

What Australian Curriculum

By Jeanie Clark



Registered home educators in Victoria, sign annually to say that they will cover the Eight Key Learning Areas (KLAs) over time in their children's education. In 2013, the roll-out of a national curriculum begins. This article is to introduce the Australian Curriculum (AC). There are no changes to Victoria's Home Education requirements from the AC (ie. You must broadly cover the eight KLAs but the AC is not compulsory. However, in some other states, there are requirements to follow state curriculums, so the AC may affect home educators there. Please see your state contacts for any follow-up from this introduction.

In 2013, four KLAs, or AC domains, come into operation in Victoria (although schools and home educators alike can choose whether to use the AC). The AC has evolved from the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians(1) in 2008. Part of the motivation is to make it easier for families moving between states as there has long been differences between state education systems. It is hoped that as the AC comes on line, this will cease to be the case. The AC also aims to meet 21st century schooling needs(2). English, History, Maths and Science are the AC domains being implemented. In Victoria, a hybrid curriculum called 'AusVELS', has been introduced meaning these four domains have been adopted, while the others from VELs continue.

On-line

The details for the AC is all on-line – anyone can download the PDFs for free. You can find it at the ACARA website or the AusVELS one. For the four AC domains, the content is the same in ACARA and AusVELS, just presented differently. There is also an interdisciplinary curriculum 'Sustainability Curriculum Framework'.

One change you will notice is the name for the first year of school. The states called the first school year different things. Agreement was made to call it something new – Foundation (F). So the compulsory years are now F-10. The years may be grouped in many ways. The traditional Victorian ones are: F-2 lower primary, 3-4 middle primary, 5-6 upper primary, 7-8 lower secondary and 9-10 middle secondary, but not all states have these groups. Domain groupings may differ.

The AC provides statements for half-yearly progress and yearly achievement standards. These are meant to be a guide, as children move ahead in different domains at different rates. There are Scope and Sequence charts for each domain which covers the whole content. They show

all the content intended by sub-strands – scope- by successive year levels – sequence. It is a good summary of what can be covered in education for each subject.

To use the AusVELS website, go to <<http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au>>. To find overall aims for a domain and its content areas – strands and sub-strands- choose the curriculum tab and then the overview button. (These are shown in the table following.) In the Overview document, you will also find a link to 'scope and sequence'.

Further detail is available by each level – choose the level, or groups of levels, when in a domain. When you look at the curriculum on-line, there may be symbols there. One indicates that this statement is part of the interdisciplinary subject Sustainability. Another will link to examples of lessons and student work which you can use, and download, for free. This offering is expected to grow over time.

To use the ACARA website, go to <<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>>. Choose the domain, then Aims, and then Content Structure. The information there will be the same as on AusVELS. So the accompanying table could have come from using the ACARA AC website.

So take your pick for what is useful to you from the AC, but note it is still being built, so other lessons, examples, and domains are set to be delivered over time.

References and further reading

- (1) MCEETYA Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians Dec 2008.
- (4) Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, Australian Curriculum Overview, <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Curriculum/Overview>
- (3) *ibid* The AusVELS Curriculum English 2012 pp2-3 at <http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Print/AusVELS.pdf?d=E&l=F&l=1&l=2&l=3&l=4&l=5&l=6&l=7&l=8&l=9&l=10&e=0&e=1&e=2&e=3&e=4&e=5>
- (4) Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority The AusVELS Curriculum Mathematics 2012 pp 2-4 download at <http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Print/AusVELS.pdf?d=M&l=F&l=1&l=2&l=3&l=4&l=5&l=6&l=7&l=8&l=9&l=10&e=0&e=1&e=2&e=3&e=4&e=5>
- (5) *ibid*, The AusVELS Curriculum Science 2012 pp 2-5 download at <http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Print/AusVELS.pdf?d=S&l=F&l=1&l=2&l=3&l=4&l=5&l=6&l=7&l=8&l=9&l=10&e=0&e=1&e=2&e=3&e=4&e=5>
- (6) *ibid*, The AusVELS Curriculum History 2012 pp 2-5 download at <http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Print/AusVELS.pdf?d=H&l=F&l=1&l=2&l=3&l=4&l=5&l=6&l=7&l=8&l=9&l=10&e=0&e=1&e=2&e=3&e=4&e=5>

