

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.

Students learn to think, move, speak and act with confidence. In making and staging drama they learn how to be focused, innovative and resourceful, and collaborate and take on responsibilities for drama presentations. They are excited by exploring their imagination and taking risks in storytelling through role and dramatic action.

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.

Drama: Years 7 and 8 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 8, students identify and analyse how the elements of drama are used, combined and manipulated in different styles. They apply this knowledge in drama they make and perform. They evaluate how they and others from different cultures, times and places communicate meaning and intent through drama.

Students collaborate to devise, interpret and perform drama. They manipulate the elements of drama, narrative and structure to control and communicate meaning. They apply different performance styles and conventions to convey status, relationships and intentions. They use performance skills and design elements to shape and focus theatrical effect for an audience.

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.

Students discover and explore the elements of drama, applying principles and making and responding to drama in various forms.

The Arts across Foundation to Year 10: Years 7–10

As students move into adolescence, they undergo a range of important physical, cognitive, emotional and social changes. Students often begin to question established conventions, practices and values. Their interests extend well beyond their own communities and they begin to develop concerns about wider issues. Students in this age range increasingly look for and value learning that is perceived to be relevant, is consistent with personal goals, and/or leads to important outcomes. Increasingly they are able to work with more abstract concepts and consider increasingly complex ideas. They are keen to explore the nature of evidence and the contestability of ideas, debating alternative answers and interpretations.

In these years, learning in the Arts enables students to explore and question their own immediate experience and their understanding of the wider world. Learning through and about the Arts enables students to build on their own experiences and dispositions. Students explore and engage with artworks made by others. They make their own artworks drawing on their developing knowledge, understanding and skills.

Students' understanding of sustainability is progressively developed. They explore how the Arts are used to communicate about sustainability and also learn about sustainability of practices in the Arts.

Students learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have converted oral records to other technologies. As they explore forms, students learn that over time there has been development of different traditional and contemporary styles. Students explore 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. They identify and explore the social relationships that have developed between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other cultures in Australia, reflected in developments of forms and styles in the Arts.

Through the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, students in Years 7 to 10 pursue broad questions such as: What meaning is intended in an artwork? What does the audience understand from this artwork? What is the cultural context of the artwork and of the audience engaging with it? What key beliefs and values are reflected in artworks and how did artists influence societies of their time? How do audiences perceive and understand artworks? What does the advancement of technology mean to the presentation of, and audience engagement with, different artworks? This curriculum also provides opportunities to engage students through contexts that are meaningful and relevant to them and through exploration of past and present debates.

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

Years 7–8 Level Description: Drama

In Years 7 and 8, learning in Drama builds on the experience of the previous band. It involves students making and responding to drama independently, and with their classmates, teachers and communities. They explore drama as an art form. Students build on their understanding of role, character and relationships. They use voice and movement to sustain character and situation. They use focus, tension, space and time to enhance drama. They incorporate language and ideas and use devices such as dramatic symbol to create dramatic action and extend mood and atmosphere in performance. They shape drama for audiences using narrative and non-narrative dramatic forms and production elements. 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 those of the Asia region. Students learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have converted oral records to other technologies. As they explore drama forms, students learn that over time there has been further development of different traditional and contemporary styles of drama, including contemporary styles developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dramatists. As they make and respond to drama, students explore meaning and interpretation, forms and elements including voice, movement, situation, space and time, and tension. They consider social, cultural and historical influences of drama. They evaluate the directors' intentions and expressive skills used by actors in drama they view and perform. Students maintain safety in dramatic play and in interaction with other actors. Their understanding of the roles of artists and audiences builds upon previous bands as students engage with more diverse performances.

Years 7–8 : 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 and character - for example, maintaining commitment to role; exploring motivations and various facets of multidimensional characters; developing and analysing multidimensional relationships in the drama

Situation - for example, improvising with/adapting available materials and technologies to establish setting; using conventions of story in drama

Voice and movement

Voice and movement - for example, sustaining belief in character and situation through voice and movement; revealing character and situation through the use of voice, movement/blocking and props

Focus - for example, using a range of devices and effects to highlight specific aspects of the performance for the audience

Tension - for example, using foreshadowing and information withholding to create suspense and emphasis

Space and time - for example, using rhythm and pace to enhance drama; using blocking (for example, when and where to move) and stage areas (such as upstage right, downstage centre) in planning and performance

Language, ideas and dramatic action

- for example, manipulating central ideas or themes to give perspectives and ideas to the audience

Mood and atmosphere - the feeling or tone of physical space and the dramatic action created by or emerging from the performance

Audience

- using narrative and non-narrative dramatic forms and production elements to shape and sustain drama for formal and informal audiences.

Years 7–8 : 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 7–8

Considering viewpoints:

- *Elements, materials, skills and processes*: For example – What elements, forms and styles have been used? How have the elements and materials been used and organised to create meaning in different forms and styles? What elements, forms and styles are you using in your drama and why? How have design elements been used and why?
- *Evaluations*: For example – How successful was the director in expressing the intent clearly to the audience? How well did the performers create role or character and use expressive skills?
- *Meanings and interpretations*: For example – What were the actor/director's intentions in this drama? What are your intentions in the drama you are making? What ideas did you think the drama expressed? How did you engage with the drama?
- *Contexts*: For example – What is the cultural context in which the drama was developed, or in which it is viewed, and what does it signify? How does this drama relate to its social context and that of its makers and audiences? What are the appropriate protocols for viewing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drama and other culturally specific performance? What historical forces and influences are evident in the drama? How does this style of drama vary from those seen in other traditions and other parts of the world?

Years 7–8 Content Descriptions: Drama

- 8.1 Combine the elements of drama in devised and scripted drama to explore and develop issues, ideas and themes
- 8.2 Develop roles and characters consistent with situation, dramatic forms and performance styles to convey status, relationships and intentions
- 8.3 Plan, structure and rehearse drama, exploring ways to communicate and refine dramatic meaning for theatrical effect
- 8.4 Develop and refine expressive skills in voice and movement to communicate ideas and dramatic action in different performance styles and conventions, including contemporary Australian drama styles developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dramatists
- 8.5 Perform devised and scripted drama maintaining commitment to role
- 8.6 Analyse how the elements of drama have been combined in devised and scripted drama to convey different forms, performance styles and dramatic meaning
- 8.7 Identify and connect specific features and purposes of drama from contemporary and past times to explore viewpoints and enrich their drama making, starting with drama in Australia and including drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

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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