

Shape of the Australian Curriculum: English

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: English* will guide the writing of the Australian English curriculum K–12.
- 1.2 This paper has been prepared following analysis of extensive consultation feedback to the National English Curriculum Framing Paper and decisions taken by the National Curriculum Board.
- 1.3 The paper should be read in conjunction with *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The national English curriculum will be the basis of planning, teaching and assessment of English in Australian schools and will guide the work of both experienced and beginning teachers of English.
- 2.2 In developing the national English curriculum those features of present-day Australia that matter to all Australians need to be considered – a view of our nation as culturally and linguistically diverse, democratic, evolving, with a history of accomplishments, and struggles, and a commitment to equity and openness.
- 2.3 Equally, the curriculum needs to be developed with a futures orientation. A futures orientation includes an appreciation that our society is growing in its complexity and that Australians will need to interact in a global environment, know how to learn, adapt, create and communicate effectively, and interpret and use information more fluently and critically.
- 2.4 The national English curriculum has a particular responsibility for quality learning in English language, literature and literacy. It is an important part of a renewed national effort to improve both the educational achievements of all students and the equity of educational provision.
- 2.5 Capabilities developed in English help individuals participate in society. Proficiency in English language affects how widely and how well young people are able to improve their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of their communities and their nation. Young Australians' developing identities, the cultures they live in, and their understanding of how identity and culture are connected, are all shaped by the growing capabilities for which the English curriculum takes a major responsibility.
- 2.6 The national English curriculum will focus on how language enables people to create meaning in a broad range of forms and contexts. It will support students to develop their knowledge of how language enables people to interact effectively, build and maintain their relationships, express and exchange their knowledge, skills, attitudes, feelings and opinions and will encourage an appreciation of Australia's literary heritage and that of other cultures.

3. AIMS OF THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM

- 3.1** The national English curriculum aims to develop, students' knowledge of language and literature and to consolidate and expand their literacy skills. More specifically it aims to support students to:
- understand how Standard Australian English works in its spoken and written forms and in combination with other non-linguistic forms of communication
 - learn Standard Australian English to help sustain and advance social cohesion in our linguistically and culturally complex country
 - respect the varieties of English and their influence on Standard Australian English
 - appreciate and enjoy language and develop a sense of its richness and its power to evoke feelings, form and convey ideas, persuade, entertain and argue
 - understand, interpret, reflect on and create an increasingly broad repertoire of spoken, written and multimodal texts across a growing range of settings
 - access a broad range of literary texts and develop an informed appreciation of literature
 - master the written and spoken language forms of schooling and knowledge
 - develop English skills for lifelong enjoyment and learning.

4. KEY TERMS

4.1 English

In this paper, English refers to Standard Australian English, the variety of spoken and written English language in Australia used in more formal settings. While it is always dynamic and evolving, it is recognised as the 'common language' of Australians.

4.2 Strands

The knowledge, understanding and skills students will learn in the English curriculum are organised into developmental sequences called strands. These are inter-related and inform and support each other. In planning cohesive programs, teachers will combine aspects of learning in each strand in different ways at different stages of learning.

4.3 Grammar

Grammar refers both to the language we use and the description of language as a system. In describing language, attention is paid to both structure (syntax) and meaning (semantics) at the level of the word, the sentence and the text.

4.4 Texts

Texts provide the means for communication. Their forms and conventions have developed to help us communicate effectively with a variety of audiences for a range of purposes. Texts can be written, spoken or multimodal and in print or digital/online forms. Multimodal texts combine language with other systems for communicating such as print text, visual images, soundtrack and spoken word as in film or computer presentation media. Texts provide opportunities for important learning about aspects of human experience and about aesthetic value. Many of the tasks that students undertake in and out of school involve literary texts, information texts, media texts, everyday texts and workplace texts.

4.5 Literature

The term literature refers to the text across a range of cultural contexts and past and present works that are valued for their form and style and are recognised as having enduring or artistic value. While the nature of literary texts is dynamic and evolving, they are recognised as having personal, social, cultural and aesthetic value and potential for enriching students' lives and scope of experience. Literature includes a broad range of forms such as novels, poetry, short stories, plays, fiction for young adults and children including picture books, multimodal texts such as film and a variety of non-fiction.

