

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.

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.

Foundation to Year 2 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 2, students use spoken and written Chinese to communicate with teachers and peers. They participate in structured and routine interactions, such as using 谢谢, 再见, 请, using learnt sounds, formulaic phrases, and verbal and non-verbal responses. They respond to and receive information, for example, 你好, 你好吗? They follow simple instructions, including 排队, 请坐, 不要说话.. They use the four tones of Chinese but not always with accuracy. Students respond to short predictable imaginative and informative texts, expressing simple likes and dislikes (喜欢, 不喜欢). They can match characters to the meanings and sounds of familiar words, including numbers (八...), colours (红...) and family members (爸爸, 妈妈). Students use strategies such as imitation and basic contextual cues for comprehension. They create simple informative and imaginative texts by selecting and practising learnt characters and familiar words and phrases to describe, list, label and caption.

Students recognise that Chinese is a major language in Australia. They identify its distinctive systems of writing and speaking. They recognise the tonal nature of Chinese and know that characters are formed by strokes. Students differentiate between the Pinyin and characters associated with familiar objects in their immediate environment. They recognise the use of tone marks in Pinyin. They are aware of the word order of simple sentences. They recognise the conventions for using Chinese to communicate with family, friends and teachers. They recognise the similarities and differences between Chinese and Australian contexts, language and culture. They can identify themselves as learners of languages.

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.

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).

Foundation to Year 2 Band Description

The nature of the learners

Children enter the early years of schooling with established oracy skills in one or more languages and varying degrees of early literacy capability. For young students, learning typically focuses on their immediate world of family, home, school, friends and neighbourhood. They are learning how to socialise with new people, share with others, and participate in structured routines and activities at school. Typically, they have little to no experience of Chinese language and culture.

Chinese language learning and use

The systems of writing and speaking in Chinese are distinct. The sights and sounds of Chinese are also quite distinct from English. Students therefore are immersed as much as possible in the sounds and spoken words of Chinese, the meaning of which is made clear through participation in active listening and action-related talk, gestures, dramatisation and games. Students are introduced to common characters associated with routines and their immediate experience, and draw on explicit models to communicate.

Contexts of interaction

Students socialise in structured situations and activities in the classroom and at school, with a focus on topics such as self, home, family, and daily routines. They begin to explore Chinese language and culture by participating in experiences such as celebrations; where relevant, they identify similarities and differences between Chinese culture and their own and other cultures.

Texts and resources

Students engage with a variety of texts and text modes, including picture and caption books, songs, cartoons and movies. They hear the different sounds of Chinese in stimulus material such as stories read aloud, multimedia resources and internet sites.

Features of Chinese language use

Learners are immersed in listening to, viewing and reading Chinese. They become aware of Chinese as an alternative code to English and that other languages exist within their own classroom, their country and overseas. They begin to recognise the importance of tone in Chinese speech and observe that the sounds of Chinese can be encoded in Pinyin using familiar letters. Students view characters through appropriate text types that may be glossed in Pinyin. They learn to recognise characters that represent familiar objects and ideas and convey significant cultural meanings.

Level of support

Visual displays, gesture, and specific and concrete contextual clues are continuously used to support understanding. Teachers model correct language use, which provides the main source of students' development in Chinese. Learners will experiment with various software and technologies as communication tools.

The role of English

English is used by teachers and learners as appropriate for clarification, reflection, questioning and explanation, to support learners to comprehend and acquire Chinese.

Foundation to Year 2 Content Descriptions

Communicating		Understanding
Socialising Participate in class routines, structured conversations and activities using teacher-modelled tones and rhythms. [Key concepts: self, family; Key processes: participating, imitating, listening] Interact with simple written texts in familiar contexts to contribute to class discussions. [Key concepts: self, family; Key processes: reading, planning]	Creating Respond to and create simple Chinese stories, songs and rhymes, reproducing rhythm and sound patterns to express feelings. [Key concept: imagination] Create short imaginative written texts using images and copied characters. [Key concepts: morality; Key processes: illustrating, copying]	Systems of Language Reproduce the four tones and recognise how they can change the meaning of words. Recognise Chinese characters as a form of writing and Pinyin as the spelled-out sounds of spoken Chinese. Understand that Chinese sentences have a particular word order. Engage with familiar text types to predict meaning.
Informing Locate information about family and familiar events from spoken and visual sources and convey this information in simple visual and oral texts. [Key concepts: self, family, information; Key processes: describing, conveying] Locate and present information about familiar objects, people and personal interests using visual and contextual cues. [Key concepts: self, family, home, routines; Key processes: obtaining, processing]	Translating Identify equivalent or similar Chinese words or phrases for familiar objects or terms in English. [Key concepts: similarity, difference; Key processes: translating, connecting, interpreting] Identify common Chinese characters and words in Pinyin using contextual cues. [Key concepts: self, family, home, routines; Key processes: interpreting, analysing, copying, tracing, shaping] Reflecting Notice aspects of Chinese language and culture that are 'new' or 'interesting', and observe how relationships influence language use and own identity. [Key concepts: self, family, home, routines; Key processes: observing, comparing]	Language variation and change Recognise that Chinese is a major community language in Australia. Identify the features of formal language used in familiar contexts, such as at school. Role of language and culture Describe how people use different languages to communicate and participate in cultural experiences.