# DEMOCRACY IN A BOX Teacher resource





The Museum of Australian Democracy acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Custodians of Country and recognises their continuing connection to land, sea, culture and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

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# Introduction: Democracy in a Box

Democracy in a Box is a comprehensive educational By fostering a sense of agency and responsibility, resource from the Museum of Australian Democracy Learning team, designed to ignite curiosity and foster civic engagement in students. This innovative resource offers a range of activities, picture books, games and lesson plans that explore the fundamental principles of democracy and the importance of active citizenship. Grounded in the Key Learning Area of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS), specifically Civics and Citizenship and History, Democracy in a Box empowers students to develop a deep understanding of democratic processes and consider their role in shaping their communities. Through interactive and engaging experiences, students will learn to critically analyse information, make informed decisions and contribute meaningfully to society. Designed with the intention of being easily adaptable for diverse classrooms, this resource supports teacher agency and can easily be tailored to suit students' needs and local contexts. Through carefully crafted lessons and flexible inquiry. Democracy in a Box provides the tools and inspiration to create dynamic and impactful learning experiences.

*Democracy in a Box* aims to inspire anew generation of informed and active citizens. Through exploration of localised real-world issues and inviting students to consider the role of democracy in addressing these challenges, they will gain the skills and knowledge to make a positive impact on their communities. The Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House would like to acknowledge and thank Tim Fairfax AC and Gina Fairfax AC for their generous philanthropic donation, which has made Democracy in a Box possible.



# The creative team

*Democracy in a Box* has been supported by several talented external companies and individuals. Outlined below are some of the people who have made significant contributions to this initiative.

# Jess Harwood

Illustrator Jessica Harwood is an award- winning illustrator, cartoonist, designer and environmental campaigner. Her work has been featured on the ABC and the BBC. She is also a regular cartoonist for the Guardian Australia with her work featured in MoAD's 2023 and 2024 Behind the Lines exhibitions. Jessica's colourful cartoons feature throughout Democracy in a Box helping to connect with student's civics and democracy regardless of their age.

# Liz Elton

**Graphic Designer** The graphic design for Democracy in a Box was undertaken by the talented Liz Elton of Liz Elton Studio. Liz has spent more than two decades working as a graphic designer and creative director, specialising in custom print projects for clients such as MoAD. She brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to this project in helping to create engaging resources to support both teachers and students. Liz's work aims to uplift its viewers through positive and memorable visual impact.

#### **Crewcible** Filming

Crewcibleare a local Canberra-based film company with expertise experience in animation. story mapping and creating cohesive products. Crewcible's mission is to empower people and organisations to share their unique stories through impactful video content. The team at Crewicible assisted with the filming, editing and animation of multiple digital resources that are a part of this initiative.

## Kirli Saunders OAM

Talent for digital content

Kirli isan awardwinning writer, artist and consultant. Her film collaboration, Cry the Glossy has been screened around the world and her designs have been commissioned for large public art and digital installations including TRACES (VIVID) and First Lights (Fremantle Biennale). Kirli's books include, Eclipse (Allen & Unwin 2025), The Land Recalls You (Scholastic, 2024) Bindi (Magabala 2023) and Afloat (Hardie Grant 2024). which is included in Democracy in a Box.

# **Resource objectives**

#### Empower Educators

Provide teachers with a readily accessible and user-friendly resource to facilitate engaging lessons on democracy, civic engagement, social justice and active participation.

#### Integrate (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics and Democracy) STE AMD

Incorporate science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics and democracy into learning experiences, providing a holistic approach to understanding complex issues.

## Inspire civic engagement

Encourage students to become active and informed citizens by fostering a sense of agency and responsibility in their local communities.

# Support positive engagement

Offer a variety of activities and resources to cater to different learning styles, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all students.

## Enhance student voice

Create opportunities for students to express their ideas, opinions and concerns, empowering them to become active participants in democratic processes.

#### Foster community connection

Encourage students to connect with their local communities and explore ways to contribute to positive change.

