

Understand listening in Prep–Year 10

The Australian Curriculum achievement standards describe the learning expected of students at each year level or band and can be demonstrated by multiple means.



Reflect on practice

Compare the following two definitions. How does an understanding of the difference between *listen* and *aural skills* support:

- teachers to provide the curriculum with rigour and fidelity in a way that responds to the diversity of learners?
- students to access and participate in learning, and demonstrate the full extent and depth of learning against achievement standards?

Listen

The Australian Curriculum: English glossary defines listen across all eight learning areas of the curriculum as:

‘to use the sense of hearing as well as a range of active behaviours to comprehend information received through gesture, body language and other sensory systems.’

Aural skills

The Australian Curriculum: The Arts glossary defines aural skills as:

‘particular listening skills students develop to identify and discriminate between sounds in Music. Also referred to as ear training which involves focused listening activities through which students identify sounds such as rhythm, pitch and timbre’

(Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2021)

Understand access to listening in the Australian Curriculum

Students can demonstrate listening by multiple means, including the use of:

- a written transcript or captions;
- an assistive hearing device such as a Frequency Modulation system or Soundfield Amplification System;
- assistive technology that adjusts speed and volume, allows pausing or relistening of recorded text;
- interpretation of signed communication (for example, Auslan);
- multi-modal information (for example, using captions together with images and/or video);
- observing gestures or body language; or
- the sense of hearing.

Understand how aural skills differ to listening

Aural skills rely on the sense of hearing. They are explicitly taught and assessed in Music only. The listening aspects of the English achievement standards do not rely solely on the use of the sense of hearing. Teachers have the autonomy to plan or adjust assessment tasks that respond to the diverse needs of their students by providing options and choices in how students demonstrate listening.

If a student cannot demonstrate¹ aural skills, they may not need to be assessed against the aspects of the Music achievement standard where aural skills are being assessed. The student is assessed against the remainder of the achievement standard with this decision not affecting their overall level of achievement or opportunity to progress to the next achievement standard.

Consider an example

The following is one example of how a classroom teacher might plan to adjust the mode of listening in an assessment task. The differentiation or adjustments made to assessment are also reflected in the teaching and learning sequence².

A Prep English assessment task asks students to **listen** to, innovate on and create a rhyme.

- To support **all students** when listening for rhyme, letter patterns and sounds in words, the teacher can use a consistent gesture or facial expression when reading aloud alliteration and rhyming passages for students to comprehend.
- To support **an individual student** who is Deaf, an interpreter can convey speech from the teacher through Auslan. This enables the student to comprehend information they receive on letter patterns and rhymes through active behaviours.

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¹ A decision that a student cannot demonstrate an aspect of the achievement standard is made when the aspect being assessed demands the production of a skill that if adjusted would impact what is being assessed. For example, a student who is Deaf does not need to be assessed against the Music aspect: use aural skills to recognise elements of music in Years 9 and 10.

² Differentiation and/or adjustments planned for cohorts are recorded in the Year/Band plans, and/or Unit Plans. Differentiation and/or adjustments planned for identified groups and/or individual students can be recorded in the OneSchool Support tab.