

# Understanding Essential Learnings and Proficiency Scales

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## Australian Curriculum

An overview of all outcomes for students at grade specific levels. The Australian Curriculum comprises an overarching achievement standard, descriptors for each component and also a set of elaborations for each descriptor. (The Australian Curriculum is available on the internet for any parent or carer who wishes to take a close look.)

## Essential Learnings

A set of agreed standards, deemed as essential, derived from the Australian Curriculum by UCHSK educators, using a robust set of filtering questions to determine what teachers believe to be essential learning for all students. Filtering questions consider what students need to know and understand in order to be successful in their next year of learning, what skills and knowledge will be used across a variety of curriculum areas, the skills and knowledge deemed to be important for life-long learning to occur and those which our professional educators deem to be critical for the development of the student.

## Proficiency Scales

A set of levelled statements clearly describing exactly what skills and knowledge students need to be able to demonstrate in order to be deemed 'proficient' in each of the Essential Learnings. The scales also contain descriptions of skills and knowledge above and below what is deemed to be 'proficient'.

### How do Proficiency Scales relate to overall grades for reporting?

Whilst teachers will teach much more than simply the Essential Learnings over the course of every unit, we are committed to ensuring that all Essential Learnings will be taught in every class and that every student will be given the support and time required in order to become successful against each one.

As the selected outcomes are deemed 'essential', by definition, students should demonstrate a level of agreed proficiency in ALL Essential Learnings, in order to be eligible for an overall proficient rating in each unit of work. This will equate to a 'C' grade on end of semester reports. There is some room for teacher judgement in this area, in consultation with other teachers and the subject executive teacher.

Students who still require support in order to demonstrate proficiency against Essential Learnings will be eligible for a 'D' grade.

Students who do not demonstrate any understanding of Essential Learnings, even with support, will receive an 'E' grade.

Students who demonstrate that they are working above proficiency level in all Essential Learnings will be awarded 'A' or 'B' grades at reporting time. The grade will ultimately be determined by how far above proficiency students are working and the expectations for each grade will be made clear by staff, in rubrics designed to assess each piece of work. Exemplary work will be shared with students so they can clearly identify what quality work looks like at each level.

**Below is an example of a generic Proficiency Scale. Remember, every Essential Learning has a Proficiency Scale sitting underneath it.**

<b>PROFICIENCY SCALE</b>	
<b>PRIORITISED STANDARD(S)</b>	
<b>AREA:</b>	<b>YEAR LEVEL:</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>APPLICATION—</b>  <b>Score 4.0- More Complex</b>  <i>In addition to exhibiting a level 3 performance, in-depth inferences and applications that go BEYOND what was taught in class.</i>
	<b>3.5</b> In addition to score 3.0 performance, partial success at score 4.0 content.
<b>3</b>	<b>LEARNING GOAL (PRIORITISED STANDARD)</b>  <b>Score 3.0 – The learning goal or expectation</b>
	<b>2.5</b> No major errors or omissions regarding score 2.0 content and partial success at score 3.0 content.
<b>2</b>	<b>PRE-REQUISITE SKILLS (INCLUDING VOCABULARY)\Score 2.0—The simpler stuff</b>  <i>Fundamental knowledge, simpler procedures, isolated details, vocabulary.</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>THE SIMPLER STUFF</b>  <b>Score 1.0</b>  <i>With help, the student can perform at level 2.0 and 3.0 content.</i>
	<b>1.5</b> Partial success at score 2.0 content, but major errors or omissions regarding score 3.0 content.
<b>0</b>	<b>NO UNDERSTANDING</b>  <b>Score 0.0</b>  <i>Even with help, no success.</i>

## Notes:

- Students have access to proficiency scales from the beginning of every unit of work. There is no 'secret teacher business.'
- Scales are unpacked and explained by teaching staff at the beginning of each unit and are regularly referred to during lessons and with every assessment task.
- Feedback is provided to students on a regular basis as to their progress (growth) towards achieving each Essential Learning.
- Students will be given several opportunities to demonstrate their abilities against each Essential Learning (and therefore their growth on the proficiency scale) throughout the unit of work.
- No single assessment piece will determine proficiency; some students will require more time and/or more support in order to achieve proficiency.