#### Promote inquiry-based learning

Stimulate curiosity and critical thinking through inquirybased activities that encourage students to ask questions, investigate, collaborate and problem-solve.

# Develop 21stcentury skills

Equip students with essential skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration.

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# Getting the most out of this resource

*Democracy in a Box* has been carefully curated to support teacher agency and provide flexibility in the classroom. This resource is divided into five phases Engage, Investigate, Inquire, Go Further and Reflect. During each phase teachers can pick and tailor activities to suit specific needs, interests or curriculum link connections.



Engage

Spark curiosity and ignite a passion for civic engagement with captivating introductory (hook) activities.



Investigate

Delve deeper into the core principles of civic literacy, political engagement, democratic participation, advocacy, and volunteering.



Inquire

Guide students as they formulate thought-provoking inquiry questions, encouraging critical thinking and problemsolving skills.



**Go Further** 

Empower students to take action and make a real difference by supporting them in developing and implementing practical solutions to local issues.



Reflect

Foster metacognition and deepen learning through activities that encourage students to reflect upon their experiences and the knowledge they have gained.



By following this approach, *Democracy in a Box* provides a comprehensive framework for teaching and learning about democracy and civic engagement.



There are two main ways to engage with the Box: by completing activities in the **Engage** and **Investigate** phases these will meet all the Australian Curriculum links identified. The **Inquire** and **Go Further** phases specifically connect to the Skills outcomes in the HASS curriculum.

# **Civic engagement principles**



By understanding and supporting students to explore these civic principles they can become more informed, engaged and effective citizens in their local communities and in a global context.



## **Political** engagement

#### Election awareness Understanding

the electoral process, including voter registration, candidate platforms, and election results. **Civic literacy** Political discourse Engaging in respectful and informed Lobbying and advocacy letters, emails, or in-person meetings with

discussions about political issues. Learning how to influence policy decisions through elected officials.



## Democratic participation

Voting rights and responsibilities Understanding the importance of voting and the impact of voter turnout on election outcomes. Civic organisations Joining and participating in community organisations to advocate for change. **Public service** Considering careers in public

service, such as

teaching, law, or

government.



#### **Advocacy**

**Social justice** Understanding issues of social iustice, such as inequality, discrimination, and poverty. Environmental advocacy Advocating for environmental protection and sustainability. Human rights Promoting human rights and defending the rights of marginalised groups.



#### Volunteering Community

service Participating in volunteer activities that benefit the community, such as tutoring, mentoring, or fundraising.

# Environmental

stewardship Volunteering for environmental organisations to protect natural resources.

#### **Social change**

Volunteering for organisations that work to address social issues, such as homelessness, hunger, or healthcare.

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#### **Medialiteracy** The ability to critically analyse information from

various sources (news, social media, etc.) to identify bias. misinformation, and propaganda. **Historical literacy** Understanding historical events and their impact on current social and political issues. **Global citizenship** Recognising

one's role as a global citizen and understanding the interconnectedness of different cultures and societies.

# Skill development

Democracy in a Box encourages students to collaborate, share diverse opinions and ideas in a constructive way to promote social cohesion and tolerance of different perspectives. Most of the activities in the Box are designed for small group work but also allow the flexibility for whole class or pairs, depending on students' needs. Activities are presented in a wide variety of formats not only to engage but also showcase examples which can inspire students' creativity for their Inquiries and Go Further initiatives. Throughout the resource you will find picture books, video content, games, posters and examples of ways of sharing a message and inspiring participation in community engagement initiatives.



# Learning wall

A learning wall is a visual way to display students' learning, questions and ideas generated throughout the program in an authentic way. The inclusion of posters, opportunities to work in small groups, as well as post-it note, mind- map and drawing activities are all intended to contribute to a collaborative display. Throughout the learning experience, students can visualise their understanding, share their ideas, and reflect on their progress. This collaborative display fosters a deeper connection to the content and inspires ongoing learning, as well as celebrating how far students have come.





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# Action-based approach to empowering young citizens

*Democracy in a Box* uses a unique dual approach that integrates inquiry-based learning and STEAMD approaches to help empower students to become informed, active citizens.