4.6 Literacy

Literacy conventionally refers to reading, writing, speaking, viewing, and listening effectively in a range of contexts. In the 21st century, the definition of literacy has expanded to refer to a flexible, sustainable mastery of a set of capabilities in the use and production of traditional texts and new communications technologies using spoken language, print and multimedia. Students need to be able to adjust and modify their use of language to better meet contextual demands in varying situations.

4.7 Modes

Modes refer to the various forms of communication – listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing and creating.

4.8 Creating

Creating refers to the production of multimodal texts in the same way that writing refers to the production of print text.

5. STRUCTURE OF THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM

5.1 The Strands

5.1.1 The national English curriculum is built around three interrelated strands that support students' growing understanding and use of English.

- Language – Knowing about the English language: a coherent, dynamic, and evolving body of knowledge about the English language and how it works.
- Literature – Understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature: an enjoyment in, and informed appreciation of, how English language can convey information and emotion, create imaginative worlds and aesthetic and other significant experiences.
- Literacy – Growing a repertoire of English usage: the ability to understand and produce the English language accurately, fluently, creatively, critically, confidently, and effectively in a range of modes, and digital and print settings, in texts designed for a range of purposes and audiences.

5.1.2 Each strand has its own distinctive goals, body of knowledge, history of ideas and interests, and pedagogical traditions. However, the practical integration of these strands is at the core of the curriculum. Learning programs should balance and integrate all three strands.

5.2 Language: Knowing about the English language

5.2.1 A fundamental responsibility of the English curriculum is to develop students' understanding about how the English language works. This is because such understanding gives students:

- coherence and cumulative learning across the school years
- learning that is portable and applicable to new settings across the school years and beyond.

Students will learn how language enables people to interact effectively, to build and maintain their relationships, and to express and exchange their knowledge, skills, attitudes, feelings, and opinions. A consistent way of understanding and talking about language enables students to reflect consciously and precisely on their own speaking and writing, its efficacy, fluency and creativity, and to discuss these matters productively with others.

- 5.2.2 Many students when learning to read need systematic attention to fundamentals like phonological and phonemic awareness, and sound-letter correspondences as well as the development of skills in using semantic and syntactic clues to make meaning. Students' abilities vary greatly so programs need to be flexible. Learning the fundamentals needs to be connected to other aspects of development in oral and written language.
- 5.2.3 The development of oral language proficiency is important in its own right. It is also important when learning to read and write. The teaching of listening and speaking is essential in the early years, and continues to be important throughout the years of schooling.
- 5.2.4 Spelling strategies, punctuation conventions, handwriting and word-processing skills should be taught across all years of schooling. There should be a strong early focus on establishing strategies and a knowledge of conventions, that can be consolidated and extended in the later years. Beginning to use a common vocabulary for these strategies and conventions is a prerequisite for consolidation and extension.
- 5.2.5 Vocabulary should be taught in ways that encourage students to be curious about the origins, meanings and uses of words. Deliberate attention should be given to expanding students' vocabulary resources and developing their literal and inferential comprehension. Increasingly sophisticated meanings across various curriculum areas call for a broad vocabulary and comprehension. Skills in using various types of dictionaries and thesauruses will help students' learning to become more generative and independent during and beyond school.
- 5.2.6 Attention should be given to the teaching of grammar across all the years of schooling to help students meet the demands of schooling and their lives outside school. These demands include reading, understanding, speaking, writing, and creating texts that describe, narrate, analyse, explain, recount, argue, review, and so on.

Students need to develop foundational knowledge about what constitutes appropriateness, accuracy, fluency, and confidence in understanding, speaking, reading and writing English. They need to learn about the structures and functions of word- and sentence-level grammar and text patterns and the connections between them. In doing so they will learn to write grammatically clear, purposefully constructed, coherent sentences, paragraphs and texts and achieve a better knowledge of how to choose words and grammatical and text structures that are appropriate to the audience or readership.

The goal of teaching grammar and text patterns should be on expressing thought clearly, persuading and arguing more convincingly and reasoning more carefully. The intention is to achieve coherence, precision and imagination in speaking and writing. The overall goal is conversion of 'knowledge about' language into a capacity for effective listening, speaking, viewing, reading, writing and creating.

