

RATIONALE: DRAMA

This rationale complements and extends the rationale for The Arts learning area.

Drama is the expression and exploration of personal, cultural and social worlds through role and situation that engages, entertains and challenges. Students create meaning as drama makers, performers and audiences as they enjoy and analyse their own and others' stories and points of view. Like all art forms, drama has the capacity to engage, inspire and enrich all students, excite the imagination and encourage students to reach their creative and expressive potential.

Drama enables students to imagine and participate in exploration of their worlds, individually and collaboratively. Students actively use body, gesture, movement, voice and language, taking on roles to explore and depict real and imagined worlds. They create, rehearse, perform and respond using the elements and conventions of drama and emerging and existing technologies available to them.

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Students develop a sense of inquiry and empathy by exploring the diversity of drama in the contemporary world and in other times, traditions, places and cultures.

Learning Area The Arts: Years 3 and 4 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 4, students describe and discuss similarities and differences between artworks they make and those to which they respond. They discuss how they and others organise the elements and processes in artworks.

Students collaborate to plan and make artworks that communicate ideas.

Drama: Years 3 and 4 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 4, students describe and discuss similarities and differences between drama they make, perform and view. They discuss how they and others organise the elements of drama in their drama.

Students use relationships, tension, time and place and narrative structure when improvising and performing devised and scripted drama. They collaborate to plan, make and perform drama that communicates ideas.

AIMS

In addition to the overarching aims of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, Drama knowledge, understanding and skills ensure that, individually and collaboratively, students develop:

- confidence and self-esteem to explore, depict and celebrate human experience, take risks and challenge their own creativity through drama
- knowledge and understanding in controlling, applying and analysing the elements, skills, processes, forms, styles and techniques of drama to engage audiences and create meaning
- a sense of curiosity, aesthetic knowledge, enjoyment and achievement through exploring and playing roles, and imagining situations, actions and ideas as drama makers and audiences
- knowledge and understanding of traditional and contemporary drama as critical and active participants and audiences.

Organisation and Content Structure

In the Australian Curriculum, the Arts is a learning area that draws together related but distinct art forms. While these art forms have close relationships and are often used in interrelated ways, each involves different approaches to arts practices and critical and creative thinking that reflect distinct bodies of knowledge, understanding and skills. The curriculum examines past, current and emerging arts practices in each art form across a range of cultures and places.

The Australian Curriculum: The Arts Foundation to Year 10 enables exploration of the dynamic relationships between Arts subjects. This can involve students making and responding to artworks in traditional, contemporary and emerging forms, using materials, techniques and technologies from one Arts subject to support learning in another. In this twenty-first century Arts curriculum, students explore innovative and hybrid art forms which extend and challenge art making and combine practices of two or more art forms.

Within all Arts subjects, design facilitates the creative and practical realisation of ideas. Design thinking is a fundamental strategy in the experimentation, refinement and resolution of an artwork and takes into account logical, critical and aesthetic considerations. Many different words describe design within the Arts such as choreographing, narrating, devising, constructing, composing and sculpting. Design connects the different art forms so that they inform each other, providing possibilities for students to create innovative and hybrid forms of art.

Strands - Content descriptions in each Arts subject reflect the interrelated strands of *Making* and *Responding*.

- *Making* includes learning about and using knowledge, skills, techniques, processes, materials and technologies to explore arts practices and make artworks that communicate ideas and intentions.
- *Responding* includes exploring, responding to, analysing and interpreting artworks.

Relationship between the strands: *Making* and *Responding* are intrinsically connected. Together they provide students with knowledge, understanding and skills as artists, performers and audience and develop students' skills in critical and creative thinking. As students make artworks they actively respond to their developing artwork and the artworks of others; as students respond to artworks they draw on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired through their experiences in making artworks.

Viewpoints - In both making and responding to artworks, students consider a range of viewpoints or perspectives through which artworks can be explored and interpreted. These include the contexts in which the artworks are made by artists and experienced by audiences. The world can be interpreted through different contexts, including social, cultural and historical contexts. Based on this curriculum, key questions are provided as a framework for developing students' knowledge, understanding and inquiry skills.

In **Drama**, students explore and depict real and fictional worlds through use of body language, gesture and space to make meaning as performers and audience. They create, rehearse, perform and respond to drama.

