

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.

Foundation to Year 2 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 2, students interact with teachers and each other through action-related talk and play. They exchange greetings such as Bonjour! Comment ça va? Très bien, merci and respond to question cues with single words or set phrases such as Qu'est-ce que c'est? Un éléphant. Tu veux un croissant? Non, merci. They choose between options when responding to questions such as Tu veux le rouge ou le bleu? They make meaning using visual, non-verbal and contextual cues such as intonation, gestures and facial expressions. They mimic French pronunciation, approximating vowel sounds and consonant combinations with some accuracy. They identify key words in spoken texts, such as names of people, places or objects. They use modelled examples and formulaic language to convey factual information at word and simple sentence level, such as making statements about themselves, their class and home environment, the weather or date. They write simple texts such as lists, labels, captions and descriptions. Students use some pronouns, prepositions and simple present tense forms of regular verbs.

Students identify ways in which spoken French sounds different to English and know that it uses the same alphabet when written. They identify words that are written the same in both languages but pronounced differently. They know that French is the language used in France and also in many other regions of the world. They know that language is used differently in different situations and between different people. They identify differences and similarities between their own and other's 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).

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.

Foundation to Year 2 Level Description

The nature of the learners

Children enter the early years of schooling with established communication 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 French language and culture.

French language learning and use

French is learnt in parallel with English language and literacy. Learning in the two areas progresses at very different levels but each supports and enriches the other. French is used in classroom interactions, routines and activities, supported by the use of visual and concrete materials, gestures and body language. At this stage, there is a focus on play and imaginative activities, games, music, movement and familiar routines, which provide scaffolding and context for language development. Oral language is developed through listening to the sounds, shapes and patterns of French through activities such as rhymes, songs, clapping and action games, and through imitating and repeating sounds modelled by the teacher and aural texts. Learners experiment with simple formulaic expressions and one- or two-word responses to prompts and cues. As they progress to using French for interactions such as greetings or asking and answering questions, they notice that language behaves differently in different situations and that French speakers communicate in some ways that are different to their own. Creative play provides opportunities for exploring these differences and for using French for purposeful interaction, for example, asking for help, sharing ideas, challenging each other or expressing surprise.

Contexts of interaction

Learners interact with each other and the teacher, with some access to wider school and community members. Information and communications technologies (ICT) resources provide additional access to French language and culture experience, connecting learners' social worlds with those of French-speaking children in different contexts. Students may also encounter ideas about France and the French language outside the classroom, through travel, the media or popular culture.

Texts and resources

Learners engage with a variety of spoken, visual and written texts. They listen and respond to teacher talk, share ideas and join in stories, songs, play and simple conversations. Written and digital texts include stories, wall charts and Big Books, and teacher-generated materials such as games, labels, captions and flashcards. Writing skills progress from tracing and copying high-frequency words to writing modelled words and sentences independently (for example, greeting cards, captions or labels) and co-creating shared resources such as word walls or storybooks.

Features of French language use

Students become familiar with the sound systems of the French language, including pronunciation, rhythm, pitch and stress. They learn to pronounce individual letters and letter combinations, including unfamiliar sounds such as *-eau*, *-u*, *è*, *é*, *ou*, *r* and *g*. They recognise and use the intonation patterns that distinguish between statements, questions and exclamations. They use simple basic sentence structure and learn to write single words and simple phrases, noticing the use of accents and how these change the sound of letters. They become familiar with the idea of grammatical gender and know how to use singular and plural forms. They notice similarities and differences between French and English and begin to develop curiosity around the idea of difference and culture.

Level of support

Rich language input characterises the first stages of learning. Learners are supported via the provision of experiences that are challenging but achievable, with high levels of scaffolding and support. This includes modelling, monitoring and moderating by the teacher, providing multiple and varied sources of input and stimulus, regular opportunities for revisiting, recycling and reviewing, and continuous cueing, feedback, response and encouragement.

