

# Describe

## Years 7–10 cognitive verb toolkit

### What is describing?

To describe is to give an account of a situation, event, pattern or process. When describing, the writer or speaker must consider whether the target audience will be able to understand the description. Effective description, particularly description that includes complicated ideas, may require logical sequencing, i.e. ordering the parts of the description. For example, when describing photosynthesis, it would be important to logically sequence the parts of the process to help the audience understand the concept. Simple descriptions, such as a description of a piece of furniture, may not require as much consideration in terms of sequencing.

This term is described in the notes section of the standard elaborations:

Term	Description
describe	give an account of characteristics or features

### Cognitive verb use in the Australian Curriculum

The cognitive verb describe appears in various learning area achievement standards and content descriptions in the Australian Curriculum. The table below shows the use of describe across the whole Australian Curriculum.

Describe in the Australian Curriculum achievement standards (AS) and content descriptions (CD)																
Year level	English	Health and Physical Education	HASS	History	Geography	Civics and Citizenship	Economics and Business	Mathematics	Science	Design and Technologies	Digital Technologies	Dance	Drama	Media Arts	Music	Visual Arts
Year 7			AS CD	AS CD	AS		AS	AS CD	AS							
Year 8				AS CD			AS	AS CD	AS							
Year 9								AS CD	AS CD	AS						
Year 10								AS CD	AS CD	AS						

# Cognitive process

The cognitive verb **describe** is part of the comprehension category of cognitive process.

Cognitive skills to help describe are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify</li> <li>• order</li> <li>• state.</li> </ul>	Cognitive skills that follow describe are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determine</li> <li>• explain</li> <li>• infer.</li> </ul>
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Learning area/subject examples include, but are not limited to:

Year level	Learning area	Achievement standard	Content description
Year 7	HASS	Students <b>describe</b> the effects of change on societies, individuals and groups and <b>describe</b> events and developments from the perspective of people who lived at the time.	Reflect on learning to propose personal and/or collective action in response to an issue or challenge, taking into account different perspectives, and <b>describe</b> the expected effects (ACHASS1162)
Year 8	History	Students <b>describe</b> different interpretations of the past.	Identify and <b>describe</b> points of view, attitudes and values in primary and secondary sources (ACHHS155)
Year 9	Mathematics	Students make sense of the position of the mean and median in skewed, symmetric and bi-modal displays to <b>describe</b> and interpret data.	Compare data displays using mean, median and range to <b>describe</b> and interpret numerical data sets in terms of location (centre) and spread (ACMSP283)
Year 10	Science	Students <b>describe</b> and analyse interactions and cycles within and between Earth's spheres.	Evaluate conclusions, including identifying sources of uncertainty and possible alternative explanations, and <b>describe</b> specific ways to improve the quality of the data (AC SIS205)

## More information

This factsheet is part of a suite of resources to support teachers in the explicit teaching and assessment of students' thinking. The suite of resources includes cognitive verb overviews, cognitive verb year-level overviews and categories of common cognitive verbs. The cognitive verbs are categorised using Marzano and Kendall's (2007) four levels of cognitive process: retrieval, comprehension, analysis and knowledge utilisation.

The suite of resources can be found here: [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/p-10/aciq/frequently-used-resources/cognitive-verbs/years-7-10-cognitive-verb-toolkit](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/p-10/aciq/frequently-used-resources/cognitive-verbs/years-7-10-cognitive-verb-toolkit).

Reference: Marzano, R & Kendall, J 2007, *The New Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.



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