

## **National English Curriculum: Framing paper**

For consultation - November 2008 to 28 February 2009

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## PREAMBLE

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1 The *National English Curriculum: Framing paper* proposes broad directions for what teachers should teach and young people should learn in the national English curriculum from Kindergarten<sup>1</sup> to Year 12.

2 The purpose of this paper is to generate broad-ranging discussions about curriculum development. The paper is posted on the National Curriculum Board's website ([www.ncb.org.au](http://www.ncb.org.au)) with an invitation to all those interested to provide feedback and advice up to 28 February 2009.

3 The Board will then examine all feedback and determine its final recommendation to guide curriculum development.

### **Process to develop the *National English Curriculum: Framing paper***

4 The Board began its consultation with the publication of the *National Curriculum Development Paper* on its website. This paper described the context of its work and set down questions that needed to be answered to determine the kind of curriculum that would be developed.

5 *The Shape of the National Curriculum: A Proposal for Discussion* was developed following feedback from the 'Into the Future: National Curriculum Board Forum' and state and territory consultation forums. Appendix 1 provides details about its principles and specifications for curriculum development. This paper is posted on the Board's website with an invitation to anyone interested to provide feedback during Term 4, 2008.

6 The Board began work on framing the national curriculum in English by recruiting a lead writer to work with a small advisory group (see Appendix 2) to draft an initial advice paper that provided a broad scope and sequence from Kindergarten to Year 12.

7 This initial advice paper was discussed at a national forum in October. On the day after the forum a small group of nominees from the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE), Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA), Experts in Primary Literacies (e:lit) and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) met with the writer to discuss the feedback from the forum and its implications for developing the curriculum.

8 The *National English Curriculum: Framing paper* is built on this initial advice, advisory group feedback, submissions through the Board's website, individual responses by academics and teachers, responses from national, state and territory forums and responses received through email and letters.

9 The *National English Curriculum: Framing paper* is best read in conjunction with *The Shape of the National Curriculum: A Proposal for Discussion* to provide a context for the shape of the curriculum overall. The framing paper focuses on what the content for the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Kindergarten' refers to the first year at school. In some jurisdictions this is called 'Reception' or 'Preparatory'.

national English curriculum might be; assessment and pedagogy, although key considerations for any curriculum, are addressed only briefly in the paper.

### **Providing feedback about the *National English Curriculum: Framing paper***

10 The Board welcomes feedback on this paper. Survey questions are included in Appendix 3 and there are several ways to participate. Survey forms can be emailed to [feedback@ncb.org.au](mailto:feedback@ncb.org.au) and written feedback can be mailed to: National Curriculum Board Feedback, PO Box 177, Carlton South, Victoria 3053.

11 From 25 November online feedback for this paper can be submitted through the Board's website link:

[http://www.ncb.org.au/get\\_involved/subscribe/ways\\_of\\_participating.html](http://www.ncb.org.au/get_involved/subscribe/ways_of_participating.html)

Register from this link. Once you have joined, a username and password provide easy access to online surveys, discussions and summaries of feedback comments. This is an opportunity to be fully involved and up-to-date with national curriculum development.

## INTRODUCTION

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12 A national English curriculum, because of its particular responsibility for quality learning in language, literature, and literacy, is an important part of a renewed national effort to improve the educational achievements of all students. As part of its goal to encourage openness to diversity and the imagination, an effective English curriculum can help strengthen connections between people who are linguistically, socially, and culturally diverse, and who are separated by time and space.

13 Capabilities in English help individuals participate in society. English proficiency 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 subject English takes a major responsibility.

14 Developing a national English curriculum invites us to explore those features of present-day Australia that matter to all Australians, a view of our nation as pluralistic and changing, with a history of accomplishments and struggles, a commitment to democracy, and aspirations to equity and openness.

## AIMS

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15 Historically, English has taken responsibility for developing students' knowledge of language and literature and for consolidating and expanding their literacy skills. The national English curriculum aims to affirm the continuing relevance of these areas of responsibility and to support students to:

- acquire a knowledge of how English works in its spoken and written forms and in combinations with other communication systems
- understand and compose spoken and written English texts fluently, effectively, creatively, and critically
- understand and compose an increasingly broad repertoire of texts appropriately across a growing range of settings
- gain access to literature and develop an increasingly informed appreciation of literature
- analyse and synthesise texts accurately, critically, and imaginatively
- master the written and spoken language forms of schooling and knowledge
- develop skills in English that provide a platform for lifelong enjoyment and learning
- develop a working knowledge of the English language that can sustain and advance a linguistically and culturally complex country.

In light of these aims, the national English curriculum should be built around three core Elements:

*Element 1: Language: Knowledge about the English language:* a coherent, dynamic, and evolving body of knowledge about the English language and how it works.

*Element 2: Literature: Informed appreciation of literature:* an enjoyment in and increasingly informed appreciation of the English language in its capacity to convey information, to express emotion, to create imaginative worlds, and to convey aesthetically and ethically significant experiences through reading and viewing a variety of literary texts.

*Element 3: Literacy: Growing repertoires of English usage:* the ability to understand and produce the English language accurately, fluently, creatively, critically, confidently, and effectively in a growing range of modes, and digital and print settings.

16 The overall objective of the national English curriculum is to develop knowledge about language, literature, and literacy that can be successfully applied in authentic and increasingly complex settings. The three Elements contribute to this knowledge through their systematic attention, built over time, to aspects of using language. Each contributes in its own right and also contributes to the others.

## **A FUTURES ORIENTATION**

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17 Australian society is saturated with language, literature, literacy, and communication media. Australians conduct their routine daily activities, more than did their parents and grandparents, through a wider range of oral and written language and images. Their sense of belonging to local, institutional, national, and, increasingly, virtual communities, and their ability to contribute meaningfully to those communities, will come to depend more and more critically on how well they understand, interpret, and produce communications (Lo Bianco, Liddicoat, & Crozet 1999). Most young Australians now leave schools with the language capabilities to participate in this environment. Some, however, do not and so are disenfranchised from full citizenship.

18 Digital and online technologies continue to transform more and more sectors of Australian society in increasingly profound ways: how people 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 English with new teaching opportunities (Beavis 2007) including opportunities for adapting these materials to suit the specific needs of the English curriculum. Enhancing the access of all teachers and students to these resources is critical.

19 Globalisation, in the form of the rapid and substantial international movements of people, money, ideas, and knowledge, has contributed to changes in the structure of the Australian labour market (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008). Many students now in Australian schools are heading for worksites and vocational pathways that are markedly different from those encountered by their parents and grandparents. The later years of the English curriculum need to be designed so that some realistic account is taken of the increasingly diverse pathways that school leavers can take. These developments combine to put pressure on young people's proficiency in English and on their ability to learn quickly in a range of unfamiliar conditions. Even in those sectors where the share of the labour market is shrinking, jobs require increasingly sophisticated language and literacy skills and more successful engagement with new knowledge. Elements 1 and 3 of the proposed new English curriculum are designed partly in light of these extraordinary and relatively rapid developments.

