



CHINESE: BACKGROUND LANGUAGE

ATAR course

Years 11 and 12 syllabus – What’s changing: General capabilities

For teaching in 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

Background

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment to investigate the assessment and reporting of the general capabilities on the Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA), the Authority has updated the statements about the general capabilities in each syllabus.

The Authority has mapped the general capabilities through the unit content and assessment types for each of the WACE courses. Students will have the opportunity to develop the general capabilities identified in the course through the teaching, learning and assessment programs. These general capabilities will be reflected on the WASSA.

Important information

WACE Refreshment: Investigating the assessment and reporting of the general capabilities on the Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA)

This document contains information that will be included in the syllabus effective from 1 January 2026.

Users of the syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

Syllabuses are formally reviewed by the Authority on a cyclical basis, typically every five years.

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Progression from the Years 7–10 curriculum

The Australian Curriculum: Chinese Background Language Year 7 to Year 10 is organised through two interrelated strands: Communicating and Understanding. Communicating is focused on using language for communicative purposes in interpreting, creating, and exchanging meaning, while Understanding involves examining language and culture as resources for interpreting and creating meaning.

These strands reflect three important aspects of language learning: engaging in communication, analysing various aspects of language and culture involved in communication, and understanding oneself as a communicator.

This syllabus continues to develop the knowledge, understandings and skills that ensure students communicate in Chinese and understand language, culture and learning and their relationship, and thereby develop an intercultural capability in communication.

Representation of the general capabilities

The general capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will support students to live and work successfully now and into the future. Teachers should find opportunities to incorporate the following capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Chinese: Background Language ATAR course. The general capabilities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Critical and creative thinking

Through the study of the Chinese language and culture students have opportunities to enhance their critical and creative thinking skills. Content in the course is presented through the perspectives – Personal, Community and Global – encouraging students to compare information and evaluate ideas from diverse perspectives. By analysing and interpreting spoken and written texts, students strengthen their ability to process, select and evaluate information and engage in logical and reflective thinking. By extending their skills, knowledge and understanding of the Chinese language they learn to assess how language conveys meaning and how context, purpose, and audience influence communication.

Through the course students are also taught and have opportunities to practise language learning and communication strategies. These strategies support and enhance the development of literacy skills and enable further development of cognitive skills through thinking critically and making connections. The process of transferring the linguistic and cultural knowledge and applying it to new contexts, fosters students' metacognition, problem-solving abilities and analytical skills.

Intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding is central to the course as students learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs and those of others. The main aim of learning Chinese is to develop an intercultural understanding, which is integral to communicating in the context of diversity, the development of global citizenship and lifelong learning. Students bring to their learning various preconceptions, assumptions and orientations shaped by their existing language/s and culture/s that can be challenged by the new language experience. Learning to move between two languages and

cultures is integral to language learning and is key to the development of students' intercultural capability.

Learning Chinese is an enriching and cumulative process that broadens students' communicative repertoire, providing additional resources for interpreting and making meaning. Through the perspectives of Personal, Community, and Global, they explore a range of topics such as relationships, traditions and values, the nature of work, global citizens and Australian identity.

Students learn that interactions between different people in different languages also involve interactions between the different kinds of knowledge, understanding and values that are articulated through language and culture. Successful intercultural communication is not only determined by what they do or say, but also by what members of the other language and culture understand from what they do or say.

Intercultural understanding is one of the five content areas of this course.

Literacy

Students enhance their literacy capacity as they use Chinese to listen to, read, view and respond to a range of texts, participate in spoken interaction, and write texts in Chinese for different purposes and contexts. They further expand their skills, knowledge and understanding of the Chinese language and apply their knowledge of linguistic resources to exchange information, ideas and opinions in Chinese. For language learners, literacy involves skills and knowledge that need guidance, time and support to develop. These skills include developing an ability to decode and encode from sound to written systems; mastering grammatical, orthographic and textual conventions; developing semantic, pragmatic, and critical literacy skills; processing and responding to a range of texts in Chinese to comprehend and interpret meaning; and composing texts in Chinese to convey information and express ideas, opinions and experiences. For learners of Chinese, literacy development enhances and extends their knowledge and understanding of English literacy, which in turn supports their learning in Chinese.

Personal and social capability

Learning to interact in a collaborative and respectful manner is a key element of personal and social capability, which the course actively fosters by engaging students in culturally appropriate communication, close text analysis, research, and reflective practices. Through the study of Chinese, students develop empathy and appreciation for diverse perspectives. They come to recognise that people view and experience the world differently, gaining insights into their own identity, relationships, and roles in society. The course encourages students to express opinions, explore values and attitudes, and respond to a range of personal and social experiences, ultimately strengthening their understanding of themselves and others in an interconnected world.

This capability is developed in the course through the Personal Investigation, which encourages deep reflection on personal and cultural identity; close and critical study of texts that explore emotions, perspectives, and cultural values, fostering empathy and critical thinking; and engagement with issues such as migration, the environment, and Australian identity through personal, community, and global perspectives, helping students strengthen their social awareness.

Addressing the other general capabilities

Although the following general capabilities have not been identified as a focus in the Chinese: Background Language ATAR syllabus, teachers may find opportunities to incorporate these capabilities into the teaching and learning program.

- Digital literacy
- Ethical understanding
- Numeracy

Such opportunities may occur through the application of different contexts, pedagogical practices and/or assessment strategies that relate to the syllabus as part of the teaching and learning program.

Summary representation of the general capabilities in the Chinese: Background Language ATAR course

A representation of the general capabilities for the two years is summarised in the table below.

Year	Course	Course type	General capabilities						
			CCT	DL	EU	IU	L	N	PSC
Year 11	Chinese: Background Language (AECBL)	ATAR	✓			✓	✓		✓
Year 12	Chinese: Background Language (ATCBL)	ATAR	✓			✓	✓		✓

Key

CCT: Critical and creative thinking, DL: Digital literacy, EU: Ethical understanding, IU: Intercultural understanding, L: Literacy, N: Numeracy, PSC: Personal and social capability