

Understand reading 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 *read* and *decode* 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?

Read

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

‘to process words, symbols or actions to derive and/or construct meaning. Reading includes interpreting, critically analysing and reflecting upon the meaning of a wide range of written and visual, print and non-print texts.’

Decode

The Australian Curriculum: English glossary defines decode as:

‘a process of efficient word recognition in which readers use knowledge of the relationship between letters and sounds to work out how to say and read written words.’

(Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2021)

Understand access to reading in the Australian Curriculum

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

- a human or digital reader reading aloud instructions, questions, stimulus or resource materials;
- alternative format content;
- an audio book or pre-recorded text (may include an Auslan translation);
- Braille text;
- reading aloud;
- text to speech assistive technology, for example, C pen to read text; read aloud feature with Word Online;
- non-print text such as animations, images or film.

Understand how decoding differs to reading

Decoding makes up a small portion of the English achievement standards from Prep–Year 5. Unless decoding itself is being assessed, a student is not required to decode to demonstrate reading. 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 reading.

If a student cannot demonstrate¹ decoding, they may not need to be assessed against the aspect of the achievement standard where decoding itself is 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 reading in an assessment task. The differentiation or adjustments made to assessment are also reflected in the teaching and learning sequence².

A Year 8 English assessment task asks students to **read** and interpret the language and visual features of a homepage.

- To support **all students** to read the visual and non-print texts on the homepage studied, the use of accessibility tools on the computer/tablet (e.g. audio descriptions, magnifying glass, screen reader, zoom) can be used.
- To support **an individual student** for whom English is an additional language or dialect to read the print on the homepage studied, a web-based translation tool can be used.

This document has been republished from the Assessment and Moderation Hub, an internal Department of Education website.

¹A 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 does not use verbal communication does not need to be assessed against the English aspect: read aloud, with developing fluency in Year 1.

²Differentiation 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.