Knowledge and skills of Drama

In Drama, students physically inhabit an imagined role in a situation. By being in role and responding to role, students explore behaviour in the symbolic form of dramatic storytelling and dramatic action. In purposeful play, students' exploration of role sharpens their perceptions and enables personal expression and response. Their intellectual and emotional capacity grows, specifically the capacity to feel and manage empathy. As audiences, students learn to critically respond to and contextualise the dramatic action and stories they view and perceive. Creating, performing and viewing drama enables the exploration of ideas and feelings. The exploration of dramatic forms and styles, and associated cultural, social and historical contexts, diversifies students' expression, understanding and experience of their world.

The Arts across Foundation to Year 10: Years 3–6

Through the primary years, students draw on their growing experience of family, school and the wider community to develop their understanding of the world and their relationships with others. In Years 3 to 6, learning in the Arts occurs both through integrated curriculum and The Arts subject-specific approaches. Some of the instinct to play evident in the early years becomes formalised into both experimentation and artistic practice. Students in these years increasingly recognise the connections between the Arts and other learning areas.

While arts in the local community continues to be the initial focus for learning in the Arts, students are also aware of and interested in arts from more distant locations and the curriculum provides opportunities to build on this curiosity. Students learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples tell history through combinations of art forms. They learn that particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories have been recorded and will explore the meanings of stories and styles in which they are told. Students have opportunities to participate in a variety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art forms that are publicly available for broader participation in their community. Students may also extend their cultural expression with appropriate community consultation and endorsement.

Students also study artworks which represent Australia's connections with other places, the effects of these interconnections and the factors that affect people's knowledge and opinions of other places.

During these years of schooling, students' thought processes become more logical and consistent, and they gradually become more independent as learners. Students talk about changes in their own thinking, performance or making, giving reasons for their actions and explaining and demonstrating their organisation of ideas. They begin to recognise, appreciate and value the different ways in which others think, act and respond to artworks and consider how practices in the Arts may be enacted and sustained.

Content descriptions in each Arts subject focus on similar concepts and skills that, across the bands, present a developmental sequence of knowledge, understanding and skills. The focus of each content description in Foundation to Year 6 expands into more specific content descriptions for Years 7 to 10 as presented in the table below. For transition purposes from primary to secondary in Years 7–8 and consistency state-wide, generalist primary teachers at Year 7 could focus on the four initial similar concepts and skills eg, the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 6th Content Descriptions, with the deeper and expanded concepts being the focus in year 8, eg, the 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 7th Content Descriptions. E.g. The focus in Year 7 could then be on: 8.1, 8.3, 8.5 and 8.6, and in Year 8: 8.2, 8.4, 8.5 and 8.7.

Content description	Foundation–Yr 6	Content description	Yrs 7–10
1 st	Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas	1 st	Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas
		2 nd	Manipulating and applying the elements/concepts with intent
2 nd	Developing understanding of practices	3 rd	Developing and refining understanding of skills and techniques
		4 th	Structuring and organising ideas into form
3 rd	Sharing artworks through performance, presentation or display	5 th	Sharing artworks through performance, presentation or display
4 th	Responding to and interpreting artworks	6 th	Analysing and reflecting upon intentions
		7 th	Responding to and interpreting artworks

Years 3–4 Level Description: Drama

In Years 3 and 4, learning in Drama builds on the experience of the previous band. It involves students making and responding to drama independently and collaboratively with their classmates and teachers.

Students extend their understanding of role and situation as they offer, accept and extend their ideas in improvisation. They vary voice and movement to create role when devising drama. They learn about focus, tension, space and time in their own and others' drama. They use language and ideas to shape dramatic action. They use story structures to shape drama for audiences.

As they experience drama, students draw on drama from a range of cultures, times and locations. They explore the drama and influences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and of the Asia region. Students learn about drama in their community. They also learn about drama from more distant locations that may be represented in their community. Students learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drama uses dramatic action and narrative structure to communicate ideas.

As they make and respond to drama, students explore meaning and interpretation, forms and elements including voice, movement, situation, time and place, and tension. They explore social and cultural contexts of drama. They make personal evaluations of their own and others' drama.