- 5.2.7 Students also need to develop a clear, consistent and shared language for talking about language that enables them to:
- ask questions about their learning and to improve their language use
 - explain the nature and consequences of the choices they have made in expressing themselves
 - explain how language differs across settings, potential audiences, and purposes, and the implications of these differences for language use
 - discuss language use with teachers and others, with continuity from year to year
 - build their knowledge continuously as they progress through the school years.
- 5.2.8 The explicit teaching and consolidation of the fundamentals of spoken and written English are important aspects of the national English curriculum. These aspects of knowledge about English should be planned, introduced, consolidated, and embedded in language, literary, and literacy tasks as part of English programs throughout the school years.

5.3 Literature: Understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature

- 5.3.1 The Literature strand is fundamentally about students' engagement with, and study of, literary texts of personal, cultural, social, and aesthetic value. A significant feature of this strand is the attention it pays to texts that are judged to have potential for enriching students' lives and expanding the scope of their experience.

Encountering literary texts and creating their own will engage students partly because of what they might learn about human experience and what they might learn about how language has been used, and can be used by them, to create particular emotional, intellectual, or philosophical effects. In this strand distinctively literary approaches to texts are developed. Students develop critical understandings about:

- the social, historical and cultural context of texts
- a text's formal, creative and aesthetic qualities
- ways in which argument and viewpoint are presented and supported through a text
- how a text's features reflect the perspectives from which it can be interpreted
- how different perspectives are associated with different uses of language.

- 5.3.2 Studying literature helps shape personal, cultural and national identities. Studying past and present literature reveals the imaginative potential of the language, including how that relates to cinema, television, and multimedia. Engaging with literary texts is worthwhile in its own right, but, importantly, it is also valuable in developing the imaginative application of ideas, flexibility of thought, ethical and critical reflection, and motivation to learn.

The presence of Australian literary texts and an increasingly informed appreciation of the place of Australian literature among other literary traditions will be part of the national English curriculum.

Australia's evolving ethnic composition and the increasing national importance placed on our geographic location in the Asia-Pacific region brings with it a variety of cultural, social, and ethical interests and responsibilities. These interests, and the collective cultural memories that have accumulated around them, are represented in a range of literatures including the inscriptional and oral narrative traditions of Indigenous Australians as well as contemporary Indigenous literature. The national English curriculum will develop in all students an awareness of, interest in, and respect for the literary traditions and expressions of other nations in the Asia-Pacific region.

- 5.3.3 Literature will be a core element at every stage of the national English curriculum. Through a variety of experiences students will be supported to acquire the motivation, skills, and knowledge to develop an informed appreciation of literature.

In studying literature, students will increasingly reflect on the processes by which some works have been found to offer distinctive personal, cultural, social, and aesthetic experiences. They will explore why literature in some form has persisted in mattering to individuals and cultures.

- 5.3.4 As with all aspects of the national English curriculum, students' skills, knowledge and understandings will be developed coherently and cumulatively. This will begin with accessible, appropriate and engaging texts related to young students' daily lives and capture their imagination. These texts will be systematically broadened and deepened each year.

- 5.3.5 From primary school, the Literature strand will gradually incorporate literature for children and young adults, broadly defined in terms of different genres and modes that will evolve through the secondary years toward textual forms for more specialised study.

- 5.3.6 In the later years students will analyse both the historical genres and literary traditions of Australian literature and world literature and contemporary texts. By the final years, students' written and oral accounts of engagement with literary texts will show that they can apply a coherent knowledge of English to literary criticism, history, and informed appreciation, as these processes capture, refine, and extend their understandings of what is important to them in their lives now and in the future. With this in mind, specialised literature courses in the senior secondary years will connect more directly with literary studies at the university level for those students aiming to pursue such studies.

