

# AUSTRALIA



## PISA Rankings

2006			2003			2000		
MATH	SCIENCE	READING	MATH	SCIENCE	READING	MATH	SCIENCE	READING
13	8	7	11	6	4	6	8	4

Population size:	21,015,042
Student enrollment:	3,417,000 in 2007
U.S. states with similar statistics:	Florida, Texas, and Pennsylvania

### General description of K–12 education:

In most of the states and territories compulsory education begins at six and completes at 15, and the school year is 200 days long. Australia does not have a national curriculum. But there is a process underway to develop one covering English, math, science, history, languages, and geography. The National Curriculum Board, an organization made up of members representing each type of school (independent, public, and Catholic), has been responsible for developing frameworks for the national curriculum. Since 2008, primary and lower secondary level students are assessed at grades 3, 5, 7, and 9 in literacy and numeracy. Since 2003, a sampling of students has been tested in grades 6 and 10 in one of the following areas: science, civics and citizenship, or information and communication technologies. There is no national system of assessment at the upper secondary level, but every state and territory has an external certification exam that students take in 12th grade. In addition to signifying school completion, these exams are also used in ranking students for further education.

### Required subjects:

The arts, English, health and physical education, languages, mathematics, science, studies of society and the environment, and technology.

### EXCERPTS

The documents included for Australia are an excerpt from the history framework being used to develop a national curriculum and a portion of a civics and citizenship test given to a national sample of students:

- History—grades 7–10
- Civics and Citizenship—grade 6

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## Excerpts

### NATIONAL HISTORY CURRICULUM FRAMING DOCUMENT

#### History • Grades 7–10

#### CURRICULUM FOCUS

The Grades 7–10 history curriculum will specify the required learning in terms of historical concepts, understandings and skills, through overviews and depth studies. Depth studies may include episodes of key significance to the period of study. Some depth studies will provide options, including comparative options and school developed options where appropriate, so that the required learning can be developed in a range of historical contexts. This will enable teachers to meet the interests and needs of their students. A depth study should incorporate interconnections and comparisons within a historical period where appropriate.

The number of depth studies and the amount of time allocated to each study will be determined according to considerations of feasibility, conceptual ability and student engagement.

Students will develop historical skills which include:

- learning how to use, with facility, common historical terms for dealing with chronology and time-related historical concepts and continuing to acquire a sound grasp of the sequence of events
- asking and exploring inquiry questions in detail, finding relevant and comprehensive answers and providing sound explanations and conclusions for historical events
- using a wide range of different forms of evidence in providing historical explanations, recognizing how these forms of evidence may vary in their value
- developing a range of appropriate techniques of organization and communication.

It is proposed that the history curriculum should follow a sequence:

Students should have an appreciation of the major civilizations of Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Australia. They should understand Australian history within a comparative framework that embraces the Indigenous and settler components, and they should be aware of its regional and global dimensions.

#### UNIT 1:

History from the time of the earliest human communities

to the end of the Ancient period (c. 60,000 BC – c. 500 AD) *This period of human history establishes the defining characteristics of civilisations. It encompasses transitions in human society from mobile hunter-gathering to agriculture and the growth of cities. It is in this period that the first identifiable individuals emerge from the historical record. This period also provides an opportunity to trace the movement of peoples across the world and to investigate the early peopling of Australia. The origins of many modern Australian institutions and practices can be traced back to the legacy of ancient civilizations, particularly Greece and Rome.*

Themes to be explored in the development of depth studies include:

- movement of peoples
- human transformation of the environment
- characteristics of civilizations—early forms of government, religion, society and culture
- rise and fall of large empires
- heritage
- nature of history, role and methodologies of the historian.

This unit will provide an overview of the period along with depth studies which might include: human migration out of Africa, the early peopling of Australia, Ancient Japan and Ancient Greece.

#### UNIT 2:

History from the end of the Ancient period to the beginning of the Modern period (c. 500–1750)

*This span of human history was marked by significant change and continuity in major world civilizations; it was the period when the modern world began to take shape, through expanding horizons and increasing differentiation of societies. Through an investigation of civilizations, world exploration and events students develop an understanding of their significance for modern times.*

Themes to be explored in the development of depth studies include:

- relationships between religion, rulers and people
- social structure
- health and disease
- scientific and technological change
- impact of beliefs and values
- cultural contact and conflict
- exploration and imperialism.

This unit will provide an overview of the period along with depth studies which might include: life in Medieval Europe, the Crusades, Marco Polo, Elizabeth I, the Aztecs, the scientific revolution in Europe compared with technological advances in China and the extension of European empires.

**UNIT 3:**

The Modern World and Australia (1750–1901)  
*The transformation of the ‘Old World’ and the creation of ‘New World’ settler societies such as Australia define this era. The time period provides an opportunity for students to gain an understanding of Asian-European relations including the European discovery and settlement of Australia and the responses of Indigenous peoples. Students will gain an appreciation of the consequences, intended and unintended, that arose from the various actions that occurred.*

Themes to be explored in the development of depth studies include:

- forced and voluntary movement of people
- Indigenous-settler relations
- early impact of industrialization
- social, economic, political and cultural development
- revolution and reform
- nationalism and federation.

This unit will provide an overview of the period along with depth studies which might include: the slave trade, the impact of industrialization, European settlement of Australia and the American Civil War.

Through direct and comparative study, Australian history will occupy approximately 40 per cent of this unit.

