Literacy and Numeracy as Australian Curriculum general capabilities

The Australian Curriculum has 3 dimensions: learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. Of the 3 dimensions, the learning areas are the foundation of the Australian Curriculum. They identify the essential content that teachers should teach, and that we want students to learn. The other 2 dimensions, the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, are developed through the content of the learning areas and aren't separate areas to be taught. These 2 dimensions offer opportunities to enrich and enhance the content of the learning areas.

General capabilities

The general capabilities define a set of knowledge, skills and behaviours that will support students to successfully access all Australian Curriculum learning areas. There are 7 general capabilities included in the Australian Curriculum:

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Digital Literacy
- Ethical Understanding
- Intercultural Understanding
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Personal and Social capability.

Each general capability is presented as a learning continuum or learning progression. Literacy and Numeracy are presented as learning progressions. These progressions provide detailed descriptions of the typical development of understanding and skills in literacy and numeracy, regardless of age or year level. The learning progressions are aligned to the learning areas of English and Mathematics. Literacy and numeracy are the authentic application of the understanding and skills of English and Mathematics. The progressions provide literacy and numeracy guidance for teachers to consider within all learning areas of the curriculum.

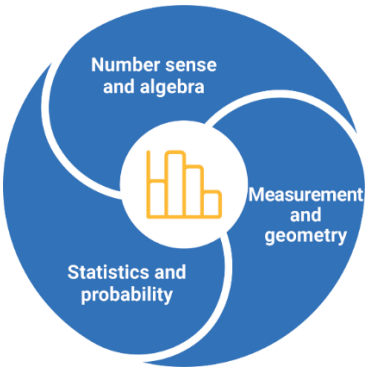
The learning progressions are a teaching resource, not an alternative curriculum.

Why are literacy and numeracy important as general capabilities?

Together, literacy and numeracy underpin learning across all subjects. The development of effective literacy and numeracy skills is necessary for students' success at school and more broadly for their success as lifelong learners and productive members of society. The Literacy and Numeracy learning progressions are a key component of the Australian Curriculum general capabilities. They provide a detailed trajectory of how students become increasingly competent in aspects of literacy and numeracy, which they need to access learning area content.

The progressions describe the small steps that students may typically take as they develop key aspects of literacy and numeracy. In doing so, they provide a resource for teachers to monitor student progress and plan for student learning. This includes showing where there is a literacy or numeracy opportunity within other learning areas. Table 1 outlines the elements of Literacy and Numeracy and provides a description of each.

Table 1: Literacy and Numeracy elements and descriptions

Literacy	Numeracy
The key aspects of Literacy include the elements: • Speaking and listening • Reading and viewing • Writing.	The key aspects of Numeracy include the elements: • Number sense and algebra • Measurement and geometry • Statistics and probability.
	
Literacy involves students listening to, reading, viewing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using language for different purposes in a range of contexts. Literacy involves students interpreting and creating texts for learning in and out of school. As students progress through the years of schooling, they will work with a range of texts. They begin with texts that use everyday language and move towards increasingly complex, abstract and specialised texts. Students learn to adapt language to meet the demands of general or more specialised purposes, audiences and contexts. Success in any learning area depends on being able to identify and apply these literacy skills.	Numeracy involves students developing the capacity to recognise and use mathematics confidently across all relevant learning areas and in their lives more broadly. Students become numerate as they learn to apply mathematics in a wide range of authentic situations. They recognise and understand the role that mathematics plays in the world. Students know when and how to use the appropriate mathematical processes in numeracy applications to further their learning.

The relationship between Literacy and English

In English, students learn the literacy skills of listening, reading, viewing, speaking, writing, creating and understanding texts across a range of contexts. They apply and further develop these skills in other learning areas. As students develop literacy skills and understanding, they develop the proficiency and confidence to apply these skills when engaging with the content of all other learning areas. Students develop their literacy skills as they learn to interpret and analyse a range of rich texts. They engage confidently with a variety of text forms, and create written and spoken texts for different purposes and audiences in Standard Australian English.

