



JAPANESE: BACKGROUND LANGUAGE

ATAR course

**Year 11 and Year 12 syllabus – What’s changing: General capabilities
For teaching in Year 11 in 2026 and Year 12 in 2027**

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.

Copyright

© School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2025

This document – apart from any third-party copyright material contained in it – may be freely copied, or communicated on an intranet, for non-commercial purposes in educational institutions, provided that the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) is acknowledged as the copyright owner, and that the Authority's moral rights are not infringed.

Copying or communication for any other purpose can be done only within the terms of the *Copyright Act 1968* or with prior written permission of the Authority. Copying or communication of any third-party copyright material can be done only within the terms of the *Copyright Act 1968* or with permission of the copyright owners.

Any content in this document that has been derived from the Australian Curriculum may be used under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence](#).

Progression from the Years 7–10 curriculum

The Australian Curriculum: Languages 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, whereas 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 skills, knowledge and understanding that ensure students communicate in Japanese, 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 Japanese: Background Language ATAR course. The general capabilities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Critical and creative thinking

Students enhance their critical and creative thinking skills through the study of the Japanese language and culture. Content in the Japanese: Background Language ATAR course is presented through three perspectives: – The Personal, The Community and The Global – encouraging students to compare and evaluate information and 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 Japanese language, they learn to assess how language conveys meaning and how context, purpose, and audience influence communication.

Through the course, students learn and 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. Through the process of transferring linguistic and cultural knowledge to new contexts, students enhance their metacognition, problem-solving abilities and analytical skills.

Intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding is central to the Japanese: Background Language ATAR course as students learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. The main aim of learning Japanese 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 the key to the development of students' intercultural capability.

Learning Japanese broadens students' communicative repertoire, providing additional resources for interpreting and making meaning. Through the perspectives of The Personal, The Community, and The Global, they explore a range of topics such as relationships, traditions and values, the nature of work, global citizenship and Australian identity. Students come to realise 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. They realise that 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 Japanese to listen to, read, view and respond to a range of texts, communicate in spoken interaction, and write texts in Japanese for different purposes and contexts. They further expand their skills, knowledge and understanding of the Japanese language and apply their knowledge of linguistic resources to exchange information, ideas and opinions in Japanese.

For language learners, literacy involves skills and knowledge that need guidance, time and support to develop. These skills include decoding and encoding from sound to written systems; mastering grammatical, orthographic and textual conventions; processing and responding to a range of texts in Japanese to comprehend and interpret meaning; and composing texts in Japanese to convey information and express ideas, opinions and experiences. For learners of Japanese, literacy development enhances and extends their knowledge and understanding of English literacy, which in turn supports their learning in Japanese.

Personal and social capability

Learning to interact in a collaborative and respectful manner is a key element of personal and social capability. Students engage in culturally appropriate communication, close text analysis, research, and reflective practices. Through Japanese, students develop empathy and appreciation for diverse perspectives. They learn that people view and experience the world differently, gaining insights into their own identity, relationships, and roles in society. The Japanese: Background Language ATAR 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 Japanese: 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 Japanese: 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	Japanese: Background Language (AECBL)	ATAR	✓			✓	✓		✓
Year 12	Japanese: 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