

Literacy general capability

Understanding Literacy

Literacy is one of seven general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum. The other general capabilities are:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Digital literacy
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding
- Numeracy
- Personal and social capability.

Literacy is fundamental to all learning areas as each requires discipline-specific literacy skills that enable students to communicate successfully in a variety of contexts. By embedding literacy across Prep to Year 10, schools can equip their students with the literacy knowledge, skills and dispositions they need now and for the future.

Definition of literacy

'Students become literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society. Literacy involves students listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts' (ACARA 2010 to present).

Literacy progression

The Literacy progression provides evidence-based indicators of typical levels of literacy development across several elements and sub-elements (see table below). The indicators describe observable behaviours that identify increasingly complex ways students use Standard Australian English. These indicators detail the expected 'trajectory of skill development' (ACARA 2010 to present).

The levels in the progression provide a logical sequence for literacy development. However:

- students may not pass through every level in the progression, and they might display indicators from multiple levels
- there is no uniform alignment between progression level number and year level of schooling
- the 'number of progression levels is determined by the research evidence and is not the same for each sub-element' (ACARA 2010 to present).

Students can display indicators within sub-elements regardless of their year level. For example, a student in Year 5 could display indicators at Level 5 in Listening, Level 7 in Understanding texts and Level 8 in Writing.

Structure

The Literacy progression is organised around three elements and twelve sub-elements as shown in the following table.

Element	Sub-elements
Speaking and listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening • Interacting • Speaking
Reading and viewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding texts — a holistic sub-element supported by the other sub-elements • Phonological awareness • Phonic knowledge and word recognition • Fluency
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating texts — a holistic sub-element supported by the other sub-elements • Grammar • Punctuation • Spelling • Handwriting and keyboarding

For each sub-element, the progression lists detailed indicators for levels of literacy development.

Accompanying the progression is:

- [‘Literacy: Understand this general capability’](#), including definition of literacy, information about the progression, structure, and key connections to learning areas
- [‘Literacy: Glossary’](#), available as a download
- [‘Literacy: Comparative information’](#), showing differences between Version 8.4 and Version 9.0
- a description of levels of text complexity (see pages 49–56 of [‘Literacy: About the general capability’](#), available as a PDF download).

Alignment with the Australian Curriculum learning areas

The Literacy progression levels are aligned to year levels in the Australian Curriculum: English v9.0 (see [‘Literacy: Understand this general capability’](#)) and contain additional fine-grained descriptions of relevant English content descriptions. According to the Australian Curriculum: English v9.0, ‘The study of English plays a key role in the development of literacy, which gives young people the knowledge and skills needed for education, training and the workplace’ (ACARA 2010 to present).

In addition, literacy is fundamental to all learning areas and teachers support students with the discipline-specific literacy demands of the learning areas which they teach.

Where content in the Australian Curriculum is aligned to the Literacy progression, a book icon has been used. The example below is from Years 5 and 6 Design and Technologies. By clicking on the book icon, teachers can discover detail about the literacy knowledge, skills and dispositions underpinning the content description.

Technologies context: Engineering principles and systems

AC9TDE6K02

explain how electrical energy can be transformed into movement, sound or light in a **product** or system



The book icon indicates alignment with the Literacy progression.

Using the progression

'By providing a comprehensive description of literacy development, the progression gives teachers a conceptual tool that can assist them to develop targeted teaching and learning programs for students who are working at, above or below year-level expectations' (ACARA 2010 to present).

The Literacy progression can be used to support students in navigating the literacy demands of all learning areas. While the progression details **what** literacy knowledge, skills and dispositions can be taught, schools decide **how** to teach, plan, program, assess or report.

Use of the progression can support students:

- working below year-level expectations by assisting teachers — independently or in collaboration (e.g. with health professionals) — to identify areas of specific literacy need
- at year-level expectations by assisting teachers to add depth and richness to students' literacy learning
- above year-level expectations by assisting teachers to identify aspects of literacy that might extend the students' literacy development.

Planning to use the Literacy progression

Schools embed authentic opportunities to engage with the Literacy general capability based on factors such as school priorities, cohorts of students, and capacities of students in a class. This involves planning learning opportunities that specifically target literacy knowledge, skills and dispositions which are relevant to specific learning areas and appropriate for students.

Planning for individuals and groups of students

When planning and delivering a unit of work, teachers select relevant aspects of the learning area context, achievement standard and content descriptions to be addressed (referred to below as the curriculum content). The Literacy progression can be used in conjunction with the curriculum as a resource to:

- identify the current literacy capacity of individual and groups of students and whether they might benefit from specific literacy support, consolidation and enrichment, or extension
- embed aspects of the Literacy general capability by assisting teachers to identify connections between the curriculum content and the progression
- select several relevant indicators from elements and sub-elements that will be explained, modelled and practised

- select and sequence activities within the teaching and learning plan that will support students to develop the targeted knowledge, skills and dispositions of the Literacy progression. These activities could include:
 - establishing clear and explicit learning goals
 - making meaningful connections to students' prior knowledge, skills and dispositions
 - modelling the focus indicator/s using examples drawn from models and mentor texts, think-aloud demonstrations, and guided practice
 - providing opportunities for students to practise the relevant knowledge, skills or dispositions, and providing feedback to students about their progress toward the learning goals.

Planning for literacy demands of units


Although the Literacy progression will be used mainly to support specific students, the detail provided in the progression could also be used to assist teachers in all learning areas when planning listening and speaking, reading and viewing, and writing tasks to be incorporated into units of work. For example:

- Under the Writing element, Creating texts sub-element, teachers will find specific indicators that will support students to write informative and persuasive texts. These can assist teachers to identify potential pressure points in a written task.
- When teaching reading to beginner readers, the Literacy progression complements the Australian Curriculum: English by providing additional detail about the development of literacy skills. For example, finer-grained detail is provided for the Year 1 English content description about segmenting words into separate phonemes (sounds).
- In the appendix of the PDF version of the Literacy progression, teachers will find descriptions of the features and scope of texts students work with across Prep to Year 10. In conjunction with the Reading element (and especially Understanding texts sub-element), these descriptions can assist teachers to:
 - identify texts of appropriate complexity for use with students, e.g. simple texts (including decodable texts) with beginning readers; complex and highly complex texts with proficient readers
 - evaluate the literacy demands of the texts they plan to use with students
 - consider features of the text that may be unfamiliar to students and, therefore, could require explicit teaching
 - make decisions about potential differentiation for specific students and groups of students, including the potential selection of different texts on the same topic for specific individuals and/or groups of students.

More information

For advice about embedding the general capabilities, please see the QCAA resource *Embedding the general capabilities*.

If you would like more information on the general capabilities, please visit the QCAA website at <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/p-10/aciq/version-9/general-capabilities>. Alternatively, email the K–10 Curriculum and Assessment Branch at australiancurriculum@qcaa.qld.edu.au.

 © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2022

Licence: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0> | **Copyright notice:** www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright — lists the full terms and conditions, which specify certain exceptions to the licence. |

Attribution (include the link): © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2022 www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright.

Unless otherwise indicated material from the Australian Curriculum is © ACARA 2010–present, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0). For the latest information and additional terms of use, please check the [Australian Curriculum website](https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/curriculum) and its [copyright notice](#).