

Understand

Primary cognitive verb toolkit

What is understanding?

To understand is to go beyond the information that is presented. It involves knowing at a deeper level, to be able to explain and build on the ideas, concepts or skills. Information makes sense and has meaning. Understanding forms the building blocks for more complex levels of thinking, including analysis, evaluation, inferring and predicting.

As learners become more proficient at making meaning, they develop mental models using explicitly communicated and implied information. Through the activation of ideas, connections can be made between known and new information to improve learners' understanding. Using questions such as why and how can help to build a deeper understanding and ability to grasp concepts.

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

Term	Description
understand	to perceive what is meant, grasp an idea, and to be thoroughly familiar with

Cognitive verb use in the Australian Curriculum

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

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

Cognitive process

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

Cognitive skills to help understand are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify• make connections• explain.	Cognitive skills that follow understand are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• analyse• evaluate• infer.
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Learning area/subject examples include, but are not limited to:

Year level	Learning area	Achievement standard	Content description
Prep	English	Students understand that there are different types of texts and that these can have similar characteristics.	
Year 3 and 4	Health and Physical Education	Students investigate how emotional responses vary and understand how to interact positively with others in a variety of ways.	
Year 5 and 6	Music		Develop technical and expressive skills in singing and playing instruments with understanding of rhythm, pitch and form in a range of pieces, including in music from the community (ACAMUM089)

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.