Students then apply and adapt these skills in other learning areas. For example, learning the form, function and techniques for writing an informative text in English supports students when they read or create informative texts in Science or Health and Physical Education. English teachers play a key role in providing a foundation for a whole-school approach to literacy, and for engaging with texts and language across the curriculum.

The Literacy learning progression supports different rates of progress in the development of aspects of literacy. It provides additional depth and breadth to the content of the Australian Curriculum: English Version 9.0 through using different contexts for learning.

The relationship between Numeracy and Mathematics

Numeracy is fundamental to a student's ability to learn at school. It involves the recognition, formulation, interpretation and application of mathematics to real-world problems and contexts. Mathematics and Numeracy are intrinsically linked. Numeracy relies on students' mathematical content knowledge, disposition towards mathematics and proficiency with mathematics. Numerate students recognise and choose to use mathematics to make decisions, and to investigate and solve problems that arise in their daily lives, across other learning areas and future pathways. For example, how students collect, represent, interpret and analyse data plays a key role when drawing conclusions and making decisions in Science, Health and Physical Education, HASS, and Design and Technologies.

The numeracy demands in the workplace, at home and across the curriculum have increased considerably over the last decade, particularly in the areas of computational thinking, measurement, interpreting and representing data. Mathematics teachers play a key role in providing a foundation for a whole-school approach to numeracy. They ensure students become proficient with the mathematical skills, concepts and processes necessary to meet these increasing demands.

The Numeracy progression supports different rates of progress in the development of numeracy capability, and additional depth and breadth of study using different contexts for learning.

How do the learning progressions provide support for all learners?

The learning progressions are a teaching resource, not an alternative curriculum. Teachers can use the learning progressions to develop a greater understanding of a student's literacy and numeracy development. This fine-grained understanding will enable teachers to effectively differentiate teaching to support each student's particular needs.

The Literacy learning progression includes additional levels 1a and 1b in the Speaking and Listening element to support those learners with pre-intentional communication skills.

Who is responsible for the development of Literacy and Numeracy?

The development of literacy and numeracy underpins and supports learning across the curriculum. The general capabilities of Literacy and Numeracy are essential to success in all learning areas, so every teacher has a role to play in their development and application.

In most contexts, the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills and concepts will occur in English and Mathematics lessons. However, all teachers need to be aware of the literacy and numeracy demands of the content they are teaching. They must be prepared to support students' literacy and numeracy development.

Teachers also need to be aware of the literacy and numeracy requirements of any tasks or activities that they set for their students. The literacy and numeracy progressions can assist teachers in their selection of tasks and activities, and highlight ways in which they may be differentiated to support particular students.

How are the learning progressions structured?

Like the general capabilities continua, the Literacy and Numeracy learning progressions are organised as a series of elements and sub-elements. Within each progression, the largest structural unit is an element. Elements are further divided into sub-elements. Within each sub-element, indicators are grouped together to form developmental levels. Each indicator describes what a student says, does or produces. Where appropriate, the indicators in a sub-element are grouped into sub-headings. The organisation of each progression into elements and sub-elements, which are presented as sequences, ensures structural consistency throughout the progressions.

The levels in each sub-element are not designed to align across sub-elements. This means some sub-elements have 5 levels while others have 11 (see Figure 1). This reflects the fact that some skills such as Phonological awareness and Positioning and locating have a finite developmental trajectory. Others continue to develop and be applied across the curriculum to Year 10 and beyond. There is no suggested timeframe for achievement of a level as they do not represent equal intervals of time in a student's learning. Students may demonstrate skills across more than one level.