20 The English curriculum needs to harness the resource represented by the exceptional diversity of the Australian population. Present-day Australia is a nation in which over 60 Indigenous languages are spoken, along with over 100 imported 'community' or migrant languages (Liddicoat 2007). Students bring into Australian schools 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 inscribed, and how it contributes to the identities, experiences, and growing capabilities of individuals and to the cohesion of communities.

21 Students who are learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) make up about one-quarter of the Australian school population. They are over-represented in the lower achievement levels in literacy assessments. They include the children of recent or settled migrants, refugees, rural, remote and urban Aboriginal students, and increasingly, international students undertaking schooling in Australia. Such learners might know no English at all, or they might have limited English proficiency. They might, for example, be illiterate in their first language, speak a dialect of English, or be orally fluent in everyday English but lack proficiency in the language of schooling. The national English curriculum must meet the needs of all EAL/D students.

22 The national English curriculum also needs to provide a framework for students with learning disabilities and those with special needs. All students are entitled to an education that enables them to develop their communicative capacities fully. The national English curriculum should provide a framework within which this can be achieved.

23 In summary, all of these changes impact on Australian students and on the ways in which they need to use and learn about English now and in the years ahead. These developments are part of the dynamism of the Australian language, literary, and literacy experience, and they put pressure on the coherence, practicality, inclusiveness, and adaptability of an English curriculum. These developments also make it clear that the national English curriculum plays a central and practical part in affirming and acting on a commitment to both equity and quality in Australian life.

## TERMS USED IN THIS PAPER

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24 **Texts:** Texts are vehicles for expressing meaning and are developed to communicate purposefully to intended audiences on particular topics. They can be in print, multimodal and digital/online forms. In educational settings texts both offer opportunities for learning and show the signs of learning. Texts provide opportunities for important learning about aspects of human experience and about aesthetic value. They represent authentic examples of the textual materials and tasks that students face in and out of school.

25 **Literature:** The term *literature* applies to texts that are valued for their form and style and are recognised as having important permanent or artistic value. It includes a broad range of forms such as novels, poetry, picture books, multimodal texts, short stories and drama, and a variety of non-fiction forms such as biography. Studying literature involves the study of past and present works that aim primarily to make the most of the imaginative potential of the language. Such texts are judged to have personal, social and aesthetic value and particular potential for enriching young learners' lives and expanding the scope of their experience.

26 **Literacy:** Literacy conventionally refers to reading, writing, speaking, viewing and listening. Recent approaches to defining literacy have expanded on this definition of literacy by drawing attention to (a) the multiple capabilities that go together to make up a fluent and effective member of a literate society, (b) the requirement that people now need to be fluent and effective in both traditional and new communication technologies, (c) the need for these capabilities to be responsive to different contexts of use, and (d) the need for these capabilities to be systematically maintained over time.

27 **Modalities:** *Modalities* is an umbrella term used in subject English and describes the various forms of communication such as written and spoken language or visual images. Different modalities have different strengths and weaknesses as ways of communicating.

Written and spoken language, for instance, is especially good at conveying sequence and progress, and causes and effects, compared to some other modalities. Still visual images (photographs, maps, graphics, and so on) are comparatively better at showing the static or stable features of elements, and their complex inter-relations.

28 **General capabilities:** This term refers to those capabilities that enable engagement with and success in a variety of curriculum areas. It is evident that literacy, numeracy, and ICT are put to heavy duty use in many curriculum areas. The term also refers to dispositions that crucially affect students' success across the curriculum areas, including curiosity, creativity, intellectual adaptability, and collaboration.

## CONSIDERATIONS

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### Beginnings and ‘basics’

29 There has been long-standing discussion about the teaching of ‘the basics’ of literacy in the early years of schooling: grapheme–phoneme correspondence, phonological and phonemic awareness, alphabetic knowledge, spelling, the conventions of punctuation, comprehension, and so on. Doing the best job possible in these areas has strong effects on educational quality and equity.

30 Four overall conclusions (drawn from the Australian National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy 2005; Paris 2005; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Reading Panel 2000) have general support from the extensive research literature on this topic:

- The explicit and systematic teaching of phonological awareness and sound–script correspondences is important. The acquisition of this knowledge does not take place at the same time or tempo for all students and programs need to be flexible enough to cater for students who come to school already reading proficiently through to those who need intensive, ongoing support.
- Spelling, punctuation, and grammar need to be taught throughout the school years, with a strong early focus on establishing strategies and a knowledge of conventions that can be consolidated and extended in the later years. The determination of a common vocabulary for these strategies and conventions is a prerequisite for consolidation and extension.
- Deliberate attention should be given to the expansion of students’ vocabulary resources and the development of their literal and inferential comprehension. Breadth of vocabulary and comprehension are key factors in students’ ability to engage productively in the increasingly sophisticated use and construction of meanings across the various areas of the curriculum.
- ‘Basic’ learning is not an end in itself. It needs to become connected to other aspects of language in its authentic uses. Excessive levels of attention to ‘the basics’, or attention that is not clearly reconnected to other aspects of literacy development, can restrict opportunities to learn about other aspects of oral and written language. This applies in particular to teaching and learning about phonological and alphabetic knowledge. It is through strong input combined with an increasingly rich connection to other developing aspects of language and literacy learning that ‘the basics’ come to add value. In the skilled reader and writer these capabilities are highly interconnected, continuously informing one another. That means that, along with direct, explicit input about such knowledge and processes, learners need ample opportunities to apply them to genuine language and literacy tasks.

31 The explicit teaching and consolidation of the ‘basics’ of spoken and written English should be important and routine aspects of the national English curriculum. These aspects of knowledge about English should be planned, introduced, consolidated, and embedded in authentic language, literary, and literacy tasks as part of the English education program throughout the school years.

## **The teaching of grammar in English**

32 Questions have long been asked in schools, universities, and the general community in Australia about the teaching of grammar in English. Whether grammar should be taught at all, when, how much and what particular form(s) of grammar should be taught have all been debated.

33 Attention should be given to grammar across K-12, as part of the 'toolkit' that helps all students access the resources necessary to meet the demands of schooling and of their lives outside of school. It should include knowledge about the structures and functions of word- and sentence-level grammar, and textual patterns; it should include an emphasis on the connections between these levels so that this knowledge is useful.

34 The goal of teaching grammar and textual patterns should go beyond students' labelling of various grammatical categories; it should centre on goals such as clearer expression of thought, more convincing argumentation, more careful logic in reasoning, more coherence, precision, and imagination in speaking and writing, and knowing how to choose words and grammatical and textual structures that are more appropriate to the audience or readership. The goal here centres on the gradually more powerful conversion of 'knowledge about' language into a resource for effective reading, listening, viewing, writing, speaking and designing.