# This innovative framework allows students to:

# Inquire and investigate

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- **Critical thinking:** Students delve into complex issues related to democracy, such as social justice, environmental sustainability and human rights.
- **Research and analysis:** Students conduct research, analyse information and evaluate evidence to develop a deeper understanding of the topic.
- **Problem identification:** Students identify local issues and challenges that require democratic solutions.

Drawing on this knowledge, students then enter the STEAMD cycle, which supports the development of solutions to their inquiry grounded in sound information and understanding.

# **Design and create**

- **Innovative thinking:** Using their knowledge and skills, students design and create solutions to address the identified issues.
- **Collaborative problem-solving:** Students work together to brainstorm ideas, develop plans and implement their projects.
- **Real-world impact:** Students take action to make a positive difference in their communities, empowering them to become agents of change.

By combining these two powerful approaches,

Democracy in a Box equips students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to become active participants in democratic processes and to contribute to their local community in a meaningful way. The Engage phase aims to encourage students to learn about democracy, civic engagement and their role as active citizens within their local community.

It aims to ignite students' curiosity and establish why civic engagement is relevant to them. During this phase teachers have a number of activity options to select from, and the flexibility to have their students complete as many as they like. Each of the activities listed has an accompanying activity card with detailed instructions and materials.

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Activity overview	Activity type
<b>Gunai woman Kirli Saunders</b> Considering the importance of everyone playing a role in caring for Country and connecting with community.	Pre-recorded video
<i>Democracy in Action</i> Explore the basics of Australian democracy and active participation through examining a detailed illustration by artist Jess Harwood.	Poster
<i>Democracy!</i> Picture Book Take a deeper dive into the basics of democracy through an engaging non- fiction picture book by author and illustrator Phillip Bunting.	Non-fiction picture book
<i>We Are Australian</i> Picture Book <i>We are Australian</i> by Wiradjuri man Duncan Smith and Nicole Godwin with artworks by Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung man Jandamarra Cadd invites all of us to consider what makes us Australian.	Picture book
Hexagon Thinking: Making connections Expanding upon ideas of democracy and civic engagement to support the active participation of students in their communities.	Card game activity
Make a Change Opportunity to build connections between <i>Democracy in a Box</i> with students' home life through the question, 'What positive change will I make this week?'	Home resource

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During the Investigate phase students will explore the key themes of the Civic Engagement model: • Civic literacy • Political engagement • Democratic participation • Volunteering (helping others) • Advocacy

To support students understanding of the Civic Engagement model we have included a poster provocation as the introductory activity. The poster includes the five areas of

civic engagement with supporting illustrations, and an image of the world to represent engagement at home, at school, in the local community and state/territory/ global levels.

The rest of the Investigate phase consists of two activities for each of the five Civic Engagement themes. Teachers can make a selection from these activities, all of which are designed to build background knowledge that will help support students before they enter the Inquire phase.

#### **Teacher notes**



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Activity overview	Activity type
<b>Civic Engagement</b> Grounds the Investigate phase in the five key areas of civic engagement: civic literacy, political engagement, democratic participation, volunteering and advocacy.	Poster
<b>Civic Literacy: Principles of a Classroom</b> Understanding of the fundamental principles of Australian democracy and the role of a constitution in shaping society.	Constitution Activity
<b>Civic Literacy: The Media and Me</b> Develop students' media literacy and critical thinking skills to support civic engagement.	Activity
<b>Political Engagement: Three Levels of Government</b> A 'deep dive' into the three levels of government to explore how responsibilities are distributed.	Card game activity
<b>Political Engagement: The Role of the Media</b> Consider why people make, share and engage with news as central to active participation and understanding different perspectives.	Activity
<b>Democratic Participation: Voting in Australia</b> Introduction to nominees, campaigning and preferential voting through Krys Saclier's and Cathy Wilcox's <i>Vote 4 Me</i> picture book.	Picture book
<b>Democratic Participation: Westminster Traditions</b> Explore pre-recorded video or book a live for a digital excursion with MoAD Learning team. Explore Australia's system of government through historical spaces at Old Parliament House.	Pre-recorded video
<b>Volunteering: Caring for Country</b> A reading of <i>Afloat</i> by Gunai woman Kirli Saunders and Freya Blackwood to provoke students' interest and in building resilience in local communities by considering ways students can support the environment and people.	Picture book
<b>Volunteering: Community Mapping</b> Identify local volunteering opportunities and groups.	Activity
<b>Advocacy: Seeing the World Differently</b> Support students to value different perspectives and consider how we can be more inclusive of others through the picture book, <i>Room on Our</i> <i>Rock</i> by Kate and Jol Temple, illustrated by Terri Rose Baynton.	Picture book
<b>Advocacy: Young People and Civics</b> Help students see the possibilities for civic engagement and meaningful change in their local community.	Pre-recorded video

