



Support units: Why teach geography?

Illustration 2: Teaching geography for a better world

Key links in the Australian Curriculum: Geography

This document summarises the elements of the **Australian Curriculum: Geography** <<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Rationale>> that demonstrate why geography is a subject well placed to promote a better world.

Curriculum references

Geography's goals, content, resources and teaching method through inquiry provide students with skills and knowledge to think about the future as active citizens. Geography teaches about real-world issues that are concerned with social, economic and environmental justice.

Geography uses an inquiry approach to assist students to make meaning of their world <<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Rationale>>:

It teaches them to respond to questions in a geographically distinctive way, plan an inquiry, collect, evaluate, analyse and interpret information, and suggest responses to what they have learned. They conduct fieldwork, map and interpret data and spatial distributions, and use spatial technologies. Students develop a wide range of general skills and capabilities, including information and communication technology skills, an appreciation of different perspectives, an understanding of ethical research principles, a capacity for teamwork and an ability to think critically and creatively. These skills can be applied in everyday life and at work.

Responses can include taking action, be it informing local councils of an issue, or informing their school community about a global issue and the ways that their action can make a difference. The curriculum encourages students to reflect on, and respond to, their inquiry:

Reflecting and responding <<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Content-structure>>

Reflecting on the findings of the investigation, what has been learned, the process and effectiveness of the inquiry and proposing actions that consider environmental, economic and social factors.

General capabilities

Teaching geography for a better world is closely linked to the seven **General capabilities** <<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/General-capabilities>>. Four are particularly relevant.

Critical and creative thinking ... Students develop critical and creative thinking as they investigate geographical information, concepts and ideas through inquiry-based learning. They develop and practice strategies to help them think logically in evaluating and using evidence, testing explanations, analysing arguments and making decisions, and to think deeply about questions that do not have straightforward answers. Students learn the value and process of developing creative questions, the importance of speculation, and to be curious and imaginative in investigations and fieldwork. The

curriculum also stimulates students to think creatively about the ways that the places and spaces they use might be better designed, and about possible, probable and preferable futures.

Personal and social capability ... Students develop personal and social capability as they engage in geographical inquiry, and learn how geographical knowledge informs their personal identity, sense of belonging and capacity to empathise with others, and offers opportunities to consider ways of contributing to their communities.

Inquiry-based learning assists students to develop their capacity for self-management, giving them a role in directing their own learning and in planning and carrying out investigations, with opportunities to express and reflect on their opinions, beliefs, values and questions appropriately. This enables them to become independent learners who can apply geographical understanding and skills to decisions they will have to make in the future. Through working collaboratively in the classroom and in the field, students develop their interpersonal and social skills, and learn to appreciate the different insights and perspectives of other group members.

Ethical behavior Students develop capability in their ethical understanding as they identify and investigate the nature of ethical concepts, values, character traits and principles, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgment ... as they investigate current geographical issues and evaluate their findings against the criteria of environmental protection, economic prosperity and social advancement. These criteria raise ethical questions about human rights and citizenship, for example, who bears the costs and who gains the benefits, and about group and personal responsibilities. By exploring such questions, students develop informed values and attitudes and become aware of their own roles and responsibilities as citizens.

When undertaking fieldwork, students learn about ethical procedures for investigating and working with people and places, including working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples'. When thinking about the biophysical environment, students consider their responsibilities to protect other forms of life that share the environment.

Intercultural understanding Students develop intercultural understanding as they learn about the diversity of the world's places, peoples, cultures and environments. As they investigate the interconnection between people and places and the meaning and significance that places hold, they come to appreciate how various cultural identities, including their own, are shaped.

Through opportunities to study the lives, cultures, values and beliefs of people in different places, students learn to appreciate and interpret different perspectives and to challenge stereotypical or prejudiced representations of social and cultural groups where they exist.

Through their study of people in diverse places, including those countries from which migrants to Australia have come, students come to recognise their similarities with other people, to better understand their differences, and to demonstrate respect for cultural diversity and the human rights of all people in local, national, regional and global settings.