## **The texts of English**

35 For a long time subject English was largely about the reading and writing of printed texts. In recent decades there has been attention to the ways in which English language combines with visual information in both print and digital settings. These forms of communication have become increasingly prevalent in and out of formal education, in workplaces, and in leisure, the arts, and entertainment. Because of this the argument has been that subject English should expand its scope to include these combinations. This expansion also acknowledges the importance of 'arts-enriched' activities (accompanying English learning with drama, visual images, music, and so on) in language, literature and literacy activities. These activities enhance engagement of students in English learning throughout the school years and contribute a distinctive set of skills to the program. They are part of developing proficiency in how English is used, and so they have an important place in a national English curriculum.

## **Understanding, analysing, appreciating and constructing**

36 The national English curriculum should help develop in students the capabilities to understand, analyse, appreciate, construct, and evaluate texts. These skills include how to analyse texts in terms of their assumptions, content and reception. The general aim here is to have students develop five related sets of informed understandings about:

- the social and historical context of production of a text
- a text's formal and aesthetic qualities
- ways in which argument is presented and supported through a text
- how a text's features reflect the vantage point from which it can be interpreted
- how different vantage points are associated with different uses of language.

37 The capabilities developed here relate to the educational goals and intended educational outcomes for young Australians as outlined by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (2008 pp. 5, 10): students 'are creative and resourceful and are able to think critically, analyse information and solve problems' with the 'general capabilities that underpin flexible and critical thinking'.

### **The place of literature and Australian literature**

38 A national English curriculum points to schools' responsibility for the English language and literary traditions of Australia, in their historical context, as they currently stand, and in their ongoing relevance to this country. A feature of Australian education in English language and literature is that it has become gradually less oriented to colonial agenda and more open to international English and world literature (Dixon 2008). The presence of Australian literary works and an increasingly informed appreciation of the place of Australian literature among other literary traditions should be features of the national English curriculum. Knowledge of these matters should form part of what young Australians know about English and about being Australian.

39 Negotiations around what constitutes works of literature have been central to the history of the English curriculum. The proposal here is that literature, broadly defined, should be a core element at every stage of the national English curriculum. Through a variety of experiences students should acquire the motivation, skills, and knowledge to develop an informed appreciation of literature. 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 narrative traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These responsibilities include the entitlement of all young Australians to develop an awareness of the literary traditions and expressions of other nations in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **Pedagogy and disciplinarity**

40 In past decades educational debates have occurred over explicit teaching versus more discovery-based or exploratory approaches; an emphasis on correctness versus imaginativeness, and so on. These debates about appropriate pedagogy continue to challenge educators. For our purposes here, the knowledge that makes up the core of subject English involves rules and conventions, and imagination, experimentation, judgment, and appreciation. This calls for a range of pedagogical approaches, some involving more authoritative and direct teacher intervention, some involving more encouragement, support, and indirect guidance on the part of teachers.

41 Systematic knowledge about English is built around norms and conventions that reflect the history of the discipline and its current goals and activities. But the effective development and application of knowledge also requires some creative and imaginative personal initiative on the part of the learner (Bereiter 2002). This is what keeps fields of study and practice dynamic and moving forward. Without personal initiative, a field of knowledge is static; without norms and secure principles of judgment as reference points, new ideas cannot be distinguished from good new ideas, imaginative applications from distractions. This tension is part of the definition of 'a discipline of study'. Subject English should provide young people with learning experiences that come from the teacher's dynamic and responsive shifting, back and forth,

between authoritative teaching and supportive encouragement, between centring on the norms and rules of English use and promoting the unique forms of personal initiative that they offer.

42 The national English curriculum proposed here takes the view that learning English is made useful and durable through the interplay between, on the one hand, explicit knowledge about language, literature, and texts and, on the other, the complex demands of understanding and using language effectively to express meaning — using the norms of the curriculum to engage and influence the changing, diverse environments in which that knowledge can be applied. The proposed curriculum names these three Elements partly as a way of foregrounding the planning for their interaction throughout the school years.

### **General capabilities across the curriculum**

43 Cutting across the learning areas into which the school curriculum has traditionally been divided are important general capabilities that schools should also help students develop. The histories of disciplines and the curriculums they support, and more recent reflections on the nature of learning and work in the 21st century, all point in particular to literacy, numeracy, and ICT capabilities as having general cross-curricular significance.

44 An influential outline of 21st century approaches, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL 2003) is an example of an attempt to itemise the components of 21st Century learning. NCREL named the following as the new emphases for learning:

- the need to understand the ways in which digital resources are reshaping the uses of literacy (including basic, scientific, economic, and technological literacies; visual and information literacies; culturally adaptable literacy and global awareness)
- the need to stress inventive thinking (adaptability and the management of complexity; self-direction in learning and life-planning; curiosity, and creativity; and abstract, adaptable, and sound reasoning)
- a focus on effective communication (teaming, collaboration, and interpersonal skills; and personal, social, and civic responsibility)
- a focus on high productivity (prioritising and planning results; effective uses of real-world tools; the capability to produce relevant, high-quality products as displays of learning).

45 The development and flexible application of systematic knowledge is important for all of NCREL's 21st century goals. It is portable, flexible, and broadly consolidated knowledge that provides a preparation for future learning. Learners need to be sufficiently aware of the processes of knowledge acquisition, access, and management so that they can fluently engage new bodies of knowledge in new settings.

46 It is evident that subject English has a clear and distinctive responsibility to help develop students' literacy capabilities. It is also the case that recent decades have seen computer, multimedia, and online proficiencies become more central to accessing materials relevant to English education and to everyday activities in English classrooms.

47 In the early-to-middle years of schooling, literacy, numeracy, and ICT capabilities can be thought of as having generally enabling effects. As the school years progress, however, the curriculum areas themselves begin to put these capabilities to increasingly specialised use. Literacy, numeracy, and ICT capabilities begin to re-form and diversify in the distinctive image of each curriculum area. This is why the term *cross-curriculum capabilities* should not be taken to reflect the expectation that generic, baseline capabilities, laid down early in the school years, will of themselves somehow carry students successfully through into the specialist knowledge

areas. Rather, *cross-curriculum capabilities* refers to the fact that schools need to provide an ongoing program of maintaining and revisiting the skills and knowledge of literacy, numeracy, and ICT capabilities as these capabilities become increasingly reconfigured in the service of the curriculum areas.

48 That is, all teachers in all curriculum areas are involved in explicitly teaching the English language requirements that are specific to these areas.