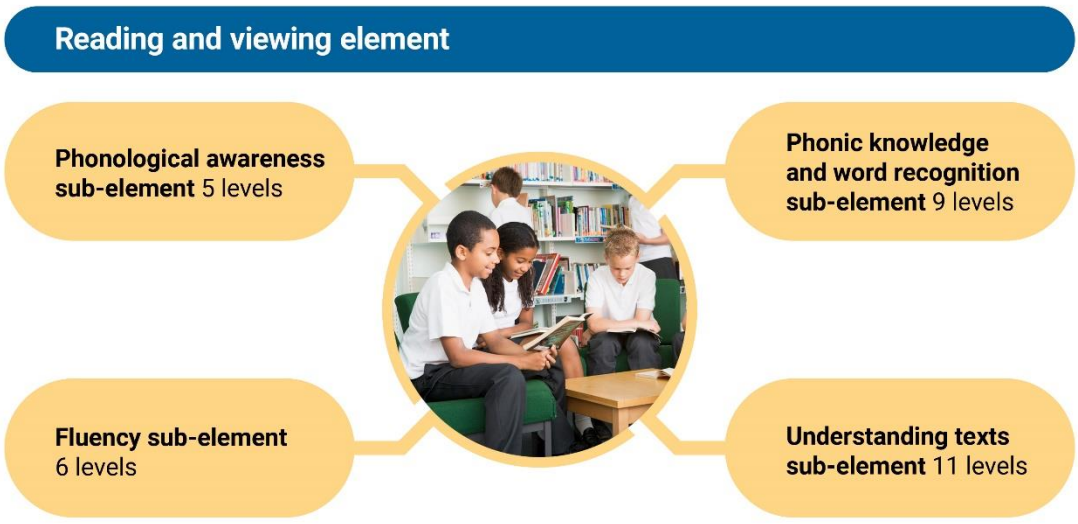


Figure 1: Range of levels for each sub-element of the Reading and viewing element

Figure 2 shows the sub-element levels for Reading and viewing and when they may be addressed.

