

## Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS).

The Curriculum in all Victorian schools is developed, at the school level, around curriculum guidelines known as the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). The VELS is a relatively new curriculum structure replacing the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF11) in 2006-2007. The VELS indicate what is essential for students to know and be able to do at different levels. It is then up to schools and teachers to choose the curriculum that best helps students to meet these standards, while addressing broader student interests and needs.

Following is an outline of the structure of Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS).

### Introduction

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards identify three core and interrelated strands for the Prep to Year 10 curriculum. Each strand has a number of domains which describe the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours students need to prepare for further education, work and life. The domains include the standards, organised by dimension, by which student achievement and progress is measured (see table below).

### Standards by Domain

| Strand                                                 | Domain                                        | Dimension                                |                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Physical, Personal and Social Learning</a> | <a href="#">Health and Physical Education</a> | Movement and physical activity           |                                       |
|                                                        |                                               | Health knowledge and promotion           |                                       |
|                                                        | <a href="#">Interpersonal Development</a>     | Building social relationships            |                                       |
|                                                        |                                               | Working in teams                         |                                       |
| <a href="#">Discipline-based Learning</a>              | <a href="#">Personal Learning</a>             | The individual learner                   |                                       |
|                                                        |                                               | Managing personal learning               |                                       |
|                                                        | <a href="#">Civics and Citizenship</a>        | Civics knowledge and understanding       |                                       |
|                                                        |                                               | Community engagement                     |                                       |
| <a href="#">Discipline-based Learning</a>              | <a href="#">The Arts</a>                      | Creating and making                      |                                       |
|                                                        |                                               | Exploring and responding                 |                                       |
|                                                        | <a href="#">English</a>                       |                                          | Reading                               |
|                                                        |                                               |                                          | Writing                               |
|                                                        |                                               |                                          | Speaking and listening                |
|                                                        | <a href="#">The Humanities</a>                |                                          |                                       |
|                                                        | <a href="#">The Humanities – Economics</a>    |                                          | Economics knowledge and understanding |
|                                                        |                                               | Economics reasoning and interpretation   |                                       |
| <a href="#">The Humanities – Geography</a>             |                                               | Geographical knowledge and understanding |                                       |
|                                                        |                                               | Geospatial skills                        |                                       |
| <a href="#">The Humanities – History</a>               |                                               | Historical knowledge and understanding   |                                       |
|                                                        |                                               | Historical reasoning and interpretation  |                                       |

|                                            |                                                                 |                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                            | <a href="#">Languages Other Than English (LOTE)</a>             | Communicating in a language other than English<br>Intercultural knowledge and language awareness |
|                                            | <a href="#">Mathematics</a>                                     | Number<br>Space<br>Measurement, chance and data<br>Structure<br>Working mathematically           |
|                                            | <a href="#">Science</a>                                         | Science knowledge and understanding<br>Science at work                                           |
| <a href="#">Interdisciplinary Learning</a> | <a href="#">Communication</a>                                   | Listening, viewing and responding<br>Presenting                                                  |
|                                            | <a href="#">Design, Creativity and Technology</a>               | Investigating and designing<br>Producing<br>Analysing and evaluating                             |
|                                            | <a href="#">Information and Communications Technology (ICT)</a> | ICT for visualising thinking<br>ICT for creating<br>ICT for communicating                        |
|                                            | <a href="#">Thinking Processes</a>                              | Reasoning, processing and inquiry<br>Creativity<br>Reflection, evaluation and metacognition      |

## About the Standards

Standards define what students should know and be able to do at different stages of learning. They provide valuable information about student progress which can form the basis of further teaching and intervention.

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards recognise the differing learning needs of students at three stages of learning. Curriculum expectations for student achievement are set at six levels over the 11 years of compulsory schooling. The six levels are broadly associated with Years Prep to 10 and are consistent with the levels for student achievement introduced in the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) in 1995. General expectations of when students will achieve the various standards are:

Level 1 – Preparatory Year

Level 2 – Years 1 and 2

Level 3 – Years 3 and 4

Level 4 – Years 5 and 6

Level 5 – Years 7 and 8

Level 6 – Years 9 and 10.

By clearly specifying the standards appropriate at each of the six levels, the Standards provide a clear picture of the sequence of development a student should progress through at school in terms of the essential physical, personal and social, discipline-based and interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. The Standards enable teachers, parents and students not only to determine the knowledge and skills a student currently demonstrates, but also what that student needs to know and be able to do to progress to the next level through to the end of Year 10.

Since standards describe what students know and can do, they focus on the knowledge and skills components of the three strands. This is not to suggest that the behavioural components of the strands are unimportant, but rather to acknowledge they are less amenable to the development of clear standards, and do not necessarily develop in broadly sequential ways. Behaviours included in the Standards will however be the focus of teacher observation which in turn will be referenced in student reports.

Standards in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards are set at a challenging level, not minimum competence, in age and developmentally appropriate ways. This helps to ensure that students are stretched to learn, rather than doing work they find easy which potentially leaves them bored.

Each standard describes what students are expected to know and be able to do at that level, and how well they should know and be able to do it. Standards in the English and Mathematics domains are aligned to agreed national benchmarks.

Standards are not set for all domains of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards at all levels. The Standards contain learning focus statements for all domains to assist schools to develop programs appropriate to their own local circumstances. However, formal standards against which student achievement is assessed and reported on, apply where research suggests it is developmentally appropriate, and central to future learning and success in the relevant domain.

**Levels 1 and 2 (Years Prep to Year 2)** focus largely on foundational literacy and numeracy skills and development of physical, personal and social capacities. At Level 1, standards are written for English, Mathematics, Health and Physical Education, The Arts and Interpersonal Development. At Level 2, standards are introduced for ICT. At **Level 3 (Years 3–4)** students are expected to also achieve standards in Science, the Humanities, Thinking Processes, Design, Creativity and Technology, Personal Learning and Civics and Citizenship.

At **Level 4 (Years 5–6)** standards are introduced in the remaining domains of Languages Other than English (LOTE), History, Geography, Economics and Communication. From this level, it is developmentally appropriate for students to be supported in and expected to achieve the full range of knowledge and skills in each of the three strands.