49 Capabilities need to be supplemented with attention to dispositions that crucially affect students' success across the curriculum areas: curiosity, creativity, intellectual adaptability, collaboration, and so on. These dispositions are part of a successful learner's repertoire. The distinctive engagement of English with creativity, composition, fluency, and the structural and aesthetic aspects of communication mean that it has a part to play in students' success in other curriculum areas.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE CURRICULUM**

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### **The Elements**

50 The three Elements of the national English curriculum are outlined here. Each Element brings its own distinctive goals, body of knowledge, history of ideas and interests, and repertoire of pedagogical traditions. To constitute subject English, however, these need to work together, each contributing both in its own right and as it affects the others. Further, each aspect of student learning is not only valuable in its own right, but also to the extent that it builds directly on what has gone before and adds value to subsequent learning. The integration of the Elements in practice needs to form the centrepiece of the organisation of the curriculum. A brief outline of the three Elements and an illustration of scope and sequence follow.

### **Element 1: Language: Knowledge about English**

51 Systematically guiding students in the development of a coherent body of knowledge about how the English language works is a fundamental responsibility of the English curriculum. This is because such a body of knowledge about English makes possible:

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

52 The knowledge-building process will be neither linear nor the same for all students. Establishing greater continuity in the growth of knowledge about the English language across all years of schooling, however, is none the less a priority.

53 Students need to grow in their knowledge of 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, connecting, and talking about language can help in the growth of that knowledge. It can enable students to reflect consciously and with precision on their own speaking and writing, its efficacy, fluency and creativity, and to discuss these matters productively with others.

54 Students should develop foundational knowledge about what constitutes appropriateness, accuracy, fluency, and confidence in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing the English

language. They need to become accomplished in their interpretations and constructions of texts that combine language with other kinds of symbols, such as graphs or images. The development of a clear and consistently used vocabulary for this knowledge will enable students to ask questions about their learning and negotiate ways of improving their language use.

55 This body of knowledge about English should comprise a number of components, revisited cumulatively as the school years progress. These are among the most important of the components:

- Many students in their early experiences of reading need systematic attention to phonological awareness and sound–letter correspondences.
- The teaching of spelling strategies and punctuation conventions will be necessary across all stages of schooling, along with handwriting and wordprocessing skills.
- Vocabulary should be taught to students in ways that engender a curiosity about words — their origins, meanings and uses. Skills in using various types of dictionaries and thesauruses will help students’ learning to become more generative and independent over the school years and beyond.
- Students need to know how to create grammatically clear, purposefully constructed, coherent sentences, paragraphs and texts through the language choices they make. They need to be able to talk systematically in informed ways about the nature and consequences of the choices they have made in their expressions.
- Across all stages of schooling there is a need for systematic exposure to a usable, increasingly specialised language for talking and learning about aspects of English at the three levels of word, sentence, and text. It is important for the usefulness of this learning in authentic settings that the connections among these levels be made clear. A shared language for talking about language enables students, teachers and others to discuss, with continuity from year to year, how language differs across settings, potential audiences, and purposes, and the implications of these differences for language use. This shared language enables a body of knowledge to be built upon continuously as the school years progress.
- All students need to develop their understandings of how language functions to achieve a range of purposes that are critical to success in school. This includes reading, understanding, and writing texts that describe, narrate, analyse, explain, recount, argue, review, and so on. Such an approach aims to:
  - extend students’ language resources in ways that support increasingly complex learning throughout the school years
  - help students deal with the language demands of the various curriculum areas
  - enable students move from the interactive spontaneity of oral language towards the denser, more crafted language of the written mode
  - help students, in their speaking and writing, to move to and fro between the general and the specific, the abstract and the concrete, and the argument and the evidence
  - raise students’ awareness generally of interpersonal issues such as how to take and support a stand in an argument, how to express considered opinions, how to strengthen or soften statements, how to interact with a variety of audiences, and so on.
- Students need to expand their understanding of how language builds knowledge and beliefs about the world, and of how pervasive this process is in their everyday lives, including in increasingly specialised contexts such as schools and workplaces.

56 Aspects of the body of knowledge developed in Element 1 will have an impact on the work developed as part of the other two Elements. A body of knowledge about the English language is aimed at providing the foundation that will help students broaden their repertoires of language use, engage with, analyse, and construct a wide range of texts, and negotiate evaluations of the social and aesthetic value of texts.

57 Evaluating texts involves an ability to explicitly discuss such matters as how language choices develop description of characters and setting, how a narrative builds suspense, how a poem creatively manipulates language, how a scriptwriter might use irony, how the written text interacts with its accompanying visuals, and so on. With regard to literacy, students should engage with and construct a wide range of texts, understanding how they differ depending on their purpose, the nature of the audience, their subject matter and the mode and medium in use.

## **Element 2: Literature: Informed appreciation of literature**

58 Studying literature is a form of arts-related and arts-enriched learning experience. Studying literature involves the study of past and present works that aim primarily to make the most of the imaginative potential of the language, including as that potential relates to cinema, television, and digital 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 reflection, and motivation to learn.

59 Element 2 is fundamentally about students' engagement with and study of literary texts of personal, social, and aesthetic value. This engagement is both intellectual and affective in nature. Literary texts engage students in a large part because of what they might learn about the human condition and, in conjunction with this, what they might learn about how language has been used to create particular emotional, intellectual, or philosophical effects. In this Element distinctively literary approaches to texts are developed, including literary criticism, literary history, and appreciation. This involves the study of past and present literature that aims to make the most of the imaginative potential of the English language and the study of how that potential is exploited in literary works.

60 A significant feature of Element 2 is the attention it pays to texts that are judged to have particular potential for enriching young learners' lives and expanding the scope of their experience.

61 Over the school years, Element 2 should gradually come to incorporate more informed reflection on the processes by which some works have been found to offer distinctive personal, social, and aesthetic experiences. This calls for negotiation around the processes of valuing, and around the significance of those processes — why literature in some form has persisted in mattering to individuals and cultures (Sawyer 2008).

62 As with all aspects of the national English curriculum, students' skills, knowledge and understandings should be developed in coherent and cumulative ways over the school years. In that regard, informed intellectual and affective engagement is an important step toward more formal understandings of literature. Element 2 entails a process that should begin in the early school years and be systematically broadened and deepened as the school years progress. This process should begin with accessible and appropriate texts, including Australian texts, related to young children's daily lives and aimed at engaging their imagination.

63 Over the primary school years Element 2 should gradually incorporate literature for children and young adults, broadly defined in terms of genres and modalities; it should evolve through the middle and secondary years toward the textual forms developed as part of the more specialised study of literary texts.

64 In the culminating years subject English should provide offerings that focus on analysing both the historical genres and literary traditions of Australian literature and world literature and contemporary texts. By the final years of secondary schooling, students' written and oral accounts of their engagement with literary texts should show that they can apply a coherent body of knowledge about the English language 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. In this way the senior years of secondary English should provide offerings that begin to connect directly with the more formal expectations of literary studies as a humanities subject at the university level for those students aiming to pursue such studies.

