

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 engage in social interaction to exchange greetings and to share ideas and information related to their personal, social and school worlds. They use known phrases to exchange ideas and opinions, for example, Non mi piace la pallacanestro. They use language to interact and to respond to classroom instructions, questions and directions. They approximate Italian sound patterns such as consonant combinations, clear vowel sounds and unaspirated consonants. They use gesture and some formulaic expressions to support oral interaction. Students use well-rehearsed language related to their personal experiences (for example, stating preferences in sports, leisure activities and entertainment), in both spoken and written forms, and predominantly in the present tense. They demonstrate understanding of information from a range of factual and creative texts. They use learnt structures to create texts such as, captions, descriptions, conversations and correspondence, providing information about themselves, their personal worlds and immediate needs, interests and preferences. They produce simple descriptions with appropriate use of definite and indefinite articles, adjectives and adverbs. They connect ideas using conjunctions such as e, ma, però, anche, perché- and invece to create simple texts using known vocabulary and structures.

Students identify similarities between Italian and English and understand that they are related languages which borrow from each other. They know that that literal translation between languages is not always possible. They reflect on how culture is evident in experiences, images and texts. They understand and use metalanguage to explain aspects of language and culture, and use simple statements to identify features of different text types. They know that language reflects contexts of situation and culture, and identify differences between standard, dialectal and regional forms of Italian. They analyse the impact of technology and media on communication and language forms, the influence of Italian and English on one another, and the interrelationship of language and culture. They reflect on how they interpret and respond to aspects of Italian language and culture, and to intercultural experience, and identify how their response may be shaped by their own language(s) and culture(s).

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 Italian 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 Italian. Students' textual knowledge developed through English literacy learning supports the development of literacy in Italian. 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.

Italian language learning and use

Students work with different modes of communication and with different text genres, with reference to their own social, cultural and communicative interests. They learn to use modelled and rehearsed language in familiar contexts and begin to use the language to create and communicate their own meanings. They work with others collaboratively to plan, problem-solve, monitor and reflect on aspects of their learning. They learn how to make observations about the relationship between language and culture, particularly through comparing what they learn in Italian to their own language(s) and culture(s). They identify cultural references in texts and consider how language reflects practices, perspectives and values. They reflect on the process of moving between languages and cultures and developing their capability as learners of Italian.

Contexts of interaction

Opportunities for interaction in Italian are provided through working with the teacher and peers in class, and using resources and materials, including online resources as appropriate; there is also some interaction beyond the classroom with members of Italian communities. Italian is used by the teacher in classroom routines, structured interaction and learning tasks.

Texts and resources

Students listen to, read, view and interact with a range of texts for a variety of purposes, such as personal, social, informational, transactional, imaginative and expressive. They develop skills in planning, drafting and presenting descriptive and informative texts and participate in collaborative tasks, games and discussions. They compose and present simple texts such as stories, poems, songs/raps, blogs, advertisements, reports and journal entries. They develop metalanguage for referring to Italian language and learning, and use processing strategies, such as comparing and categorising, that draw on their developing understanding of text conventions and patterns. They learn to identify how cultural values and perspectives are embedded in texts and become aware that language choices determine how people and circumstances are represented.

Features of Italian language use

Students become familiar with the pronunciation and sound system of Italian, noting similarities and differences with English. They build a vocabulary relating to people and objects in their immediate worlds. They learn how to use definite and indefinite articles. They learn how to form singular and plural nouns, to recognise patterns of noun categories and to understand the general rule of gender and agreement. Students learn simple sentence construction (subject-verb-object), which is enriched by the use of adjectives. They create their own texts mainly using the present tense of regular and common irregular verbs. They gradually build more extended texts, using cohesive devices. Students develop language for interacting with the teacher and each other. They learn to distinguish between formal and informal register. They develop a metalanguage to describe and discuss features of Italian.

Level of support

Students require support to build on existing language-learning strategies and knowledge, such as using mnemonic devices and developing a metalanguage to talk about language and culture and about language learning. Scaffolding is continuously provided by the teacher and by support materials such as word banks, focused language activities, and interactive models of language use and analysis.

The role of English

English serves two main functions in the Italian class: it represents a point of reference for Italian learning by enabling students to compare structures, features, and cultural meanings in both languages; and it is used when appropriate for explanation, reflection and discussion..

Year 7 and 8 (Year 7 Entry) Content Descriptions

Communicating	Understanding
<p>Socialising Socialise with peers and adults to exchange greetings, good wishes, factual information and opinions about self, family and friends, routines, shared events, leisure activities, interests, likes and dislikes. [Key concepts: naming, friendship, family, celebration, leisure, neighbourhood; Key processes: interacting, exchanging, describing]</p> <p>Participate in individual or collective action, both orally and in writing, by making arrangements, inviting, planning, deciding and responding. [Key concepts: activity, rules, politeness; Key processes: arranging, negotiating alternatives, deciding, responding]</p> <p>Participate in spoken and written transactions, including purchasing goods and services, and give and follow directions and instructions. [Key concepts: social exchange, etiquette; Key processes: negotiating, describing, transacting, ordering]</p> <p>Develop language to interact in classroom routines and tasks, for example, posing questions, asking for repetition, rephrasing, explaining, asking how to say something in Italian, expressing opinion, and giving and following instructions. [Key concepts: class routine, responsibility, community; Key processes: questioning, negotiating]</p> <p>Informing Identify factual information from a range of spoken, written and multimodal texts, and process and represent meaning through, for example, classifying, sequencing and summarising. [Key concepts: concepts drawn from selected texts and from learning areas across the curriculum; Key processes: locating, ordering, classifying, comparing, tabulating]</p> <p>Convey factual information and ideas through a range of spoken, written and multimodal texts, using information from a range of sources. [Key concepts: society, event, fact, opinion; Key processes: describing, comparing, presenting]</p>	<p>Systems of Language Develop awareness of features of the Italian sound system, including pronunciation, syllable stress, rhythm and intonation, and how these are represented in written form.</p> <p>Understand and use key features and patterns of the Italian grammatical system, including definite and indefinite articles, gender and agreement, present tense of regular and common irregular verbs, and simple sentence construction.</p> <p>Understand the features of common spoken, written and multimodal texts.</p> <p>Language variation and change Analyse variable linguistic features present in the learning contexts and texts to develop an understanding that language use varies depending on participants, their roles and relationships, and according to the contexts of situation and culture.</p> <p>Analyse and understand the dynamic nature of the Italian language, and of languages in general.</p> <p>Analyse and understand the place of Italian locally and internationally, including the relationship between Standard Italian and regional dialects, and Italian in the ecology of languages in Australia.</p> <p>Role of language and culture Reflect on the role of language and culture in interaction and how language constructs and reflects assumptions and values.</p>