The Inquire phase draws on students' **Source Provide and Investigate phases to support the developme of a key question to further ex in small g** learning in the development further explore in small groups.

Activity overview	Activity type
<b>'Deep Dive' Questions</b> Supporting students to generate high quality open-ended questions.	Poster
<b>Inquiry Student Booklet</b> A scaffolded approach to undertaking an inquiry with students.	Work booklet

# The Inquiry process

# **Planning for inquiry**

There are some critical decisions teachers need to make before students can begin the inquiry process.

- Will it be a guided inquiry (with teachers formulating the driving question), a collaborative exercise with students constructing a question or an open inquiry in which students create their own questions?
- Will students undertake this inquiry as a whole class or work in small groups? (We recommend groups of three for active participation)
- Consider how best you can support students by creating meaningful, manageable change, as this is a significant component of the inquiry/STEAMD process.

# **Driving question**

Thedriving question is an overarching one which students should be able to answer at the end of their inquiry process. It can be developed in conjunction with the students themselves (guided inquiry) or, if students are already familiar with the inquiry process (open inquiry). they can come up with their own. The driving question itself needs to have depth and not be something that is readily answerable before the inquiry

has even started. It also needs to be open-ended, to support vigorous research and result in meaningful responses. The supporting questions are there to help guide students and keep their research focused on answering the driving question. The deep dive activity will support students to consider what makes a good question and test out possible ideas before committing to an inquiry.



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PLANS



# Big picture question examples

What does democracy look like in our community?

What can we teach others about democracy in our community?

How is democracy relevant to me?

What does the future of Australian democracy look like?

Is democracy the fairest way to make decisions?

Is democracy a good fit for all cultures and societies? Can democracy be used to solve global challenges such as climate change?

How can we make democracy more inclusive and representative of all people?

## Investigate

The Investigate stage is critical as students will gather their research and ask questions of others to help answer their driving question. Once the driving and guiding questions have been identified, teachers can decide whether any explicit instruction needs to occur for some (or all) students before they start researching for themselves. To support students, the whole class may need to be explicitly taught how to research effectively. This can be done by working through the first couple of topics together.

Throughout this stage of the inquiry, teachers should encourage students to constantly refer to their questions and to reflect on whether their research is helping them answer the driving question. Throughout this process, students should keep a record of all the sources they have used. This will be beneficial down the track, when they may wish to use these again in their presentation.

## Design

The Design stage provides students with an opportunity to analyse the results of their research and identify key pieces of information they want to share with other students. This needs to be undertaken while critically assessing whether the information they have gathered answers the driving question. The critical thinking process will help students to determine the essential content which best answers the driving question and to disregard any irrelevant information.

This stage is also the point at which students brainstorm ways to communicate their findings effectively. Presentations can take many forms, including creating an artwork, developing an infographic or using digital technologies. Students need to consider who the audience is and what they will find engaging and relevant. Inquire

#### Create

During the Create stage, students take the time to create a detailed, high-quality response to share with their audience. They need to consider the materials they will use, the time it will take to craft their response and its overall readability. Students could also have discussions about how the presentation will run; this should include a consideration of who will be responsible for presenting particular information and whether speeches need to be written out to ensure a more polished presentation.