65 As with the contents of Element 1, Element 2 will call for significant effort around initial teacher preparation and ongoing professional development. There are two aspects to this: first, the pushing of the informed appreciation of literature down into the primary years will mean that some teachers will seek to develop their knowledge of literary terms, concepts, and pedagogies, and, perhaps, their familiarity with available literature that is appropriate to their year levels; second, the imperative to maintain connected, coherent approaches and content over the school years K–12 will call for the development of materials that can lead students toward key literary concepts such as metaphor, symbolism, allegory, versification, poetic and narrative form, intertextuality, and stylistic variation. These materials will need to offer guidance on pedagogical approaches, criteria for the selection of texts, and the organisation of texts and activities into curriculum sequences.

### **Element 3: Literacy: Evolving repertoires of English usage**

66 Element 3 aims to help students expand and consolidate their repertoires of oral and written English in use and of multimodal forms of communication. The aim is to develop students' appropriateness, accuracy, confidence, fluency and efficacy in the use of English across a growing range of authentic and increasingly complex and unfamiliar settings. The immediacy and spontaneity of oral language, as it is embedded in particular settings, is gradually complemented by the more crafted and deliberate oral, written, and multimodal uses; from the everyday language of personal experience toward the more abstract, specialised, and technical language of schooling; and from informal interaction with a limited number of familiar people toward more sophisticated exchanges with a wider range of known and unknown, face-to-face and distant audiences.

67 It is in Element 3 that the English curriculum assumes responsibility for helping students broaden their repertoires of English usage to equip them for later school learning, out-of-school experiences, and later participation in domestic, civic, and vocational life. The diversity of this responsibility means first that these capabilities need to take account of print and digital contexts, and speaking, writing, and designing; and second that the work of the three Elements must be highly integrated.

68 If Element 1 can be thought of as ‘learning about’ English language, then Element 3 is focused on ‘learning to’ use it. Emphases are on breadth of repertoire and depth of mastery, gained through applying understandings growing out of the gradual acquisition of knowledge about the English language, about communication in spoken, print, and digital forms, about the structures and conventions of argument and the evolution of an informed appreciation of literary works.

69 The role of picture books and other visual and multimodal texts in enhancing students’ engagement, motivation, and enjoyment in the early years of schooling, and in supporting the development of reading skills and print literacy, has long been recognised. Picking up on work from the other Elements in Element 3 will also involve the systematic exploration and production of multimodal texts throughout the school years, in turn incorporating a growing understanding of how visual texts work, their structures, interpretation, and the effects of certain features.

70 Such a program also shows that the rigid use of one type of grammatical or textual structure or one communication modality does not always result in purposeful and productive communication. A particular occasion may call for movements between text types and modalities simply because this would be the most powerful and appropriate way of achieving the purposes at hand. Present-day school textbooks, learning manuals, and popular media texts display these purposeful mixtures. Consolidating the knowledge about language and applying it to authentic reading, writing and designing settings, which is the work done in Element 3, is one way in which subject English connects practically to the communication demands and opportunities facing young Australians.

71 In turn, the motivation for learning about the English language comes from the demands of expanding and consolidating English capabilities in Element 3 work. Students’ accurate, fluent and confident engagement with texts is based on development in the enabling 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.

72 Element 3 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 that in ways that the intended audience will find compelling and clear?’ That kind of learning program makes it clear that imagination and creativity are core aspects of authentic communication along with clarity, accuracy, and fluency. Assessments should reflect all of these aspects.

## **Stages of schooling**

73 Although the curriculum will be developed year by year this document takes into account the needs and interests of students as they progress through four stages of schooling:

Stage 1, which typically involves students from 5 to 8 years of age

Stage 2, which typically involves students from 8 to 12 years of age

Stage 3, which typically involves students from 12 to 15 years of age

Stage 4, which typically involves students from 15 to 18 years of age.

74 Guiding principles should include the following:

- Maximise continuity through traditional transition points: transition to school, transition to secondary school, transition to senior secondary, transition to further education and/or workplaces. Connect explicitly with previous learning and guide learners to the directions in which the learning will progress. Of course, not all learning is predictable, nor should it be; but a foundation of continuity will help students know about the transition they are encountering.
- Build-in flexibility to the timeframes for learning in the three Elements, and be aware of the powerful equity implications of a lockstep, rushed or crowded curriculum, and of the ongoing need to increase the levels of engagement and intellectual quality that characterise learning in Australian schools.
- Consider, as much as possible, the full range of conditions in which Australian schoolteachers work.
- Some aspects of learning within each Element will clearly receive more focus, time and attention at different points along the K–12 continuum.
- The English curriculum should define how the interactions in English should be sequenced. The aims of each stage of schooling should be described along with how each builds on the previous stage and provides a platform for the subsequent stage.

## **Stage 1 (typically 5–8 years of age)**

### **Characteristics of learners: Diversity and a strong beginning toolkit**

#### *Curriculum focus*

75 The curriculum at this stage of schooling must aim to both provide all students with the foundational skills, knowledge, and understandings needed to enhance students' opportunities for continued learning and to provide the opportunity for students to begin to build on and explore from these foundations. What that means for English is that in the early school years the central aims are to provide students with

- both the first items in a basic 'toolkit' that will enable them to acquire a knowledge of the English language and the strategies to build on these items
- a pleasurable and varied experience of literature and discussions about literature, and the confident beginnings of a repertoire of reading, writing and speaking activities
- an introduction to the use of digital technologies to both receive texts and design and create their own texts.

76 Element 1: 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. Essential forms of punctuation such as capital letters and full stops are mastered. They continue to extend their vocabulary and learn to read more words. They also build their comprehension of the intended meaning that is conveyed in texts as they learn to read. Most importantly, students begin to develop a broad conceptual understanding of what a language is, and an awareness of ways in which language is important for use in and out of school.

77 Element 2: Students are exposed to a variety of works of literature, including picture books, short stories, rhymes, poems, and multimedia texts such as films, pictures, and websites. They listen to teachers and others in the classroom 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 works and develop personal responses to the texts. They explore the characteristics of their personal satisfaction through comparisons with other works and through potential changes to the texts.

78 Element 3: Students expand their understanding of the purposes of print and other modalities. 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.

## **Stage 2 (typically 8–12 years of age)**

### **Characteristics of the learners: Engagement and cross-curriculum inquiry**

#### *Curriculum focus*

79 Element 1: During this stage students develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of grammar and language features, introducing more complex punctuation, clause and sentence structures, and textual purposes and patterns. 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, and internet and media texts.

80 Element 2: Over the course of this stage students are exposed to denser and more finely structured literary texts. Longer and more extensive discussions about literary texts take place and approaches to aesthetic and ethical inquiry are developed. Opportunities are given for students to develop an informed appreciation of how stories and characters are written in order to achieve particular purposes such as to generate pleasure and engagement. Students are introduced to some formal aspects of narrative and poetic form. They also explore different forms of literary works such as poetry, prose, and plays in more depth and detail.