5.4 Literacy: Growing a repertoire of English usage

- 5.4.1 The Literacy strand aims to develop appropriateness, accuracy, confidence, fluency and efficacy in English across growing and increasingly complex and unfamiliar settings. The immediacy and spontaneity of oral language will be complemented gradually by more crafted oral, written, and multimodal uses – from the everyday language of personal experience toward the more abstract, specialised, and technical language of schooling.
- 5.4.2 The Literacy strand will help broaden students' knowledge of English language for later school learning, out-of-school experiences, and later participation in domestic, civic, and vocational life. This diversity means that print and digital contexts, and listening, viewing, reading, writing, and creating need to be taken into account; and also that the three strands must be highly integrated.
- 5.4.3 The Literacy strand will emphasise the breadth of repertoire and depth of mastery gained through applying an increasing understanding about the English language: about communication in spoken, print, and digital forms; about the structures and conventions of a variety of texts; and about how texts differ depending on their purpose, the nature of the audience, their subject matter, context and the mode or medium in use.
- 5.4.4 The Literacy strand also involves exploring and creating multimodal texts throughout the school years, incorporating a growing understanding of how texts work, their structures, interpretation, and the effects of certain features.
- 5.4.5 Students will learn that, for purposeful and productive communication, they will need more than one grammatical or textual pattern or one mode of communication. Present-day school textbooks, learning manuals, and popular media texts display these purposeful mixtures. Consolidating the knowledge about language and applying it to listening, viewing, reading, writing and creating settings are practical aims of the English curriculum.
- 5.4.6 The motivation for learning about the English language comes from the demands of expanding and consolidating English capabilities in the Literacy strand. Students' accurate, fluent and confident engagement with texts is based on developing skills of decoding, spelling, punctuation, and grammatical and textual fluency. Similarly, processes and strategies that support comprehension and expression in reading and writing texts will also underpin more proficient, analytic, and effective uses of English.
- 5.4.7 The Literacy strand ensures that knowledge about language is put to practical and purposeful work. The value of learning grammar, for example, lies not simply in the ability to name a grammatical formation, text type or genre; rather, the educational questions to start with are 'what is the purpose of this communication?' and 'in that light, what grammatical formations and text types can best achieve it?' This makes it clear that imagination and creativity are crucial to authentic communication along with clarity, accuracy, and fluency.

5.5 The relationship between the strands

5.5.1 The three strands are not designed to be curriculum modules or sub-programs: but rather should be seen as interwoven. They represent aspects of learning that together can be addressed in any activity or sequence of work. Examples of how each strand works with and supports the other strands follow.

5.5.2 How the Language strand works with and supports the Literature Strand:

The Language strand will develop students' knowledge of English at the word, sentence and text levels. It gives them a language to talk about structures, patterns and key analytic concepts of language use when they listen, speak, read, view and write. Building up this kind of knowledge is helped with, and is itself helped by, the ongoing study of literature.

Studying literary texts promotes discussion on how writers use language and through different forms and media. Evaluating literature encourages discussion on how language choices develop characters and settings, how narrative builds suspense, how a poem creatively manipulates language, how scriptwriters use irony, how written text interacts with accompanying visuals, and so on.

5.5.3 How the Language strand works with and supports the Literacy Strand:

Knowing how language works directly informs, and is informed by learning in the Literacy strand (developing students' listening, speaking, viewing, reading, and writing in an increasingly wider range of contexts and purposes). For the Literacy Strand in particular, an increasingly rich vocabulary that describes a variety of strategies for creating and understanding texts is a key resource to be developed through the school years. Students should engage with and produce a wide range of texts, understanding how they differ depending on their purpose, the nature of the audience, their subject matter, context and the mode or medium in use.

5.5.4 How the Literature strand works with and supports the Literacy Strand:

Some of the capabilities students need to acquire and consolidate will be best developed through a focus on texts which are designed primarily for aesthetic purposes. Many teachers currently engage students in 're-working' literary texts, for example, in a different medium, or with additional commentaries from different perspectives. Such activities are examples of how students can combine their learning from both the Literature and Literacy strands, enhancing the depth of literary appreciation, and broadening the horizon of literacy capabilities.

5.6 English across K-12

Although the curriculum will be developed year by year, this document provides a guideline across four year groupings:

Years K–2:	typically students from 5 to 8 years of age
Years 3–6:	typically students from 8 to 12 years of age
Years 7*–10:	typically students from 12 to 15 years of age
Years 11–12:	typically students from 15 to 18 years of age

*Specific advice will be provided to writers on the development of the Year 7 curriculum.