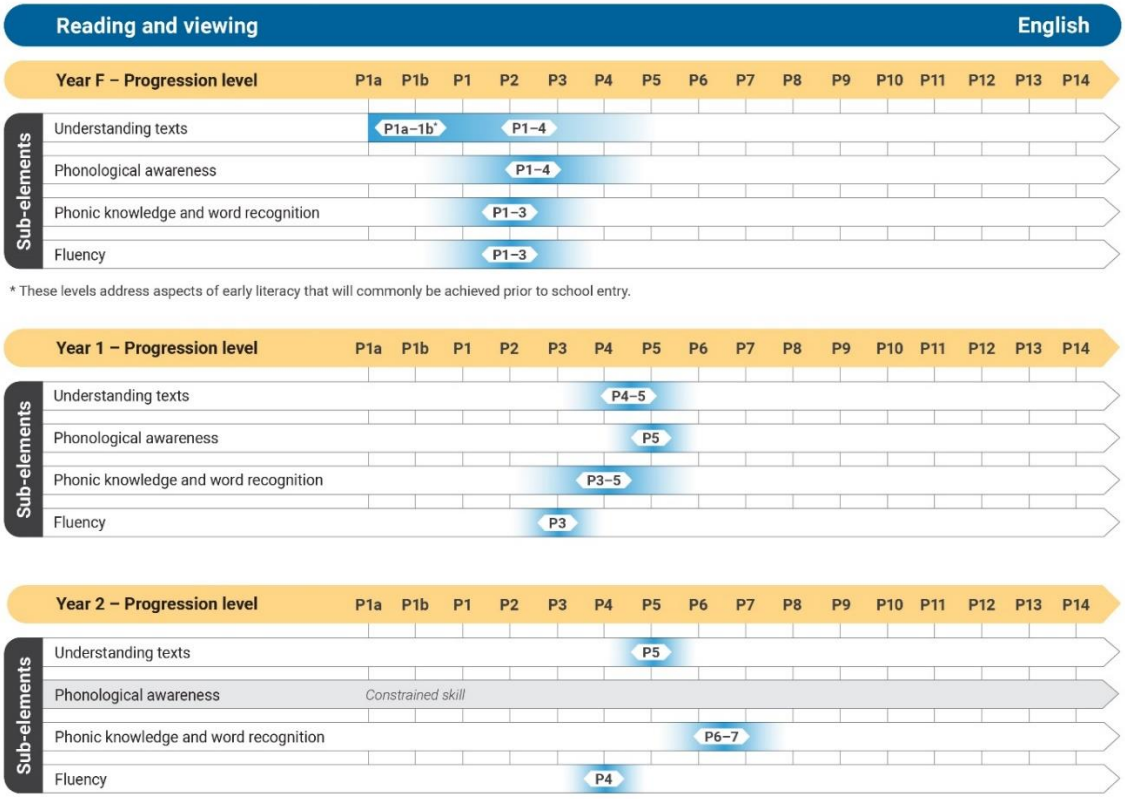


Figure 2: Range of levels for each sub-element of the Reading and viewing Years F–2

Literacy

The Literacy general capability is organised into 3 elements: Speaking and listening, Reading and viewing, and Writing. Each element is divided into sub-elements. The sub-elements are further organised into progression levels with indicators. The progression levels in each sub-element are discreet and are not designed to align across sub-elements.

The Australian Curriculum: Literacy download document illustrates when the indicators for each sub-element are addressed across F–10 English.

Figures 3 and 4 show an example of how the elements, sub-elements, levels and indicators are displayed on the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 website.