81 Element 3: Students explore the potential of written and spoken language for different purposes as they work with different disciplines. They learn to create texts for a greater range of different audiences and analyse the differences between text types, purpose and audience. Students are also given opportunities to represent their ideas through the creation of spoken, written and multimodal texts. In this stage students create texts individually and in groups. The purposes and contents of discussions and negotiations around joint productions of text constitute important learnings.

### **Stage 3 (typically 12–15 years of age)**

#### **Characteristics of the learners: Consolidating identities and curriculum specialisations**

##### *Curriculum focus*

82 Element 1: Students extend their understandings of how language works and learn to transfer understandings of language to different circumstances, including different modalities. To achieve this, students are given explicit opportunities to develop an understanding of the requirements of different text types. Building on Stage 2, students continue to represent both personal and increasingly abstract ideas in a variety of ways.

83 Element 2: Stage 3 introduces increasingly sophisticated analysis of the differences between various kinds of literary texts, popular-culture texts, and everyday texts. Students are given opportunities to engage with a variety of texts, including texts of their own choosing. They learn how to articulate the personal value and appropriateness of texts of their own choosing. The notion of ‘valuing’ itself becomes an object of discussion and negotiation. Students are introduced to literary works such as plays, novels and poems. They develop understandings of how such works can be discussed and analysed in relation to themes, ideas and historical context

84 Element 3: Students are given opportunities to apply their emerging understandings of what makes a text valuable and appropriate to the creation of texts of sociocultural and personal importance. Students engage with a variety of genres and modalities when exploring the potential of texts. Students re-enact, represent, and describe texts in order to display 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.

### **Stage 4 (typically 15–18 years of age)**

#### **Characteristics of the learners: Expanded repertoires, and diverse pathways**

##### *Curriculum focus*

85 Subject English in the senior secondary years should continue 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 a Second Language. Consultation will occur over the next few months to determine the range of options that could be considered.

86 Element 1: Students use their explicit knowledge about language to transfer their language skills to a variety of disciplines and purposes, demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of grammar and language features from the textual to the word level, and the ability to identify and implement this understanding for different purposes and audiences.

87 Element 2: Students enhance the breadth and depth of their understanding of literary works and their ability to discuss and debate the elements that make a text culturally valuable. Students link texts, past and present, with similar themes or language features, in order to discuss issues of form, content, and structure. Students engage in extensive analysis of texts,

including visual texts, as both sociocultural artefacts (the social impact/purpose/message) and as literary artefacts (language/plot/character development).

88 Element 3: Students compose creative texts that show informed appreciation of plot and character development, effective language use, and representation and manipulation of ideas. Students create 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.

## **PEDAGOGY AND ASSESSMENT**

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### **Pedagogy**

89 There are several research syntheses that bear on matters of pedagogy in English language, literature and literacy. One of the general conclusions from most of these studies is that teachers need to have available a flexible and responsive repertoire of classroom activities (Snow, Burns & Griffith 1998).

90 Similarly, the many lines of experimental, observational, and survey studies over the years converge on a set of recommendations for the teaching of language, literacy and literature in English. Two important conclusions from the extended work of the Center for Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (2006) are:

- orchestrate extended classroom interactions that support the understanding of specific texts in depth
- routinely use texts from a wide range of genres and school subjects.

91 There is also research that has examined the distinctive features of those schools and classrooms that are performing more strongly than demographically predicted on reading and writing in English. The questions here are:

- What are the features of teaching that make most difference in the learning of students from poor and marginalised backgrounds as demonstrated in standardised assessments?
- What kinds of schools and classrooms 'beat the odds'?

Conclusions (e.g. Langer 2001) that are relevant to English pedagogy and curriculum include:

- Unlike 'typical schools', schools that beat the odds systematically use a range of approaches to teaching language and literacy rather than being dominated by one approach.
- While teaching and learning focused on curriculum content is common, clear and cumulative connections are also made between knowledge and skills across multiple curriculum areas instead of treating each domain of knowledge and skill as discrete.
- A clear difference from the activities in the less effective schools relates to the pursuit of deeper understandings about a topic even when the goals relating to that topic have apparently or formally been met. Less effective schools are more likely to move to an unrelated activity with different goals as soon as some superficial or barely adequate understanding seems to have been achieved. Schools that seem to beat the odds are more likely to engage the students in extended interactive learning in their efforts to develop depth and complexity of understanding, rather than relying heavily on students working alone.

- Schools that seem to beat the odds have a clear sense of 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. The school sees its principal job as developing the languages, registers, and genres of schooling, while acknowledging the differences in the classroom.

## **Assessment**

92 Assessment against learning goals is an integral part of teaching and learning. In designing assessment activities, teachers and education systems reveal in concrete terms the skills, knowledge and values they prize most. They also demonstrate what they take to constitute growth in those prized skills, knowledge and values. Assessment activities should be closely and explicitly aligned with the stated goals, materials, and routine pedagogical activities that characterise classroom work and should be seen by all involved to be part of an overall program of growth.

93 Assessment shows how individual students and various categories of students are progressing in terms of the scope, sequence and tempo of the curriculum. Equally, assessment is about teachers, schools and systems monitoring how the curriculum is faring in terms of all of the students to whom it is responsible.

94 The scope and sequencing of the national English curriculum and the development of its three Elements should guide the content and formats of the literacy section of the National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). This program should include a broader range of texts to judge the transfer of knowledge from the English Elements to the reading and writing of texts central to other curriculum areas as well as English.

95 In formulating assessment expectations for the national English curriculum, specific account should be taken of a balance of attention to:

- speaking, listening to, reading and producing increasingly sustained and coherent texts across years K–12
- reading, manipulating, producing and productively revising texts in traditional print and new digital/online, multimodal and multimedia communications technologies, and in combinations of these
- the contents of the three Elements at each year level and stage
- displays that demonstrate students’ growing resources for accuracy, fluency confidence, meaningfulness, purposefulness, persuasiveness, analysis and artfulness, imagination, and originality
- systematic, articulated knowledge across the various levels of language use, and of the ways in which various choices at these levels produce variations in interpretation, emotional and evaluative response, and purpose.

## **ADVANCING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH**

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96 Finally, what should be ‘new and better’ in the national English curriculum? How might a new national English curriculum aspire to advance English education, now that it has a national pool of talent and experience at its disposal? Four potential advances are outlined briefly here:

- Continuity and cumulative learning
- How the English language is constructed
- A systematic program of study in literature
- Concerns about perceived losses of literature in primary English, and of language and literacy education in secondary English.