5.7 Years K – 2 (typically 5–8 years of age)

- 5.7.1 Students bring to school a range of experiences with language and texts from their home and community life. Within the three strands of the English curriculum, students' out-of-school experiences with texts and language will be included as valid ways of communicating in their lives and as rich resources for further learning about language, literature and literacy. In the early years, students will be engaged with purposeful listening and speaking activities for different purposes and contexts.
- 5.7.2 The curriculum in these years aims to provide the foundational skills, knowledge, and understandings needed for continued learning. English in the early years will provide students with:
- skills to expand their knowledge of language and acquire strategies to assist that expansion
 - a pleasurable and varied experience of literature
 - the beginnings of a repertoire of listening, speaking, viewing, reading, writing and creating activities.
- 5.7.3 *Language Strand:* Students develop an understanding that spoken sounds can be represented with letters and use their knowledge of letters and combinations of letters to make written words. Students begin to develop their handwriting and develop basic sentences. They learn about essential forms of punctuation such as capital letters and full stops. They continue to extend their vocabulary and learn to read more words. They also build their comprehension of the intended meaning conveyed in texts as they learn to read. Most importantly, students begin to develop a broad conceptual understanding of what a language is, and its importance in and out of school.
- 5.7.4 *Literature Strand:* Students encounter a variety of literary texts, including picture books, short stories, rhymes, poems, and multimedia texts such as films, pictures and websites. They listen to teachers and others read and respond to reading. Through engagement with literature they learn about themselves, each other and the world, beginning to develop an appreciation for literature, to talk about features, and to see how features relate to their appreciation. Students describe and explore the events and characters in literary texts and develop personal responses to the texts. They create their own narratives, drawing on their experiences with literature.
- 5.7.5 *Literacy Strand:* Students further understand the purposes of a range of texts. They speak to and write for a growing range of audiences and contexts. They compose short texts, starting from single words and sentences and moving to more sustained compositions, for different purposes. Students are given explicit guidance and modelling in their production of texts, and direct, explicit links are made between the texts explored in class and texts that might be composed by the students. Through their written and oral texts, students are given opportunities to describe their world outside of school, their understandings and ideas about that world, and their place in it. Familiarity with both print and digital settings for writing begins in this early stage.

5.8 Years 3 – 6 (typically 8–12 years of age)

- 5.8.1 *Language Strand:* Students develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding about grammar and language features and are increasingly able to articulate these understandings. More complex punctuation, clause and sentence structures, and textual purposes and patterns are introduced. This deeper understanding includes more explicit metalanguage as students learn to classify words, sentence structures, and texts. To consolidate both 'learning to read' and 'reading to learn', students explore the language features of different types of texts, including visual texts, advertising, digital/online and media texts.

- 5.8.2 *Literature Strand:* Students encounter denser and more finely structured literary texts and have more extensive discussions about them. They develop ways to explore aesthetic and ethical aspects of literary texts. Students are given opportunities to develop an informed appreciation of how stories and characters are developed in order to achieve particular purposes such as to generate pleasure and engagement. They explore different forms of literary texts such as narrative, poetry, prose, plays and film in more depth. They use these understandings to inform the development of their own texts.
- 5.8.3 *Literacy Strand:* Students explore the narrative, expository and persuasive potential of written and spoken language for different purposes. They learn to produce texts for a greater range of audiences and analyse the differences between types of texts, purpose and audience. Students are also given opportunities to represent their ideas through the production of spoken, written and multimodal texts. In these years students produce texts individually and in groups. The purposes and content of discussions and negotiations around joint productions of text are important .

5.9 Years 7 – 10 (typically 12–15 years of age)

- 5.9.1 *Language Strand:* Students extend their understandings of how language works and learn to transfer understandings of language to different contexts. To achieve this, students develop understandings of the requirements of different types of texts. Building on earlier learning, students continue to represent both personal and increasingly abstract ideas in a variety of ways.
- 5.9.2 *Literature Strand:* Students are introduced to increasingly sophisticated analysis of the differences between various kinds of literary texts, popular-culture texts, and everyday texts. They continue to apply what they have learnt about literature when creating their own texts. Students are given opportunities to engage with a variety of texts, including texts of their own choosing, and they explain why they made that choice. The notion of ‘valuing’ of certain texts as ‘literature’ is discussed. Students develop understandings of how such texts can be discussed and analysed in relation to themes, ideas and historical and cultural contexts.
- 5.9.3 *Literacy Strand:* Students apply their emerging understandings of what makes a text valuable and appropriate when they create texts of sociocultural and personal importance. Students engage with a variety of genres and modes. They re-enact, represent and describe texts in order to display their understanding of narrative, theme, purpose, context and argument and to defend their ideas in written and oral modes. Students continue to be given opportunities to create increasingly sophisticated and multimodal texts in groups and individually.