**UNIT 4:**

Australia in the Modern World (1901– present)  
*The twentieth century was an important period in Australia’s social, economic, political and cultural development. The transformation of the modern world through conflict and cooperation provides a necessary context for understanding Australia’s development and Australia’s place within the Asia-Pacific region. Of particular significance is the increasing recognition of the rights of Australia’s Indigenous peoples and the search for reconciliation.*

Themes to be explored in the development of depth studies include:

- global conflict and collective peace
- migration and nation building
- mass communication and popular culture
- dictatorship and democracy
- rights and freedoms
- decolonization and globalization

- active citizenship.

This unit will provide an overview of the period along with depth studies which might include: Australia’s involvement in World War I, post-war migration to Australia, the civil rights movement in the United States or apartheid in South Africa compared with Indigenous rights in Australia, the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the influence of globalised American culture on Australia and elsewhere, decolonization of the Asia-Pacific and the growth of environmentalism.

Through direct and comparative study, Australian history will occupy approximately 60 per cent of this unit.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT

**Questions 1 and 2**

Below is a notice pinned up at Elsmouth Primary School.

**Elsmouth Primary School  
Year 6 Election for Class Captain**

- All candidates (people wanting to be elected) must make a \$30 donation to the school library.
- Each candidate must give a short speech to the class explaining why they are the best person for the job of Class Captain, and what they would do if they were elected.
- There will be two rounds of voting.
- In the first round each person in Year 6 votes by standing up and telling the class who they are voting for.
- Each person has one vote.
- In the second round each person will be asked to vote secretly for one of the two candidates who received the most votes in the first round.
- The new Class Captain is the candidate who had the most votes in the second round of voting.

**Q1** Name two things about this class election that you think are democratic.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Q2** In your own words name two things about this class election that you think are **not** democratic.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 3**

- Q3** In Australia, how does someone become a member of parliament?
- by a random ballot of anyone who expresses interest
  - by being nominated by a current member of parliament
  - by standing for election and being voted in by the public
  - by making a written application to parliament, and being interviewed

**Questions 4 and 5**

In each Australian state or territory, the law says people have to wear helmets whenever they ride their bikes.

- Q4** Who made this law?
- the police forces
  - the parliaments
  - the Australian Medical Association

- Q5** Simon and Sophie are discussing this law.  
 Read the conversation and complete Sophie's reply.
- Simon:* I don't see the need for this law. I know the risks. If I have an accident, it's only me who gets hurt. So it should be my choice.
- Sophie:* No, it isn't just your choice, because ...

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**Question 6**

**Q6** In early colonial times one of the major complaints of the free settlers was that they

- did not have the same rights as convicts.
- could not avoid customs taxes.
- were not represented in government.
- were not able to return to Britain.

**Questions 7 and 8**

Below is a picture of the Australian flag. It was selected as the winning design from a public competition and first raised on 3 September 1901.



**Q7** Complete the table below by explaining what each of the symbols represents about Australia.




Symbol	Represents
<b>A</b> The Union Jack	
<b>B</b> The Southern Cross	
<b>C</b> The seven-pointed star	

The Australian Aboriginal flag below was designed by Harold Thomas, an Aboriginal rights activist and artist. This flag was first raised on 12 July 1971.



The yellow circle in the middle of the flag represents the sun.

**Q8** Complete the table below by explaining what each of the symbols represent about Aboriginal Australia.

	Symbol	Represents
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>A</b> The black colour at the top of the flag	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>B</b> The red colour at the bottom of the flag	

**Question 9**

- Q9** Which of the following is one of the Governor General's official responsibilities?
- to suggest new laws
  - to sit on the High Court
  - to swear in new Governments
  - to control Australia's Government

**Questions 10 to 13**

The Australian Citizenship Pledge is made by people when they become citizens of Australia.

**The Australian Citizenship Pledge**

From this time forward, under God\*,  
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,  
Whose democratic beliefs I share,  
Whose rights and liberties I respect, and  
Whose laws I will uphold and obey.

\*The words 'under God' are optional.

**Q10** Why do you think that people are allowed to choose whether or not they say the words 'under God'?

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**Q11** Why do you think that people who are Australians by birth or grow up as Australian citizens are **not** asked to make this pledge?

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**Q12** The pledge suggests that Australian citizens

- have both freedoms and responsibilities.
- are required to be loyal only to Australia.
- should always agree with each other.
- have more freedoms than citizens of other countries.

**Q13** One principle of democracy is that all people are entitled to hold their own opinions.

The Citizenship Pledge includes the line 'Whose democratic beliefs I share'.

Do you think it is right for the pledge to require people becoming Australian citizens to have democratic beliefs?

Yes **OR** No

Put a ✓ in **one** box and explain your answer.

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**Question 14**

**Q14** In Australia, national elections for the Federal Parliament are held

- every year.
- only when the Prime Minister resigns or dies.
- whenever the Government and the Opposition disagree on an issue.
- at least once every three years.

**Question 15**

The table below contains a series of statements about life in Australia.

Decide if you think each statement refers to a **responsibility** Australian citizens have. Indicate your answer by circling 'True' or 'False' for each statement in the table, as in the shaded example.

<b>Q15 Australian citizens have a responsibility to ...</b>		
vote at elections if 18 or over.	True	False
pay a percentage of what they earn to the Federal government.	True	False
give a certain percentage of their income to a registered charity.	True	False

**Question 20**

**Q20** Which of the following is a true statement about the relationship between the Australian Federal Government and the State and Territory Governments?

- The Federal Government chooses the State and Territory Governments.
- The Federal Government is elected by the State and Territory Governments.
- The Federal Government gives money to the State and Territory Governments.
- The Federal Government is made up of all of the State and Territory Governments working together.

**Question 21**

Sometimes democratic governments make decisions that they believe the majority of the public disagrees with.

**Q21** Give a good reason for a democratic government to do this.

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