97 *Continuity and cumulative learning* are important because discontinuities and fragmented curriculum experiences, no matter how engaging in their own right, fail to provide connections to previous and subsequent work and thereby set limits on the attainments of students (Bernstein 2000). Further, they minimise all students' preparation for future potential learning experiences. The work, however engaging and pleasurable, is work rather than learning until it is connected to past and future experiences. The national English curriculum should make it clear to teachers and students how learning within each Element can build continuous, cumulative patterns of learning. Articulating these connections is one important way in which a curriculum relates to its base discipline.

98 Across the years of schooling, Australian students should learn *how the English language is constructed*: patterns of pronunciation and spelling; the grammatical classification of words, clauses, and sentences, and text and genre patterns; the bases for responding to literary texts; the construction of texts that combine visual and linguistic information, and so on. The approach taken here is based on informed understanding first of the connections between explicit knowledge and cumulative learning, and second of the substantial relationship between explicit teaching and learning, and educational equity and quality. The view taken here is that emphasising continuity, explication, application, and experimentation is a strong and defensible response to increasing demands for quality and equity in English education.

99 With regard to Element 2, the national English curriculum should comprise *a systematic program of study in literature* both written in and translated into English. This entails answering the question: 'What will be learned about literature, the literary experience, and the past and future "histories" of literature that we can teach in a principled way over this timeframe?' The national English curriculum should aim for an informed engagement that is intensified and extended by an increasingly systematic understanding of the processes of artistic creativity, composition, the practices of aesthetic craftwork that have been conventionally valued, and a historically based understanding of why and how those processes have come about.

100 The national English curriculum should *deal head-on with commonly expressed concerns about 'the loss of literature in primary English' and 'the loss of language and literacy education in secondary English'*. Both of these would constitute a 'loss of English' as this framing paper has attempted to constitute it. Primary and secondary students will benefit from a more systematic clarification of the importance of the three Elements of English from K–12 and from their more systematic interaction across that entire span. A basic idea here is that it is important for planning, theorising and communicating to distinguish between explicit knowledge about the English language, in its variety and complexity, an informed appreciation of literature, and an ability to use English in its important forms and settings. But in implementing educational experiences that systematically build capabilities over time, and thereby maximising quality and equity, it is the interaction of these three Elements that matters most.

## **CURRICULUM MATERIALS CONSULTED**

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*Curriculum Corporation: Statements of Learning for English*

[http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/resources/SOL\\_English.pdf](http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/resources/SOL_English.pdf)

*Australian Capital Territory*

P–10 [http://activated.act.edu.au/ectl/resources/ECTL\\_Framework.pdf](http://activated.act.edu.au/ectl/resources/ECTL_Framework.pdf)

*New South Wales*

K–6 [http://k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/files/english/k6\\_english\\_syl.pdf](http://k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/files/english/k6_english_syl.pdf)

7–10 [http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus\\_sc/pdf\\_doc/english\\_710\\_syllabus.pdf](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_sc/pdf_doc/english_710_syllabus.pdf)

11–12 [http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus\\_hsc/pdf\\_doc/english\\_syl.pdf](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/pdf_doc/english_syl.pdf)

*Northern Territory*

Transition – 10

[http://www.det.nt.gov.au/education/teaching\\_and\\_learning/curriculum/ntcf/docs/learning\\_areas\\_english.pdf](http://www.det.nt.gov.au/education/teaching_and_learning/curriculum/ntcf/docs/learning_areas_english.pdf)

*Queensland*

English syllabus (P–9) currently being revised <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/syllabus/740.html>

English Essential Learnings and Standards <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/assessment/3160.html>

*South Australia*

Birth to Year 12 [http://www.sacsa.sa.edu.au/index\\_fsrc.asp?t=LA](http://www.sacsa.sa.edu.au/index_fsrc.asp?t=LA)

*Tasmania*

K–10 <http://resources.education.tas.gov.au/item/edres/e0c82c3e-a59b-b515-3a46-70b1aa032234/1/syl-elall.pdf>

*Victoria*

P–10 [http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/downloads/vels\\_standards/velsrevisedenglish.pdf](http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/downloads/vels_standards/velsrevisedenglish.pdf)

*Western Australia*

K–10 [http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au/internet/Years\\_K10/Curriculum\\_Framework/](http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au/internet/Years_K10/Curriculum_Framework/)

*British Columbia*

K–7 [http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/ela\\_k7\\_2006.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/ela_k7_2006.pdf)

8–12 [http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/ela\\_8\\_12\\_2007.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/ela_8_12_2007.pdf)

Year 12 English Literature <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/englit12.pdf>

Performance Standards [http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf\\_stands/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/)

*Ontario*

1–8 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/language18currb.pdf>

9–10 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/english910currb.pdf>

11–12 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/english1112currb.pdf>

Grade 12 English Literacy

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/english12curr.pdf>

*California*

English-Language Development Standards for California Public Schools K–12

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/englangdevstnd.pdf>

English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools K–12

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/elacontentstnds.pdf>

*Finland*

Mother tongue and Literature

[http://www.oph.fi/ops/english/POPS\\_net\\_new\\_2.pdf](http://www.oph.fi/ops/english/POPS_net_new_2.pdf)

*Singapore*

Overview of primary curriculum

<http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/primary/curriculum/>

English Language syllabus for primary and secondary

<http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/syllabuses/languages-and-literature/files/english-primary-secondary.pdf>

Literature in English (lower secondary) <http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/syllabuses/languages-and-literature/files/literature-in-english-lower-secondary-2007.pdf>

*Hong Kong*

Primary 1 - Secondary 3 (Years 1-9)

[http://www.edb.gov.hk/FileManager/EN/Content\\_3118/index.pdf](http://www.edb.gov.hk/FileManager/EN/Content_3118/index.pdf)

*England*

Key Stages 1–4

[http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/uploads/English%201999%20programme%20of%20study\\_tcm8-12054.pdf?return=/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/english/keystage1/index.aspx%3Freturn%3D/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/english/index.aspx](http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/uploads/English%201999%20programme%20of%20study_tcm8-12054.pdf?return=/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/english/keystage1/index.aspx%3Freturn%3D/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/english/index.aspx)

Programme of study and attainment targets Key Stage 3

[http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/uploads/QCA-07-3332-pEnglish3\\_tcm8-399.pdf?return=/key-stages-3-and-4/subjects/english/keystage3/index.aspx](http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/uploads/QCA-07-3332-pEnglish3_tcm8-399.pdf?return=/key-stages-3-and-4/subjects/english/keystage3/index.aspx)

Programme of study for Key Stage 4

[http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/uploads/QCA-07-3333-pEnglish4\\_tcm8-415.pdf](http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/uploads/QCA-07-3333-pEnglish4_tcm8-415.pdf)

*South Africa*

R–9

<http://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/GET/doc/home.pdf>

10–12

<http://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/HomeLang/English%20Home%20Language.pdf>

*Northern Ireland*

Foundation Stage

[http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/foundation\\_stage/areas\\_of\\_learning/](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/foundation_stage/areas_of_learning/)

