

Essential Learnings — Information Statement

What are the Essential Learnings?

Essential Learnings identify what should be taught and what is important for students to have opportunities to know and be able to do. They describe the *ways of working*, and *knowledge and understanding* that students need for ongoing learning, social and personal competence, and participation in a democratic society.

The Essential Learnings provide:

- clarity for teachers about what to teach
- assurance for teachers that the essential elements of each key learning area (KLA) are being addressed, and that their students are learning what the wider community values
- assurance for parents/carers that a core curriculum will be offered in all Queensland schools.

The Essential Learnings inform curriculum planning. They constitute a rich set of learnings: an agreed core (not a minimum requirement) that students are able to access, and which schools will use to generate school-based curriculum. Essential Learnings are the part of the curriculum that is to be common across all schools; however, schools will continue to have the flexibility to organise their curriculum to meet the needs of students according to local contexts.

Essential Learnings are available for the eight KLA syllabuses: English, Health and Physical Education, Languages, Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and the Environment, Technology, and The Arts.

Why specify Essential Learnings?

All young Queenslanders need to develop knowledge, skills and capabilities to enjoy life and to contribute to society. Schooling supports students to attain high standards of disciplinary knowledge and to develop a range of capabilities to act in the world. The Essential Learnings support teachers and students in achieving these educational outcomes.

The Essential Learnings support the development of:

- deep understandings of key disciplinary concepts, facts and procedures
- the processes students use to develop and demonstrate their understandings
- the capabilities students need to work with knowledge, grow and manage themselves, and become active participants in local and global contexts.

Young people also need opportunities to pursue their own interests and local community activities. The Essential Learnings specify only those things that all students need to learn, leaving schools with the flexibility to organise their curriculum to meet their students' needs.



Queensland Government
Department of Education, Training and the Arts



**Queensland
Studies Authority**
Partnership and innovation

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How have the Essential Learnings been identified?

Queensland's eight KLA syllabuses were the primary information source for the Essential Learnings.

Teachers in schools across the three schooling sectors worked with the Queensland Studies Authority to trial and refine the Essential Learnings.

A range of literature and curriculum materials was used to identify those aspects of the Essential Learnings related to more generic and cross-curricular capabilities.

The national *Statements of Learning* in English, Mathematics, Science, Civics and Citizenship, and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), agreed to by all states and territories, have been embedded in the Essential Learnings.

Note: ICTs have been identified as a cross-curricular priority to be used by schools in conjunction with the Essential Learnings.

How are the Essential Learnings organised?

The Essential Learnings describe the focus of teaching and learning in each KLA. They are written at key junctures, which are by the end of years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

Learning and assessment focus
Describes the focus of learning and assessment within the juncture.

Ways of working
Describes the essential processes that students use to develop and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

Knowledge and understanding
The organiser and conceptual statement describe the focus and essential concepts, or big ideas, of the KLA. Examples clarify the intent of the statements and the intended depth and level of complexity.

Assessable elements
Assessable elements describe the features of the KLA, about which evidence of student learning is collected.

Assessable elements
Students use their knowledge about the complex interactions between people, and between people and their environments, to investigate social, political, economic, environmental and cultural ideas and issues. They clarify their personal values and acknowledge others' values and world views in a range of contexts and settings. They develop their capacity for effective community participation and meaningful responses to social and environmental issues.
Students understand the world views of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people and their connections to places and other groups, and apply this understanding to their own connections to people and places.
Students use the essential processes of Ways of working to develop and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. They understand the importance of inquiry and major social and environmental issues for investigating issues to contexts that range from local to global settings. They communicate using different types of texts for specific audiences and purposes. They actively participate, both individually and collaboratively, in their communities in understanding and creative ways to respond to issues. They reflect on their learning and investigations to make judgements about different values and perspectives.
Students select and use tools and technologies, including information and communication technologies (ICTs). They readily demonstrate an achievement and purposeful use of ICTs to learn, create and communicate within social and environmental contexts.
Students demonstrate evidence of their learning over time in relation to the following assessable elements:

- knowledge and understanding
- investigating
- communicating
- participating
- reflecting

Ways of working
Students are able to:

- identify a research focus from broad topics and design focus questions and sub-questions
- plan investigations, using discipline-specific inquiry models and processes
- research sources of data, information and evidence from primary and secondary sources
- research sources of data, information and evidence for relevance, reliability, authenticity, purpose, bias and perspective
- draw conclusions and make decisions supported by interpretations of data, information and evidence
- communicate descriptions, decisions and conclusions, using text types specific to the context and purpose and the conventions of research-based texts
- respond to local and global issues by taking action in planned and unplanned ways
- apply strategies for making group decisions and for taking informed social and environmental action
- reflect on different perspectives, and recognise and evaluate the influence of values and beliefs in relation to social justice, the democratic process, sustainability and peace
- reflect on learning, apply new understandings and justify future applications.

Knowledge and understanding
Time, continuity and change
Social, political, economic and cultural changes and continuities are connected to particular events, ideas and contributions, and can be interpreted from different perspectives.

- Australian narratives and identities have been shaped by 20th-century events including major conflicts, waves of immigration, social divisions and change, and government relations with other nations
e.g. World Wars, Indigenous religion integration, conscription debate, 1967 Referendum, vote of women, Mabo v. Queensland (No 2), and the Uluru Statement and Act.
- Important ideas of democracy, government and law, citizenship rights and public decision making, and the concepts of power, consent and civil duty, developed from ancient to modern times and have Eastern and Western origins.
- Global democracy has its origin in the European Age of Imperialism. Ideas of government and law can be traced to the Bible, Homeric Greece, ancient Rome, Islamic civilisation, ancient Greece and Rome, modern western democracies including Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom have shaped our understanding of government, the right to dissent and the nature of civil duty.
- Influence of events in Australia, Asia, Pacific and global settings can be interpreted from different perspectives and values positions.
e.g. Australia's involvement in World War II may be interpreted differently in Australian, British and American sources.

The Essential Learnings incorporate:

- a *Learning and assessment focus*
- *Ways of working*
- *Knowledge and understanding*.

Each KLA has a **Learning and assessment focus** that emphasises the importance of using the *Ways of working* with *Knowledge and understanding*. It also supports active engagement in learning — that is, providing opportunities for students to learn through doing, in contexts that are relevant and meaningful.

The *Learning and assessment focus* highlights the importance of integrating ICTs as tools for learning across all KLAs, and of embedding Indigenous perspectives in students' learning. It recognises that all students in Queensland should have access to valued Indigenous knowledge.

The *assessable elements* of each KLA are specified in the *Learning and assessment focus*. These identify the valued features of the KLA about which evidence of student learning is collected and assessed.

Ways of working are drawn from the processes that are associated with KLAs, such as working scientifically or working technologically. They include higher order thinking skills that support the development of deep understanding and the capabilities that students need for ongoing learning, now and in the future. These processes develop in complexity across the junctures. It is intended that students will have opportunities to demonstrate their learning across the complete set of *Ways of working*.

Many of the processes integral to a KLA can be transferred into other learning contexts. For example, when comparing the *Ways of working* across Science, SOSE and Mathematics, students develop skills in posing questions, planning and conducting investigations, analysing and evaluating information, communicating their thinking, and reflecting on their learning.

Knowledge and understanding describes essential concepts, facts and procedures of the KLA. These are presented under organisers that relate to the broad conceptual categories which are the focus of the KLA.

Conceptual statements are presented in bold text. These describe the essential concepts or the big ideas of the KLA.

Detailed concepts, facts and procedures are presented in bulleted text. These elaborate on the core context that is to be the focus of teaching and learning in all schools.

Where statements contain an 'including', schools should ensure that these are included in their planned curriculum.

Examples have been used to clarify the intent of the statement — they are not mandatory.

How do teachers plan using the Essential Learnings?

Together, the three parts of the Essential Learnings help teachers to plan and provide opportunities for students to experience rich and rewarding learning programs that have relevance and application in the real world.

Schools and teachers have the flexibility to make decisions about how they use and combine *Ways of working* with *Knowledge and understanding* within and across KLAs. It is important to consider the most effective and efficient ways to do this.

Resources to support planning using the Essential Learnings are available on the QSA website: www.qsa.qld.edu.au