5.10 Years 11 – 12 (typically 15–18 years of age)

- 5.10.1 The English curriculum in the senior secondary years continues to provide a range of choice of more specialised courses to meet students’ needs and interests. Some examples of options may include the study of film or literature, a general English studies program oriented to vocational uses of English and English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D).
- 5.10.2 *Language Strand:* Students apply their knowledge about language to a variety of disciplines and purposes. In doing so, they demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of grammar and language features from the textual to the word level, and the ability to identify and analyse how language is used, and implement this understanding for different purposes and audiences.
- 5.10.3 *Literature Strand:* Students will better understand literary texts and discuss and debate the elements that make a text culturally valuable. Students engage in extensive analysis of literary texts, in terms of contextual aspects such as social impact, purpose and message. They also analyse literature texts for technical aspects such as language, plot and character development. (Students compare past and present texts in relation to themes, purposes or language features, in order to discuss issues of form, content, and structure). Students compose texts that show informed appreciation of plot and character development, effective language use, and representation and manipulation of ideas.
- 5.10.4 *Literacy Strand:* Students produce a growing range of creative expository, persuasive and other texts under various circumstances with a variety of stimuli, and demonstrate an ability to create written, spoken and multimodal texts both individually and with peers.
- 5.10.5 There will be further advice for writers about the nature of the curriculum in the senior secondary years and key considerations in the development of the curriculum.

6. CONSIDERATIONS

The following key considerations have informed the development of this paper and will continue to inform the development of the national English curriculum.

6.1 Equity and opportunity

The national English curriculum will provide flexibility and choice for teachers and students. The factors that influence this choice include school and community contexts, local learning opportunities, historical perspectives, contemporary and local issues and available learning resources. In managing this choice, teachers need to provide a balanced English curriculum that engages every student while catering for a broad cohort of students and a range of delivery contexts.

Ensuring that every student develops the knowledge, skills and understanding in English that enables them to actively participate in the broader community will require consideration of how to best meet the needs of every student.

Present-day Australia is a nation in which over 60 Indigenous languages are spoken, along with over 100 'community' or migrant languages. These students bring into Australian schools different cultural conceptions of language and a variety of languages that differ dramatically in their oral and written conventions, in their ideas about what language is, how it works, how it is written, and how it contributes to the identities, experiences, and growing capabilities of individuals and to the cohesion of communities.

Students who are learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) make up about one-quarter of the Australian school population. This includes children of recent or settled migrants, refugees, rural, remote and urban Aboriginal students, and increasingly, international students. These students may have little or no English at all. These students may be illiterate in their first language, speak a dialect of English or speak everyday English but lack proficiency in the language of schooling. The national English curriculum must acknowledge their diverse backgrounds and life experiences, and how their language experiences provide a building block to develop their skills in Standard Australian English.

The national English curriculum also needs to provide a framework for students with learning disabilities and those with special needs.

6.2 Connections to other learning areas

The English curriculum provides a rich resource for learning in all other areas of the curriculum. The skills taught in the Language and Literacy strands support and contribute to the literacy requirements needed for history, mathematics and science. In the Language strand, when students learn conventions and knowledge about word and sentence level grammar, this learning will contribute to their use and creation of texts in the other learning areas. When students learn a language to talk about language in English, it provides a language which can be used by teachers and students in the other learning areas. Some of the texts which students speak, write, read, create and listen to in the Literacy strand of English will have similarities to the texts of the other learning areas. However, it is also important that teachers of mathematics, history, and science take responsibility for explicitly teaching their students about conventions of language and text patterns within their own learning area.

The curriculum for each area must acknowledge where there are links or opportunities to build cross curriculum learning. Such references will be made evident in both the English curriculum document and in other relevant documents.

6.3 Clarity of the curriculum

The English curriculum needs to be sufficiently descriptive to guide beginning teachers but should avoid a level of prescription that would prevent experienced teachers from using their professional skills. The documents need to be written clearly, without excessive jargon, and should communicate succinctly the key aspects of student learning.

6.4 The role of digital technologies

Australians conduct their routine daily activities through a wide and complex range of oral and written language and images. Our sense of belonging to local, institutional, national, and, increasingly, virtual communities, and our ability to contribute meaningfully to those communities, increasingly depends on how well we communicate.

