

Primary cognitive verb toolkit

Teacher overview

The Australian Curriculum aims to ‘develop successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens’¹. Students have the opportunity to develop disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities in a progression of learning from Prep to Year 10. Within these areas of the curriculum, the expectation and development of students’ thinking skills and processes is evident.

There are signposts for this depth of thinking in the Australian Curriculum, which can be identified as cognitive verbs. Cognitive verbs are words that describe thinking processes, such as identify, explain and evaluate. They are not new and are already used in the classroom by students and teachers alike.

The *Primary cognitive verb toolkit* aims to raise awareness of the cognitive verbs used in the Australian Curriculum and provide a guide and resources to support teachers and school leaders to explicitly teach these thinking processes across all year levels.

Cognitive verb use in the Australian Curriculum

The QCAA has identified and mapped cognitive verbs across the Australian Curriculum learning area achievement standards and content descriptions. When planning for the alignment of thinking, it is important to understand that the Australian Curriculum:

- *achievement standards* describe the learning expected of students at each year level, or band of years, and include what is taught and assessed
- *content descriptions* describe what is to be taught and what students are expected to learn.

Alignment of the teaching, learning and assessment of cognitive processes is important in supporting students’ development and mastery of thinking processes within the learning area context.

Cognitive process

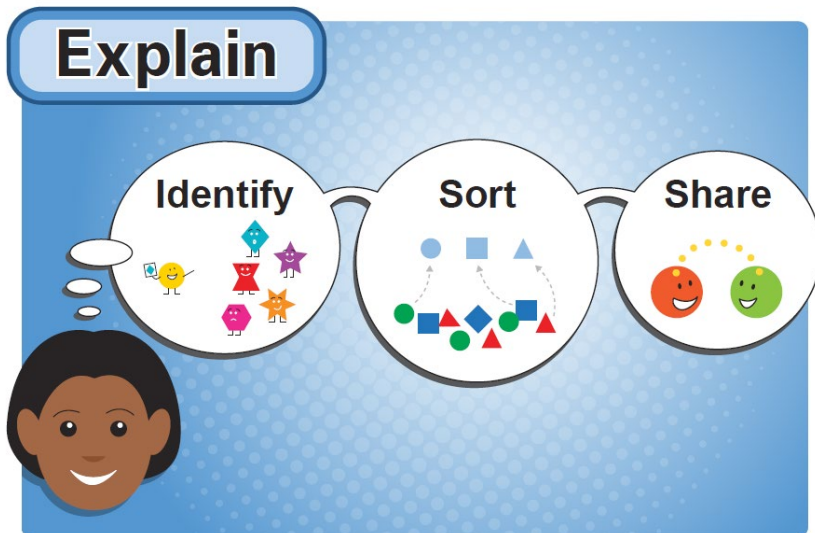
Learners benefit from scaffolding and opportunities to develop mastery at each step in the process. The scaffolding that is used will depend on the needs of the learner at a point in time in their learning. Teachers may use age-appropriate self-reflection strategies at a key point within a unit to encourage learners to take ownership of their learning and provide them with feedback to progress learning.

The *Primary cognitive verb toolkit* includes posters that were developed as resources that teachers can use to support the explicit teaching of the cognitive processes in the classroom. The posters adopt age-appropriate language to support learners in Prep to Year 2 and Years 3 to 6.

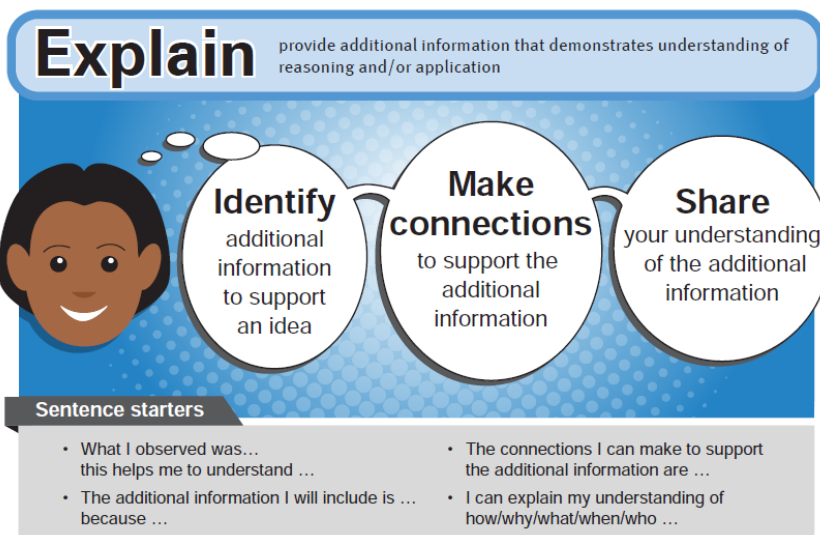
The posters highlight the cognitive skills found within each cognitive process. For example, the skills within the cognitive process of explain are identify, sort and share. On the posters, each cognitive skill is presented in an ordered sequence called a mental model. The mental model helps to make thinking visible and provides visual representations to scaffold the development of understanding of the cognitive process.

¹ www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/structure

The Prep to Year 2 posters use visual cues to scaffold understanding of the cognitive process.



The Years 3 to 6 posters use written cues, with the cognitive skills in bold, and are written as a statement to build on and scaffold understanding of the process.



Students should be encouraged to demonstrate their thinking in a variety of ways, e.g. written, spoken, signed and multimodal. Sentence starters are included on the Years 3 to 6 posters to reflect the process for each cognitive verb, supporting students to develop their understanding of the thinking skills that come together to create a process.

A graphic organiser is included for each cognitive verb in the Years 3 to 6 toolkit. Each graphic organiser complements the mental model and provides a resource for students to use to record and organise information and ideas as they work through the steps of the cognitive process. While the context and complexity of tasks differ, the approach to demonstrating the cognitive process remains constant. The graphic organisers scaffold and support student learning by providing prompts and cues for each step of a cognitive process, making thinking visible. The graphic organisers may assist a whole-of-school approach to the teaching of each cognitive verb.

For the full suite of cognitive verb resources, including the list of common cognitive verbs, cognitive verb overviews and the Primary cognitive verb toolkit, visit: www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/p-10/aciq/frequently-used-resources/cognitive-verbs.