The role of English

Learners are encouraged to use French whenever possible, with the teacher providing rich and supported language input. English is used as a medium of instruction and for explanation and discussion. This allows learners to talk about differences and similarities they notice between French and their first language(s) and culture(s), to ask questions about language and culture, and to consider how they feel when they hear or use French and about how they view different languages and the people who speak them. This introduction to the 'meta' dimension of intercultural learning develops the ability to consider different perspectives and ways of being.

Foundation to Year 2 Content Descriptions

Communicating

Socialising

Interact with each other and the teacher using simple language and gestures for exchanges such as greetings and farewells, thanks and introductions, and for talking about self and family. [Key concepts: self, family, home, friendship; Key processes: interacting, greeting, thanking, describing]

Participate in guided group activities using simple repetitive language in songs, rhymes, games and transactions. [Key concepts: play, performance, action learning, exchange; Key processes: participating, performing, taking turns, requesting]

Recognise and respond to classroom interactions such as opening and closing of lessons, transition activities, and giving and following instructions. [Key concepts: roles, routines, rules, interactions; Key processes: listening, observing, cooperating, responding]

Informing

Identify key points of information in simple texts. [Key concepts: text, meaning, context; Key processes: decoding, guessing, making meaning]

Convey factual information about self, family, friends and possessions, using simple statements, gestures and support materials. [Key concepts: self, family, school; Key processes: naming, labelling, showing, describing]

Creating

Engage with a range of imaginative texts through action, dance, drawing and other forms of expression. [Key concepts: imagination, response, character, expression; Key processes: responding, acting, dancing, expressing]

Participate in shared performance and presentation of stories, songs or nursery rhymes, playing with sound patterns, rhyming words and non-verbal forms of expression. [Key concepts: rhythm, expression, pronunciation; Key processes: chanting, miming, drawing, dancing]

Translating

Translate simple French words, phrases and gestures for family and friends, noticing how they may have similar or different meanings in English or other known languages. [Key concepts: language, vocabulary, meaning; Key processes: demonstrating, explaining, comparing]

Create simple print or digital texts that use both French and English, such as labels, word banks, wall charts or ID cards. [Key concepts: vocabulary, translation, meaning; Key processes: naming, comparing, copying]

Reflecting

Notice how using French feels and sounds different to using own language(s) and involves behaviours as well as words. [Key concepts: language, culture, difference; Key processes: noticing, considering, comparing]

Describe themselves, the people they are close to and the ways they communicate, using simple statements and gestures. [Key concepts: identity, self, communication; Key processes: describing, explaining, presenting]

Understanding

Systems of Language

Recognise and reproduce the sounds and rhythms of spoken French, noticing how they are produced and how they are represented in words and symbols. [Key concepts: pitch, stress, intonation, letters, pronunciation; Key processes: listening, distinguishing, reading, recognising]

Understand some first elements of French grammar, such as simple verb and gender forms, definite articles, pronouns and prepositions. [Key concepts: words, sentences, grammar, patterns, rules; Key processes: recognising, naming, selecting]

Understand that language is organised as 'texts', which take different forms and use different structures and features to achieve their purposes. [Key concepts: genre, text, meaning; Key processes: noticing, applying]

Language variation and change

Understand that French speakers use language differently in different situations, such as in playground games, at home with the family or in the classroom. [Key concepts: language as social practice, language conventions; Key processes: noticing, comparing]

Understand that all languages continuously change through contact with each other and through changes in society. [Key concepts: language, change, word borrowing; Key processes: noticing, comparing, listing]

Recognise that Australia is a multilingual society with speakers of many different languages, including French. [Key concepts: multilingualism, culture, community; Key processes: discussing, observing, mapping]

Role of language and culture

Understand that people use language in ways that reflect their culture, such as where and how they live and what is important to them. [Key concepts: language, culture, meaning; Key processes: noticing, asking questions, reflecting, explaining]