**Humanities Alive for Victorian Essential Learning Standards**

The new Victorian Essential Learning Standards

The new Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) replaces the Curriculum Standards Framework (CSF) from 2006. Under VELS, school curriculum and reports to parents in Victorian schools will be organised around three interrelated strands and not the Key Learning Areas (KLAs) outlined in the CSF.

The standards describe what is essential for students to achieve at different stages of learning:

- **Years Prep to 4** – Laying the foundations
- **Years 5 to 8** – Building breadth and depth
- **Years 9 to 10** – Developing pathways

Within each stage, standards are provided at levels. These are broadly related to the years of schooling. Victorian teachers will be familiar with these levels from the CSF.

- **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.

**Developing deep learning**

The new Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) aim to encourage deep learning, with students investigating a knowledge area in many layered ways, developing a range of skills as they do so. The aim of this approach is to help students develop the capacity to apply what they learn to a range to different circumstances, manage themselves and relate to others.

To enable the development of deep learners, curriculum development at a school and faculty level will now relate to three interrelated strands:

- **Physical, Personal and Social Learning**
- **Discipline-based Learning**
- **Interdisciplinary Learning**

**Planning for Humanities in VELS**

The VELS document encourages Humanities faculties to stimulate students to be curious about the world we live in, and foster a deeper understanding of Humanities through greater recognition of personal, group and interdisciplinary learning in their Humanities classrooms.

Humanities is one of the disciplines listed in the Discipline-based learning strand. It is referred to as a *domain* in the VELS document. When planning for Humanities, course planners need to look carefully at the learning focus and *standards* for Humanities at the appropriate learning level. The standards are broken down into a number of *dimensions*. The six *dimensions* within the Humanities domain (from grade 5 to Year 10) are:

- Economic knowledge and understanding
- Economic reasoning and interpretation
- Geographic knowledge and understanding
- Geospatial skills
- Historical knowledge and understanding
- Historical reasoning and interpretation

Curriculum planners also need to consider domains contained in the Physical, Personal and Social Learning and Interdisciplinary Learning strands. These strands also contain a number of domains and dimensions. In Humanities, connections can be made to all aspects of VELS; however, there are clear links between the Humanities domain and the domains of:

- Interpersonal Development
- Personal learning
- Civics and citizenship
- Communication
- Design, Creativity and Technology
- ICT
- Thinking

