



Senior Secondary History – Information Sheet

What are the subjects in the senior secondary Australian Curriculum for History?

There are **TWO** senior secondary subjects for History as part of the Australian Curriculum:

Ancient History covers the period from the development of early human communities to the end of late antiquity (around AD 650). It equips students with the skills to deal with written and archaeological sources and conflicting interpretations. It enhances students' understanding of the key institutions, structures and features of societies in the ancient world. The *Ancient History* curriculum also contributes to an understanding of issues related to the nature of the evidence and the ethical study, ownership and conservation of the past.

Modern History covers the period from 1750 through to the early 21st century. It equips students with the skills to evaluate the significance of events, movements, individuals and groups that have shaped the modern world. It enhances students' understanding of revolution and conflict, and continuing efforts to secure world peace.

How are the senior secondary Australian Curriculum history subjects structured?

The senior secondary Australian Curriculum for each history subject specifies content and achievement standards:

- The content describes the knowledge, understanding and skills that are to be taught and learned within a given subject.
- The achievement standards describe the quality of learning (the depth of understanding, extent of knowledge and sophistication of skill) expected of students who have studied the content for the subject.

The curriculum for each senior secondary subject is organised into four units with the last two units cognitively more challenging than the first two. Each unit is designed to be taught in about half a 'school year' of senior secondary studies.

Content has been specified for each unit, and achievement standards are described for each pair of units, that is, Units 1 and 2, and Units 3 and 4.

The curriculum also includes a rationale and a set of aims for the subject, a description of how the subject is organised, how general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are represented, and a glossary of key terms used.

How do the senior secondary history subjects align with the F-10 Australian Curriculum?

Both Australian Curriculum history subjects continue to develop student learning in history through the same strands that form the F-10 History curriculum, that is, *Historical knowledge and understanding*; and *Historical skills*.

The *Historical knowledge and understanding* strand in **Ancient History** includes a wider range of concepts and contexts for historical study. There is particular attention to the methods of archaeologists and historians, the impact of individuals in ancient times, and the evidence for how people lived in ancient societies.

The *Historical knowledge and understanding* strand in **Modern History** continues to develop the history of the modern world studied at Years 9-10. There is particular attention to significant developments and their far reaching consequences, the history of nations, tensions and conflicts of international significance, revolutionary change, and Asian and Australian history.

Both subjects continue to develop key inquiry skills through the *historical skills* strand, with a greater focus on skills associated with critical thinking, the analysis of sources, historical interpretation and contestability.

The senior secondary subjects continue to develop the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities introduced across Foundation to Year 10. Each subject includes a description of the opportunities for students to continue to develop their general capabilities and understanding of cross-curriculum priorities in ways that are relevant to the subject.



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How do the senior secondary history subjects differ from senior secondary courses in states and territories?

The Australian Curriculum history subjects contain content similar to that of state and territory history courses but there are some variations in scope, sequencing and emphasis.

There is more emphasis on the concept of contestability and issues of historiography in the Australian curriculum history subjects. This is in response to international research that students view the past as unproblematic. There is an emphasis on the provisional nature of historical interpretation in the introductory units for each subject in particular.

The number of topic electives within each unit is broadly consistent with most state and territory courses. As states and territories have continuing responsibility for pedagogy, assessment and reporting, their history courses may also include detailed eligibility requirements and assessment information.

How do the senior secondary history subjects relate to each other?

The Australian Curriculum history subjects have a complementary focus on key concepts that underpin the discipline of history, including evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, significance, empathy, perspectives and contestability. The same set of historical skills has been included in both subjects and provides a common focus for the teaching and learning of content in the *historical knowledge and understanding* strand of each subject.

What national and international curricula and research was drawn upon to develop the senior secondary history subjects?

In developing the senior secondary Australian Curriculum for History, ACARA reviewed state and territory History curriculum. ACARA's work was further guided by some key international references including History curriculum from the United Kingdom, Finland, the United States and Singapore with the following points noted:

- The draft senior secondary *Ancient and Modern History* subjects have a broader scope of contexts for historical study than most international curricula
- The strand *Historical knowledge and understanding* includes a wider range of concepts that constitute the discipline of history than is commonly found in most international history curriculum. These concepts are drawn from the latest research in the field of historical thinking, including the work of Peter Seixas, Sam Wineburg, Stephane Levesque, Jannet van Drie and Carla van Boxtel.

In addition, as part of ACARA's curriculum development process and a focus on high standard quality curriculum, the senior secondary Australian Curriculum subjects were reviewed by eminent overseas experts and international curriculum authorities.