions, and use Pinyin to support learning the spoken language.</p> <p>Identify how character structure, position and component sequences relate the form of a character to its particular sound and meaning.</p> <p>Identify and use the characteristics of Chinese word order and explain the use of Chinese-specific grammatical features.</p> <p>Identify the characteristics of familiar text types, noting particular textual features distinctive to Chinese.</p> <p>Language variation and change Recognise diversity in Chinese language use within different communities and regions, such as dialects, and local languages and character systems.</p> <p>Identify traditional phrases and contemporary terms in everyday language use and the role of technology in changing the way people communicate.</p> <p>Role of language and culture Discuss how language choices reflect cultural practices, including clarifying roles and relationships between participants in interactions.</p>