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Aims and Content of the AC English, Mathematics, Science and History Curriculums

AC Domain	Strands	Sub-strands
The Australian Curriculum: English⁽³⁾ aims to ensure that students:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn to listen to, read, view, speak, write, create and reflect on increasingly complex and sophisticated spoken, written and multimodal texts across a growing range of contexts with accuracy, fluency and purpose appreciate, enjoy and use the English language in all its variations and develop a sense of its richness and power to evoke feelings, convey information, form ideas, facilitate interaction with others, entertain, persuade and argue understand how Standard Australian English works in its spoken and written forms and in combination with nonlinguistic forms of communication to create meaning develop interest and skills in inquiring into the aesthetic aspects of texts, and develop an informed appreciation of literature. 	Language	Language variation and change Language for interaction Text structure and organization Expressing and developing ideas Sound and letter knowledge
	Literature	Literature and context Responding to literature Examining literature Creating literature
	Literacy	Texts in context: Interacting with others Interpreting, analysing and evaluating Creating texts
The Australian Curriculum: Mathematics⁽⁴⁾ aims to ensure that students:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are confident, creative users and communicators of mathematics, able to investigate, represent and interpret situations in their personal and work lives and as active citizens develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of mathematical concepts and fluency with processes, and are able to pose and solve problems and reason in Number and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics and Probability recognise connections between the areas of mathematics and other disciplines and appreciate mathematics as an accessible and enjoyable discipline to study. 	Number and Algebra,	Number and place value Fractions and Decimals Real Numbers Money and financial mathematics Patterns and Algebra Linear and non-linear relationships
	Measurement and Geometry	Using units of measurement Shape Location and Transformation Geometric Reasoning Pythagoras and Trigonometry
	Statistics and Probability	Chance Data Representation and Interpretation
	Running across the above are proficiency strands: Understanding Fluency Problem Solving Reasoning	
The Australian Curriculum: Science⁽⁵⁾ aims to ensure that students develop:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an interest in science as a means of expanding their curiosity and willingness to explore, ask questions about and speculate on the changing world in which they live an understanding of the vision that science provides of the nature of living things, of the Earth and its place in the cosmos, and of the physical and chemical processes that explain the behaviour of all material things an understanding of the nature of scientific inquiry and the ability to use a range of scientific inquiry methods, including questioning; planning and conducting experiments and investigations based on ethical principles; collecting and analysing data; evaluating results; and drawing critical, evidence based conclusions an ability to communicate scientific understanding and findings to a range of audiences, to justify ideas on the basis of evidence, and to evaluate and debate scientific arguments and claims an ability to solve problems and make informed, evidence-based decisions about current and future applications of science while taking into account ethical and social implications of decisions an understanding of historical and cultural contributions to science as well as contemporary science issues and activities and an understanding of the diversity of careers related to science a solid foundation of knowledge of the biological, chemical, physical, Earth and space sciences, including being able to select and integrate the scientific knowledge and methods needed to explain and predict phenomena, to apply that understanding to new situations and events, and to appreciate the dynamic nature of science knowledge. 	Science Understanding	Biological Sciences Chemical Sciences Earth and Space Sciences Physical Sciences
	Science as a Human Endeavour	Nature and development of science Use and influence of science
	Science Inquiry Skills	Questioning and predicting: Planning and conducting Processing and analysing data and information Evaluating
The Australian Curriculum: History⁽⁶⁾ aims to ensure that students develop:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interest in, and enjoyment of, historical study for lifelong learning and work, including their capacity and willingness to be informed and active citizens knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the past and the forces that shape societies, including Australian society understanding and use of historical concepts, such as evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy, significance and contestability capacity to undertake historical inquiry, including skills in the analysis and use of sources, and in explanation and communication. 	Historical Knowledge and Understanding	No sub-strands structure. Instead Curriculum focus by: F-2 Awareness of family history and community heritage 3-6 Local/national history and use of a range of sources
	Historical Skills	7-10 World and Australian history, the analysis and use of sources and historical interpretation

Table by J.Clark, collated from AusVELS website downloads see reference list above. .