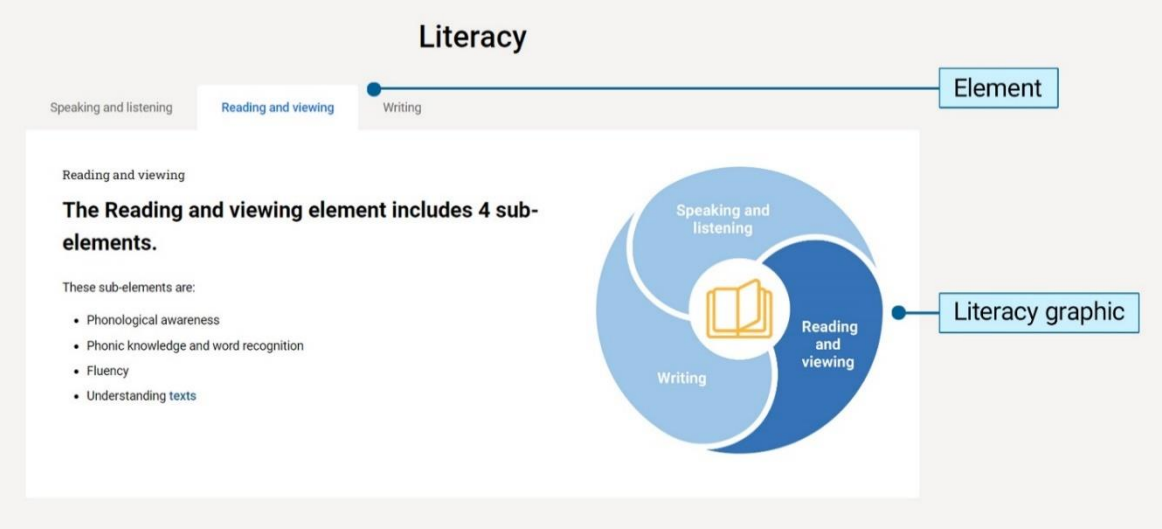


Figure 3: The elements and sub-elements of the Literacy learning progression

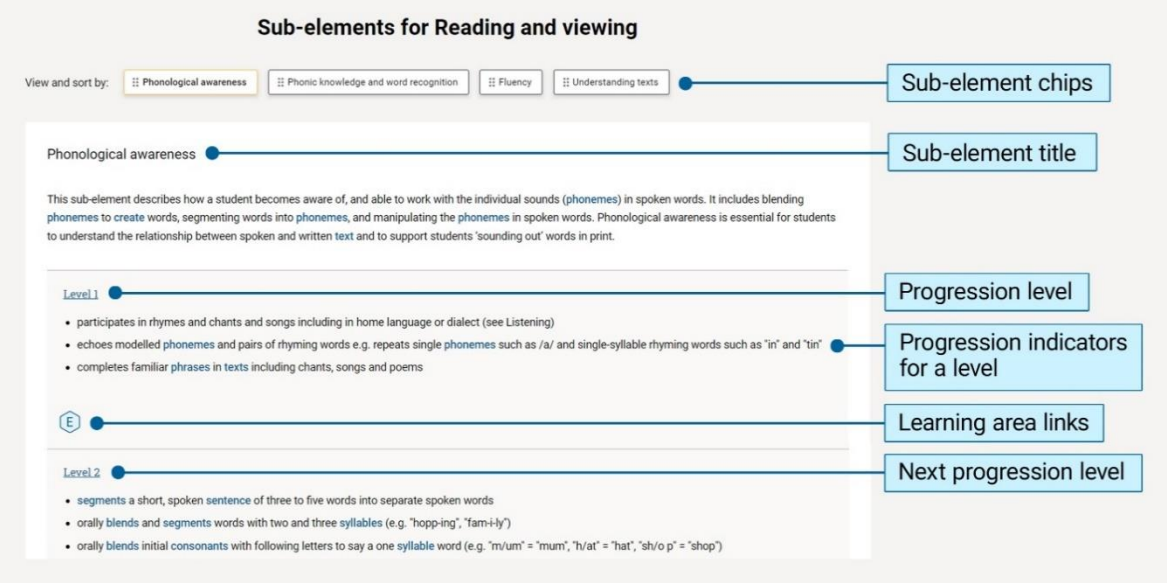


Figure 4: An example of the sub-elements, sub-headings, levels and indicators

Numeracy

The Numeracy general capability is organised into 3 elements: Number sense and algebra, Measurement and geometry, Statistics and probability. Each element includes sub-elements that represent evidence-based aspects of numeracy development. The sub-elements are organised into progression levels that are aligned to the specific year levels in the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics. The year levels are when students are expected to learn and be able to demonstrate those behaviours. This alignment with year level expectation may cover more than one level, as is the case for Foundation.

There are 8 sub-elements in Number sense and algebra, 4 in Measurement and geometry, and 2 in Statistics and probability. Within each sub-element, indicators are grouped together to form developmental levels. There are as many levels within each sub-element as can be supported by evidence.

In all of the sub-elements, subheadings have been included to group indicators into particular categories of skills that develop within that level or over a number of levels. Figures 5 and 6 show how the elements and sub-elements are displayed on the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 website.

