Describe

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
Prep	AS	AS CD	AS CD	CD	AS CD			AS CD	AS	AS CD	CD	AS	AS	AS	AS	AS
Year 1	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD			AS CD	AS	AS CD	CD	AS	AS	AS	AS	AS
Year 2		AS CD	AS CD	AS CD				AS CD	AS	AS CD	CD	AS	AS	AS	AS	AS
Year 3		AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD		CD	AS	AS	AS CD	AS	AS	AS	AS	AS CD
Year 4	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD		AS CD	AS	AS	AS CD	AS	AS	AS	AS	AS CD
Year 5	AS CD	AS	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS		AS	AS	AS	AS	AS
Year 6	CD	AS	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS		AS	AS	AS	AS	AS

Cognitive process

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

Cognitive skills to help describe are:	Cognitive skills that follow describe are:
• identify • order • state.	• determine • explain • infer.

Learning area/subject examples include, but are not limited to:

Year level	Learning area	Achievement standard	Content description
Prep	Health and Physical Education	Students **describe** how their body responds to movement.	Identify and **describe** how their body moves in relation to effort, space, time, objects and people (ACPMP011)
Year 1	Science	Students **describe** objects and events that they encounter in their everyday lives, and the effects of interacting with materials and objects.	
Year 2	Visual Arts	Students **describe** artworks they make and view and where and why artworks are made and presented.	
Year 3	Mathematics		**Describe**, continue, and create number patterns resulting from performing addition and subtraction (ACMNA060)
Year 4	Digital Technologies	Students **describe** how a range of digital systems (hardware and software) and their peripheral devices can be used for different purposes.	
Year 5	English	Students **describe** how events, characters and settings in texts are depicted and explain their own responses to them.	
Year 6	Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)	Students **describe** the causes and effects of change on society.	

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.

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