The following grid outlines how a study of Deserts can be built to make the most of the new VELS curriculum. This unit of study makes strong links between the domains of Humanities, Interpersonal Development, Communication, Design, Creativity and Technology, and Thinking. It lists a series of contexts that could be used to assess student performance in each dimension. It also lists links that can be made within the Humanities domain and between other disciplines.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Key elements of standards</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Discipline links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical, Personal and Social Learning</td>
<td>Interpersonal Development</td>
<td>Building social relationships</td>
<td>Empathise with others in local and global contexts, acknowledging the diversity of individuals.</td>
<td>Appreciate that a range of people have adapted in different ways to desert conditions</td>
<td>Text – pages 182-183</td>
<td>Empathy Chapter 1 – page xx</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline-based learning</td>
<td>Humanities – Geography</td>
<td>Geographical knowledge and understanding</td>
<td>Extend knowledge and understanding of physical phenomena and processes</td>
<td>Understand why deserts are so dry</td>
<td>Text – pages 174-5</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identify desert landforms and patterns</td>
<td>Text – pages 176-7</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Research how animals and plants adapt to desert life</td>
<td>Text – pages 180-1</td>
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<td>Identify patterns of distribution of major physical features and their links with human activities</td>
<td>Identify the distribution of deserts of the world.</td>
<td>Text – pages 172-3</td>
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<td>Appreciate that humans have adapted to desert conditions</td>
<td>Text – pages 182-183</td>
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<td>Examine the interaction of physical processes and human activities in Asia-Pacific</td>
<td>Understand that humans have changed desert areas</td>
<td>Text – pages 184-5</td>
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<td>Study life in the desert town of Coober Pedy</td>
<td>Text – pages 186-7</td>
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<td>Investigate environmental issues and evaluate sustainable management of these resources.</td>
<td>Evaluate the damage caused by desertification in China</td>
<td>Text – pages 188-9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Geospatial skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>Apply knowledge and understanding of scale, grid references, legend and direction</td>
<td>Apply geospatial skills to draw conclusions from a map</td>
<td>Text – pages 174-5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use topographic maps, atlas maps and geographic information systems.</td>
<td>Use a topographic map to investigate the desert town of Alice Springs.</td>
<td>Text-pages 190-1</td>
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<td>Use a range of techniques to collect, process, present and analyse data</td>
<td>Construct a climograph for the planet Xerxxes</td>
<td>Teacher book – page xx</td>
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<td>Set up experiments to collect water through transpiration and condensation</td>
<td>Teacher book – page xx</td>
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<td>Interdisciplinary learning</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Listening, viewing and responding</td>
<td>Use specialised language and symbols</td>
<td>Story of crash in desert using specialized language to introduce desert terminology</td>
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<td>Understanding symbols to assist survival in the desert</td>
<td>Text pages 178-179</td>
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<td>Presenting</td>
<td>Use a range of presentation formats to meet the needs of the context, purpose and audience.</td>
<td>Prepare a newspaper article about a desert plane crash</td>
<td>Teacher book page xx</td>
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<td>Newspaper reports English Alive 1, pxx</td>
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<td>Design, Creativity and Technology</td>
<td>Investigating and designing</td>
<td>Develop a design brief to clearly define the idea, problem, need, want or opportunity</td>
<td>Create and make a desert animal capable of surviving the extreme climate</td>
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<td>Thinking</td>
<td>Reasoning, processing and inquiring</td>
<td>Use reasoning and analysis to evaluate evidence.</td>
<td>Identify a mystery object found in the desert</td>
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<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Apply creative thinking to explore possibilities and solutions.</td>
<td>Use musical performance to paint a picture of desert life</td>
<td>Teacher book page xx</td>
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Humanities Alive for Victorian Essential Learning Standards – Level 5

*Humanities Alive* 1 and 2 have been specifically designed to cater for level 5 of the new Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). The texts and accompanying teacher resource books and CD-ROMs encourage deep learning, with students investigating a knowledge area in many different ways. Great attention is given to engaging learners and helping them understand and adapt essential information and skills. *Interdisciplinary learning* through the domains of communication, design, ICT and thinking are imbedded in the activities on each spread and extended through a range of worksheets. Links are also made from Humanities to the domains contained within the *Physical, Personal and Social Learning* strand, particularly *Civics and Citizenship*.

Features of the *Humanities Alive* for VELS series includes:

**Text**
- Complete coverage of the Level 5 Humanities standards with links to *Physical, Personal and Social Learning* and *Interdisciplinary Learning* strands
- Stunning full-colour spreads with accessible and instructive text
- Detailed illustrations and captions to engage both the visual and linguistic learner
- Structured activities catering for a wide range of abilities and intelligences, with many links to other domains such as *Thinking*
- Skillbooster activities to provide opportunities for coverage of *Economic Reasoning and Interpretation*, *Geospatial Skills, Historical Reasoning and Interpretation* standards
- Special *Physical, Personal and Social Learning* chapters focusing on the domains of *Civics and Citizenship* and *Interpersonal Development*
- Checklists to encourage students to think about their own learning

**CD-ROM**
- Entire text is provided on the CD-ROM to save students carrying a text to and from school
- New interactive educational games are included to heighten engagement
- New site studies and mapping skills interactives assist students use ICT to further develop their geospatial and historical interpretation skills
- Wisdom interactive game acts as a summary for the unit

**Teacher Support Kit**
- VELS curriculum grids to show how *Humanities Alive* caters for the new course
- *Interdisciplinary Learning* worksheets to further link and extend the domains of *Communication, Design, Creativity and Technology, ICT and Thinking*
- Teaching notes for each of the spreads in the text outlining teaching purpose, links to *VELS*, links to CD-ROM and worksheets, common pitfalls and suggested answers to activities
- Teacher CD-ROM contains *VELS* curriculum grid in adaptable Word format, assessment software and pre-prepared assessment tasks in a flexible Microsoft Word format.