Primary

[http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key\\_stages\\_1\\_and\\_2/northern\\_ireland\\_curriculum\\_primary.pdf](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stages_1_and_2/northern_ireland_curriculum_primary.pdf)

Key Stage 1 Language and literacy statutory guidelines

[http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key\\_stages\\_1\\_and\\_2/areas\\_of\\_learning/statutory\\_requirements/ks1\\_language\\_literacy.pdf](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stages_1_and_2/areas_of_learning/statutory_requirements/ks1_language_literacy.pdf)

Key Stage 2 Language and literacy statutory guidelines

[http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key\\_stages\\_1\\_and\\_2/areas\\_of\\_learning/statutory\\_requirements/ks2\\_language\\_literacy.pdf](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stages_1_and_2/areas_of_learning/statutory_requirements/ks2_language_literacy.pdf)

Key Stage 3

[http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key\\_stage\\_3/statutory\\_curriculum\\_ks3.pdf](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stage_3/statutory_curriculum_ks3.pdf)

### *Scotland*

Scotland is currently developing a new curriculum called *Curriculum for excellence*. There is information available on the website in relation to English and literacy.

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/outcomes/literacyandenglish/>

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## APPENDIX 1: THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

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### The national curriculum: principles and specifications for development

The National Curriculum Board's work will be guided by the following principles and specifications for development:

- a) The curriculum should make clear to teachers what has to be taught and to students what they should learn and what achievement standards are expected of them. This means that curriculum documents will be explicit about knowledge, understanding and skills and will provide a clear foundation for the development of a teaching program.
- b) The curriculum should be based on the assumptions that all students can learn and that every child matters. It should set high standards and ensure that they apply to all young Australians while acknowledging the markedly different rates at which students develop.
- c) The curriculum should connect with and build on the early years learning framework being developed for the pre-K phase.
- d) The curriculum should build firm foundational skills and a basis for the development of expertise by those who move to specialised advanced studies in academic disciplines, professions and technical trades. It should anticipate and provide for an increase in the proportion of students who remain in education and training to complete Year 12 or equivalent vocational education and training and the proportion who continue to further study.
- e) The curriculum should provide students with an understanding of the past that has shaped the society and culture in which they are growing and developing, and with knowledge, understandings and skills that will help them in their future lives.
- f) The curriculum should be feasible, taking account of the time and resources available to teachers and students and the time it takes to learn complex concepts and ideas. In particular, the curriculum documents should take account of the fact that many primary teachers are responsible for several learning areas and should limit the volume of material which they must read in order to develop teaching programs.
- g) The primary audience for national curriculum documents should be classroom teachers. Documents should be concise and expressed in plain language which, nevertheless, preserves a complexity in ideas appropriate for professional practitioners. Documents should be recognisably similar across learning areas in language, structure and length.
- h) Time demands on students must leave room for learning areas that will not be part of the national curriculum.
- i) The curriculum should allow jurisdictions, systems and schools to implement it in a way that values teachers' professional knowledge and reflects local contexts.
- j) The curriculum should be established on a strong evidence base on learning, pedagogy and what works in professional practice and should encourage teachers to experiment systematically with and evaluate their practices.

(National Curriculum Board 2008:4)

## **APPENDIX 2: ENGLISH ADVISORY GROUP**

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*The advice in this paper was provided by an advisory group led by Professor Peter Freebody*

Professor Peter Freebody, Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney.

Emeritus Professor Bruce Bennett, University of New South Wales

Professor Roslyn Arnold, University of Sydney

Ms Jade Spencer, East Murray Area School

Professor Robyn Ewing, University of Sydney

Dr Ruth Fielding-Barnsley, Queensland University of Technology

Dr Brian Gray

Mr Ray Land, Indigenous Education Leadership Institute

Dr Bev Derewianka, University of Wollongong

Associate Professor Patrick Buckridge, Griffith University

Associate Professor Catherine Beavis, Deakin University

Mr Scott Bulfin, Monash University

Professor Barbara Comber, University of South Australia

Professor Robert Dixon, University of Sydney

Ms Lisa McNeice, St Michael's Grammar School

Ms Christine Topfer, Australian Literacy Educators' Association

Ms Fiona Walker, Armadale Primary School

Ms Jodie Waters, Northern Territory teacher

### **Special acknowledgment**

A special acknowledgment goes to Associate Professor Catherine Beavis, Professor Beverly Derewianka, and Professor Robert Dixon for providing extensive comment and input during the development of this paper.

**APPENDIX 3: FEEDBACK QUESTIONS**

To provide us with feedback on this paper, please respond to the questions below. Your replies are a rich source of information and are of great value to us.

Name:			
Organisation (if applicable):			
Postal address:			
Please nominate your area/areas of interest			
<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/> science	<input type="checkbox"/> history
Please choose:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic	<input type="checkbox"/> Business or industry professional	Education professional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chief executive officer</li> <li>○ Curriculum director</li> <li>○ Curriculum manager</li> <li>○ Departmental/sector representative</li> <li>○ Principal</li> <li>○ Professional organisation representative</li> <li>○ School administrator</li> <li>○ Teacher</li> <li>○ Teacher's aide</li> </ul>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Community member	<input type="checkbox"/> Journalist		
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Student		
<input type="checkbox"/> Union representative	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth leader		

*If there is not enough space, please write on a separate sheet*

**Introduction**

1. Please comment on the Introduction.

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**Futures orientation**

6. To what extent do you agree that this section adequately describes the futures orientation to be taken by a national English curriculum?

- Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Agree       Strongly Agree

7. Please comment.

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**Terms used in this paper**

8. This section of the paper defines terms used in the paper. Please comment on the clarity of these definitions. List other terms used in the paper that should be defined.

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**Considerations****Beginnings and 'basics'**

9. To what extent do you agree with the comments in this section?

- Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Agree       Strongly Agree

10. Please comment

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**Structure across the curriculum****Element 1**

23. This section describes Element 1: *Language: Knowledge about English*. To what extent do you agree with the description of this Element?

Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Agree       Strongly Agree

24. Please comment.

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**Element 2**

25. This section describes Element 2: *Literature: Informed appreciation of literature*. To what extent do you agree with the description of this Element?

Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Agree       Strongly Agree

26. Please comment.

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**Element 3**

27. This section describes Element 3: *Literacy: Evolving repertoires of English usage*. To what extent do you agree with the description of this Element?

Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Agree       Strongly Agree

28. Please comment.

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**Stages of schooling**

29. To what extent do you agree with the proposed descriptions of the Elements for Stage 1 of schooling?

Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Agree       Strongly Agree

30. Please comment.

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31. To what extent do you agree with the proposed descriptions of the Elements for Stage 2 of schooling?

Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Agree       Strongly Agree

32. Please comment.

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33. To what extent do you agree with the proposed descriptions of the Elements for Stage 3 of schooling?

Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Agree       Strongly Agree

34. Please comment.

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