Once again, this is an opportunity for students to reflect on whether what they have created answers the driving question, and whether the information is clear, concise and engaging.



#### **Present/Discuss**

This stage is all about students sharing their learning, unpacking their creative responses and the significance behind their choices. Presenting can also include students sharing their learning beyond the classroom. Students may be interested in connecting with key stakeholders, including other students at their school, parents or community members. While they are listening to other presentations, students should make a record of any comments and questions they have, to fuel further discussion around the theme.



**Call to action** 

Students will have been actively reflecting throughout each stage of the inquiry process. This stage allows students to fully reflect on their learning and take a moment to reflect on what they got out of the experience. During this time, students can identify one or more 'call to action' statements which can be workshopped and then used during the STEAMD process.



# **Teacher notes**

This phooffers studed, the opportunity to take their Inquiry learnings and apply them to a practical change in th school or lo community **Activity overview** Activity type **Go Further Student Booklet** Work booklet A scaffolded approach to making meaning, manageable change with students. **Optional Digital Connection** In this optional session, the MoAD Learning team will run a reflectionbased workshop, supporting students to share their learnings from the Inquiry and Investigate activities. By participating in this digital connection, it also provides an opportunity for students to ask any questions they may have around topics such as civic engagement or Westminster traditions. CLEAN UP!



## **Teacher notes**


# **STEAMD** process

The STEAMD process will take students in-depth inquiry learnings and transition their 'call to action' statements into a practical solution they can effectively implement. Students need to have realistic ideas which can be introduced into the classroom, school or local community. This process is all about identifying what the students see as important and allowing them to advocate for positive change.

Plan

# Imagine

The **Imagine** stage is all about building connections between the 'call to action' statement from students' inquiry and developing this into a practical solution. Students will need to research their ideas, look at what is already being done and critically analyse what is achievable in the relevant context. Keep in mind this process is centred on students taking action to implement changes they have identified.

The **Plan** stage is where students workshop their idea and develop solutions that will better enable them to turn it into reality. As part of this process, they will need to consider the resources and the time required, and also how they can effectively communicate their intentions to others. To assist them in working up their ideas, students can create detailed diagrams, which will help them to unpack their thinking visually. This is an opportunity for teachers to provide support by offering feedback or questions, which will, in turn, prompt students to consider additional aspects of the issue they may not have thought of.

#### Design task examples

How can we share our message? Design a democracy superhero.

Create a 'My Voice Matters' poster.

Design a cartoon focused on democracies around the world.

> Create a new student leadership model for the school.

Design a new democracy symbol challenge.

Democracy: 'Then and Now' illustration.

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## <u>Create</u>

**Test & Modify** 

## Implement

Reflect

The Create stage of the STEAMD process needs to be allocated enough quality time and should not be rushed. Students have worked through the whole inquiry process, workshopped their 'call to action' statements and are now ready to bring their practical solutions to life. At this point, students need to pay close attention to the finer details to produce a good quality product, initiative or display.

#### The Test/Modify

stage is where students share their product. How students conduct this stage will vary depending on the product and its intention. Here are some questions which will support students through this stage:

- Does the product achieve its intended purpose?
- Are other students engaged?
- Is our message clear?

Throughout this stage students will need to gather data and critically evaluate it, to determine whether what they have produced is complete as it is or whether it requires modification in some way.

#### The Implement

stage is the point at which students launch their design, once any modifications have been made, and they are satisfied with their product. Depending on the product, this may involve a ceremony or an official event to inform other students or community members about their initiative. This stage offers a great opportunity for students to organise and run the event themselves. As part of the students' role in informing others, they can create short digital material, posters or artworks.

It is critical that. once the STEAMD process is drawing to a conclusion. students take a moment to reflect on their achievements. The **Reflect** stage is just as much about identifying the positive outcomes, as it is about recalling the initial challenges. This process should be done as a group, but it also allows students to individually reflect. It is important for each student to evaluate what they have learnt about themselves, their strengths and any areas that they need to work on to better support group interactions.