Geographical Inquiry and Skills

Throughout the **Australian Curriculum: Geography**

<<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Rationale>>

Students are expected to 'reflect and respond'. Documented within geographical inquiry and skills, the following information summarises how reflecting and responding content descriptions contribute to teaching geography for a better world.

Year 3: Places are both similar and different

<<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Curriculum/F-10#level=3>>

Reflect on their learning to propose individual action in response to a contemporary geographical challenge and identify the expected effects of the proposal:

- discussing what they know and have learned about the differences between places
- designing actions that people could take to protect and improve places that people perceive as important
- proposing possible actions that could promote awareness about the similarities and differences between particular places

Year 4: The Earth's environment sustains all life

<<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Curriculum/F-10#level=4>>

Reflect on their learning to propose individual action in response to a contemporary geographical challenge and identify the expected effects of the proposal:

- discussing what they know and have learned about different views related to the sustainability of environments
- explaining why it could be necessary to improve sustainability and propose a range of different actions that could be taken, for example, with reference to their home, community or school
- proposing possible actions that could be taken to promote awareness about how people can reduce their impact on the environment.

Year 5: Human and environmental characteristics of places

<<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Curriculum/F-10#level=5>>

Reflect on their learning to propose individual and collective action in response to a contemporary geographical challenge describe the expected effects of their proposal on different groups of people:

- assessing possible options as actions that people could take to enhance sustainability and fairness and reduce the effects of environmental change on the local community
- suggesting possible actions and ways to reach consensus about a local issue, for example, make a poster identifying various views and their own recommendation.

Year 6: We live in a diverse world <<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Curriculum/F-10#level=6>>

Reflect on their learning to propose individual and collective action in response to a contemporary geographical challenge describe the expected effects of their proposal on different groups of people:

- reflecting on what they have learned, and suggesting additional questions that could be investigated
- suggesting a course of action on a global issue that is significant to them.

Year 7: Water in the world and Places and liveability

<<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Curriculum/F-10#level=7>>

Reflect on their learning to propose individual and collective action in response to a contemporary geographical challenge, taking account of environmental, economic and social considerations, and predict the expected outcomes of their proposal:

- reflecting on personal values and attitudes and how these influence responses to an issue, for example, the effect of perceptions of crime on liveability
- proposing actions to respond to geographical issues related to environmental and economic sustainability, for example, ensuring a sustainable supply of water.

Year 8: Landforms and landscapes and Changing nations

<<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Curriculum/F-10#level=8>>

Reflect on their learning to propose individual and collective action in response to a contemporary geographical challenge, taking account of environmental, economic and social considerations, and predict the expected outcomes of their proposal:

- reflecting on the inquiry process and suggesting questions that would be suitable for further investigation
- reflecting on personal values and attitudes and how these influence responses to an issue, for example, the protection of landscapes
- proposing actions to respond to geographical issues related to environmental and economic sustainability, for example, urbanisation.

Year 9: Biomes and food security and Geographies of interconnections

<<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Curriculum/F-10#level=9Year 9>>

Reflect on and evaluate the findings of the inquiry to propose individual and collective action in response to a contemporary geographical challenge, taking account of environmental, economic and social considerations; and explain the predicted outcomes and consequences of their proposal:

- explaining how the application of geographical concepts and methods has contributed to deep understanding of the causes of and solutions to issues related to biomes, food production and security, interconnections or spatial change

- examining a contemporary geographical issue about biomes, food production and security, interconnections or spatial change and debating alternative responses that consider environmental, economic and social factors.

Year 10: Environmental change and management and Geographies of human wellbeing

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Curriculum/F-10#level=10>

Reflect on and evaluate the findings of the inquiry to propose individual and collective action in response to a contemporary geographical challenge, taking account of environmental, economic and social considerations; and explain the predicted outcomes and consequences of their proposal:

- reflecting on the role of personal values and attitudes in influencing their responses to situations including goals, for example, environmental protection
- explaining how the application of geographical concepts and methods has contributed to deep understanding of the causes of and solutions to issues related to environmental change, human wellbeing or development.

Source: Based on Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). **Australian Curriculum: Geography**. Retrieved (May) 2013, from: <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Rationale>