Digital and online technologies continue to profoundly transform how members of Australian society work, meet, keep in touch, express themselves, share, build and store knowledge, and access material for pleasure and learning. Clearly, digital and online materials present the English curriculum with new teaching opportunities. Enhancing the access of all teachers and students to these resources is critical.

6.5 The nature of the learner (K – 12)

In developing the national curriculum (both content and achievement standards) consideration will be given to characteristics of learners across the years of schooling. These characteristics influence curriculum decisions about how and when particular content is best introduced and consolidated.

6.6 General capabilities

Skills and understanding related to literacy, numeracy, and ICT need to be used and further developed in all learning areas.

While the initial and major continuing development of literacy will be in English programs, all teachers in all learning areas must take responsibility for developing student capability in response to the specific literacy demands of their learning area.

Two other specific capabilities - thinking skills and creativity - also need to be developed explicitly in all learning areas. Other general capabilities like self management, team work, intercultural understandings, ethical awareness, and social competence will be represented in each learning area in ways appropriate to that area.

6.7 Cross curriculum perspectives

There are other cross-curriculum matters related to Indigenous education, sustainability and Australia's links with Asia that can be thought of as perspectives rather than capabilities. Each of these perspectives will be represented in learning areas in ways appropriate to that area. The strands of the national English curriculum provide opportunities for students to explore these perspectives.

In the Literature strand, for example, students develop understanding of aspects of Indigenous languages and culture in the English curriculum, through a broad range of texts, including the inscriptional and oral narrative traditions as well as contemporary literature of Indigenous people. The range of texts incorporates Indigenous people's storytelling, life stories, poetry, Dreaming stories, song, media, plays, fiction and film.

The curriculum documents will be explicit on how the perspectives are dealt with in each learning area and how links can be made between learning areas.

7. PEDAGOGY AND ASSESSMENT: SOME BROAD ASSUMPTIONS

- 7.1** In the English curriculum teachers strategically use both explicit teaching and more discovery-based or exploratory approaches. The core of the English curriculum involves rules and conventions, as well as imagination, experimentation, judgment, and appreciation. This calls for a range of pedagogical approaches, from direct teacher intervention, to encouragement, support, and indirect guidance.
- 7.2** Research into pedagogy in English language, literature and literacy indicates that teachers of English need to:
- provide flexible and responsive classroom activities
 - provide extended classroom interactions that support the understanding of specific texts in depth
 - use texts from a wide range of genres, topics and issues
 - identify and use approach(es) to teaching language and literacy that best meet students' needs
 - make clear and cumulative connections between knowledge and skills across multiple curriculum areas instead of treating them as discrete
 - engage students in extended interactive learning to develop depth and complexity of understanding
 - clarify for students the differences between the 'official' written and spoken language of schooling, the everyday language of 'commonsense' and the language and dialect of the students' out-of-school lives; and to develop the languages, registers, and genres of schooling, while acknowledging and using these differences in the classroom.
- 7.3** In assessment there should be a balance of attention to the three strands and tasks that focus on:
- speaking, listening to, reading and writing texts for different purposes and audiences
 - reading, writing, creating and revising texts in print and digital forms
 - accuracy, fluency, confidence, meaningfulness, purposefulness, persuasiveness, analysis and artfulness, imagination, and originality
 - knowledge about the various levels of language use (word, sentence and text), and how some choices influence interpretation, emotional and critical response, and purpose.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1** Both primary and secondary students will benefit from a more systematic clarification of the importance of the three strands of English from K–12 and their interaction, that is, to distinguish between explicit knowledge about the English language, an informed appreciation of literature, and an ability to use English in its important forms and settings. In implementing educational experiences that systematically build capabilities over time, and maximise quality and equity, it is the interaction of these three strands that matters most.
- 8.2** Australian students will learn how the English language is constructed: patterns of pronunciation and spelling; the grammatical classification of words, sentences, and textual patterns; the bases for responding to literary texts; the production of texts that combine visual and linguistic information, and so on.
- 8.3** The national English curriculum will have a systematic program of study in literature, both written in and translated into English. It will engage students with an increasingly systematic understanding of the creative processes of composition, the practices of aesthetic craftwork that have been perennially valued, of how those processes have come about and of why societies have recognised their value.