Students maintain safety in dramatic play and in interaction with other actors. Their understanding of the role of the artist and of the audience builds upon their experience from the previous band. As an audience, students focus their attention on the performance and respond to the performance. They consider why and how audiences respond to performance.

Years 3–4: Examples of knowledge and skills in Drama

The elements of drama work dynamically together to create and focus dramatic action and dramatic meaning. Drama is conceived, organised, and shaped by aspects of and combinations of role, character and relationships, situation, voice and movement, space and time, focus, tension, language, ideas and dramatic meaning, mood and atmosphere and symbol. Through *Making and Responding*, students develop knowledge, skills and understanding of their drama making, developing the capacity to use proficiently the techniques of voice and movement to make drama. Students learn the skills of working collaboratively, recognising that imaginative, creative and critically analytic teamwork is central to drama.

Examples of knowledge and skills in Drama

The following information serves to articulate the main parts of the broader conceptual areas of Knowledge and Skills. These are not an exclusive, exhaustive list, but an indication of the breadth of study within Drama. In this band students are introduced to the ways that ideas and intentions are communicated in and through drama. They develop knowledge, understanding and skills through drama practices focusing on:

Elements of drama

Role, character and relationships

Role - adopting a role and maintaining focus in role; character; communicating role traits; relationships; developing relationships between characters in a drama, for example, using dialogue to show relationships

Situation - establishing a fictional setting using space and time; exploring how drama uses story structures

Voice and movement

Voice - varying voice, for example, clarity, pace, volume and projection

Movement - using movement and gesture to create belief in character and situation

Focus - framing point of view, situation and characters in drama

Tension - factors that contribute to tension or mystery in a drama; what's happening next in the drama

Space and time - establishing a clear setting and sense of time to create belief in the drama

Language, ideas and dramatic action - central ideas or themes that give drama consistency

Audience - shaping drama for others, using story structures.

Years 3–4: Considering viewpoints in Drama

In both *Making* and *Responding*, students learn that meanings can be generated from different viewpoints and that these shift according to different world encounters. As students make, investigate or critique drama as actors, directors and audiences, they may ask and answer questions to interrogate the playwrights' and actors' meanings and the audiences' interpretations. Meanings and interpretations are informed by social, cultural and historical contexts, and an understanding of how elements, materials, skills and processes are used. These questions provide the basis for making informed critical judgments about their own drama and the drama they see as audiences. The complexity and sophistication of such questions will change across Foundation to Year 10. In the later years, students will consider the interests and concerns of artists and audiences regarding philosophies and ideologies, critical theories, institutions and psychology.

Examples of viewpoints and questions within the Drama Content Elaborations Years 3–4

Considering viewpoints:

- *Forms and elements*: For example – How did the drama begin? Develop? Conclude? How did the performers vary their voices, movement and gestures to create and share believable characters? How are elements of drama such as role, situation, time and place part of the action? How is the dramatic tension developed in the drama?
- *Meanings and interpretations*: For example – What do you want your audience to think about your drama? What did this drama make you think about? How did you feel when making/watching the drama?
- *Evaluations*: For example – How well did you collaborate to make drama? What worked best in the drama? What did you like best in the drama? Why?
- *Societies and cultures*: For example – What features and ideas in the drama come from other cultures, times and places? How have you used these ideas and features in your own drama? Why do you think people from all different cultures make and respond to drama?
- *Considering viewpoints*: For example – What are the stories and the ideas in the drama you watch and listen to? Which of the characters do you identify with? What relationships and situations do you recognise (or not recognise) in the drama you watch and listen to?

Years 3-4 Content Descriptions: Drama

4.1 Explore ideas and narrative structures through roles and situations and use empathy in their own improvisations and devised drama

4.2 Use voice, body, movement and language to sustain role and relationships and create dramatic action with a sense of time and place

4.3 Shape and perform dramatic action using narrative structures and tension in devised and scripted drama, including exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drama

4.4 Identify intended purposes and meaning of drama, starting with Australian drama, including drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, using the elements of drama to make comparisons

NB: It is advised that the 'Learning in Drama' two page introduction (Subject, structure) is used along with this 'explorer' paper. Download it from the Australian Curriculum website.

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