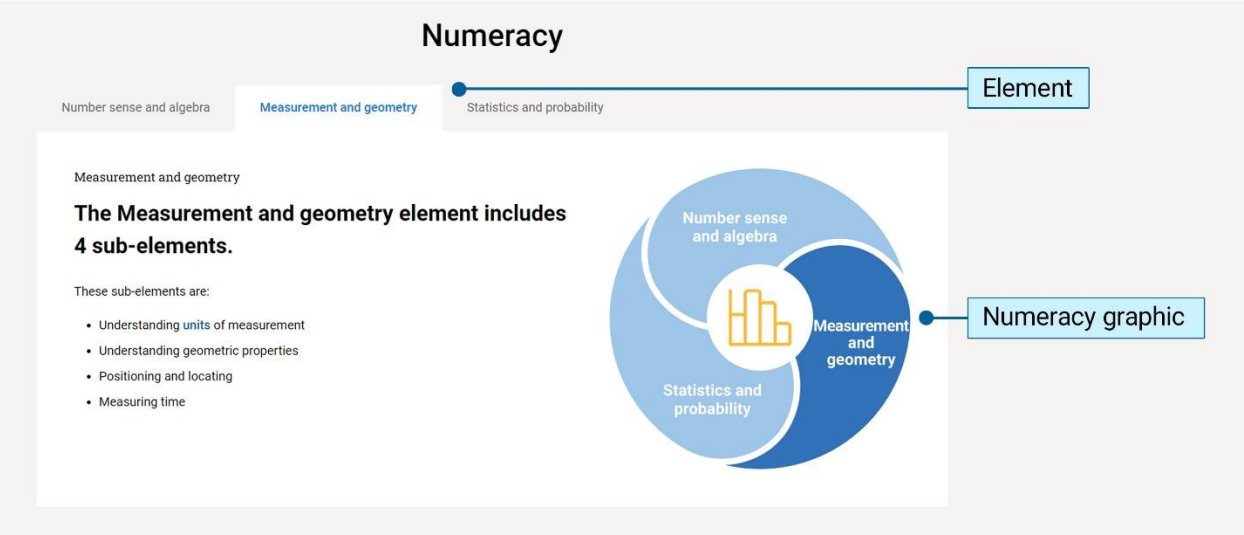


Figure 5: The elements and sub-elements of the Numeracy learning progression

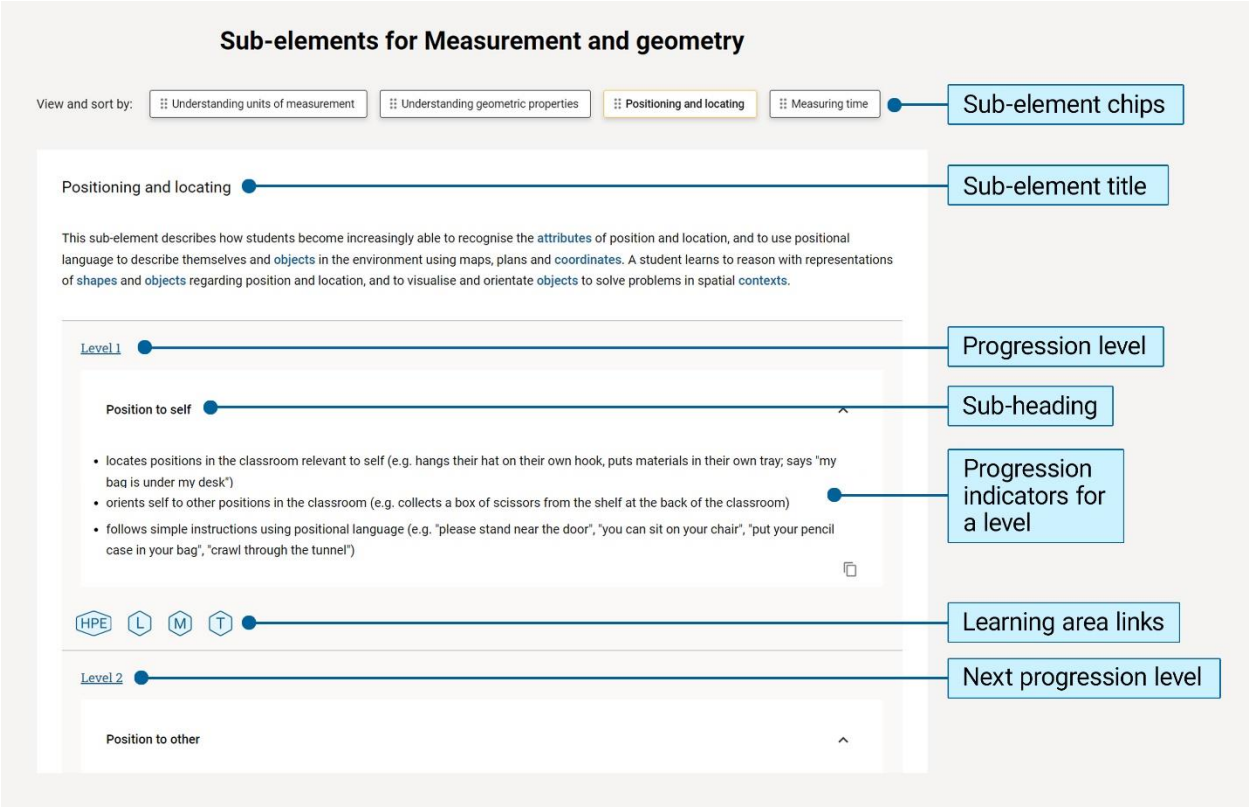


Figure 6: An example of the sub-elements, sub-headings, levels and indicators

Levels in the learning progressions

The indicators describe specific literacy and numeracy skills that students demonstrate at each level of a sub-element. It is likely that students could be demonstrating skills across more than one level. For example:

- On entry to Foundation, some students may already be well advanced in the early levels of the Numeracy and Literacy learning progression, as in some cases 2–3 levels span across Foundation.
- Several levels of the learning progressions can relate to one year level, particularly in the early years when the trajectory of development is more rapid (for example, Additive strategies L1–2 in Foundation and L3–6 in Year 1, and Listening L–3 in Foundation).
- Some levels of the learning progression bridge 2 or more year levels in the foundational learning area F–10 (for example, Understand money L7 bridging Years 4–5 and Years 5–6, and Interacting L4 bridging Years 3–4).

How to use the progressions

The progressions provide a sequence for the development of literacy and numeracy skills. They articulate in greater detail and depth the literacy and numeracy in the Australian Curriculum: English and Mathematics. They do not replace the curriculum. The content and achievement standards of the curriculum continue to be the focus for planning, programming, teaching, learning and assessment.

Teachers can use the learning progressions to develop a greater understanding of a student's literacy and numeracy development. This fine-grained understanding will enable teachers to effectively differentiate teaching to support each student's particular needs. The fine-grained nature of the learning progressions may also assist teachers to identify the sub-skills in a content description (CD). Examples for English and Mathematics are provided below.

English and Literacy

This content description from the Year 5 English *Literacy* strand includes several component Literacy skills:

use appropriate interaction skills including paraphrasing and questioning to clarify meaning, make connections to own experience, and present and justify an opinion or idea AC9E5LY02