The Reflect phase is an opportunity for students to consolidate their learning experiences and reflect on key takeaways from the unit of work.

Activity overview	Activity type
<b>Democracy Board Game</b> A question and drawing game to help students share what they have learnt from the program. Teachers can select from a range of prewritten question cards or support students to write their own.	Board game activity
<b>'How has our thinking changed?'</b> Students reflect on their learning journey and share their key takeaways from the learning experience.	Poster



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# **Teacher notes**

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# Australian Curriculum outcomes

The following has been directly taken from the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0.

Target audience:

# Years 5 and 6

Key learning areas:

Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)



# Years 5 and 6 (Stage 3) Achievement standards

## Achievement standard Year 5

By the end of Year 5, students explain the causes of the establishment of British colonies in Australia after 1800. They explain the roles of significant individuals or groups in the development of an Australian colony and the impact of those developments. They explain the influence of people on the characteristics of places and in the management of spaces. Students explain the key values and features of Australia's democracy and how people achieve civic goals. They explain the nature of resources, and how they meet needs and wants.

Students develop questions and locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources. They evaluate sources to determine origin and perspectives. Students evaluate information and data to identify and describe patterns or trends. They suggest conclusions based on evidence. Students consider criteria in proposing actions or responses. Students select ideas and findings from sources and use relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.

# Achievement standard Year 6

By the endof Year 6, students explain the roles

of significant people, events and ideas that led to Australian Federation, democracy and citizenship. They explain the causes and effects of migration to Australia since Federation. They explain the geographical diversity of places and the effects of interconnections with other countries. Students explain the key institutions, roles and responsibilities of Australia's levels of government, and democratic values and beliefs. They explain influences on consumers and strategies for informed consumer and financial choices. Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources. They evaluate sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives. Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships. They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions. Students propose actions or responses and use criteria to assess the possible effects. Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.

# Year 5 and 6 (Stage 3)

# **Knowledge and Understanding outcomes** Year 5

## **Civics and** Citizenship

# AC9HS5K06:

#### Significant individuals. events and ideas The key values and that led to Australia's features of Australia's Federation, the democracy, including Constitution and elections, and the roles democratic system and responsibilities of of government.

# representatives.

elected

#### AC9HS5K07:

How citizens (members of communities) with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal.

#### **Civics and** Citizenship **AC9HS6K06:**

Year 6

**Histor y** 

AC9HS6K01:

The key institutions of Australia's system of government, how it is based on the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy, and the key values and beliefs of Western democracies.

## AC9HS6K07:

The roles and responsibilities of the three levels of government in Australia.

# Year 5 and 6 (Stage 3) **Skills outcomes**

# **Questioning and** researching AC9HS5S01/ AC9HS6S01:

Develop questions to people, investigate events, developments, places and systems.

#### AC9HS5S02/ AC9HS6S02:

Locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats.

## Interpreting, analysing and evaluating AC9HS5S03/ AC9HS6S03:

Evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships.

## AC9HS5S04:

Evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives.

# **Concluding and** decisionmaking

#### AC9HS5S05/ AC9HS6S05:

Develop evidencebased conclusions.

#### AC9HS5S06/ AC9HS6S06:

Propose actions or responses to issues or challenges and use criteria to assess the possible effects

## Communicating AC9HS5S07/ AC9HS6S07:

Present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions

# English

- Language
- Literacy

# **General capabilities**

# Inquiring Critical and creative thinking

## Analysing

## Level 4

# (Years 5 and 6)

#### Level 4

#### (Years 5 and 6)

- Develop questions to examine unfamiliar ideas and topics.
- Questions developed focus on improving understanding about a topic and clarifying information about processes or procedures.

#### • Identify the relevant and significant aspects of a concept or problem, understanding that approaches may change depending on the particular subject or learning area.

# Additional Key Learning Areas

## Dependent on Inquiry and Go Further initiatives developed.

- Literacy
- Digital technologies
- Creative arts.