As teachers work through these skills, they might consider indicators from the Interacting sub-element of the learning progression to understand the particular sub-skills, such as:

- appropriately presents an alternative point to the previous speaker
- initiates interactions confidently in group and whole-class discussions
- poses pertinent questions to make connections between a range of ideas
- uses open questions to prompt a speaker to provide more information.

To assist teachers in planning for teaching this content description, each progression includes examples of student behaviour in relation to the indicator statement. These contextualised examples are intended to provide the additional support teachers need when making decisions about student progress.

Mathematics and Numeracy

The Numeracy progression can also serve as guidance for the teaching of related content descriptions that rely on the same behaviours. For example, the following Year 2 content descriptions are related within the Mathematics curriculum. All 3 are aligned to the sub-element Interpreting fractions of the Numeracy progression.

identify common uses and represent halves, quarters and eighths in relation to shapes, objects and events AC9M2M02

recognise and read the time represented on an analog clock to the hour, half-hour and quarter-hour AC9M2M04

identify, describe and demonstrate quarter, half, three-quarter and full measures of turn in everyday situations AC9M2M05

As teachers work through these skills, they might consider indicators from the Interpreting fractions sub-element of the Numeracy learning progression to understand the particular sub-skills involved, such as:

Creating halves

- demonstrates that dividing a whole into 2 parts can create equal or unequal parts
- identifies the part and the whole in representations of one-half

Repeated halving

- makes quarters and eighths by repeated halving
- identifies the part and the whole in representations of halves, quarters and eighths

Repeating fractional parts

- accumulates fractional parts (e.g. knows that two-quarters is inclusive of one-quarter and twice one-quarter, not just the second quarter)
- demonstrates that fractions can be written symbolically and interprets using part-whole knowledge.

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