Describe

Prep–Year 6 cognitive verb toolkit

What is describing?

To describe is to give an account of a situation, event, pattern or process. When describing, the writer or speaker must consider whether the target audience will be able to understand the description. Effective description, particularly description that includes complicated ideas, may require logical sequencing. For example, when describing key processes that change the Earth's surface, it would be important to sequence logically the parts of the process to help the audience understand the concept. Simple descriptions, such as a description of the observable properties of soils, may not require as much consideration.

A process of describing may include:

- identifying the facts, patterns or processes

- ordering the information

- giving an account of the characteristics or features.

Describe as a cognition

Cognitive verbs are categorised using Marzano & Kendall's four elements of the cognitive system: retrieval, comprehension, analysis and knowledge utilisation (2007).

The cognitive verb describe is part of the comprehension element of cognitive process. This element involves the storage of 'the critical features of information in permanent memory' (p. 40).

Describe in the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0

The cognitive verb describe appears in various learning area achievement standards (AS) and/or content descriptions (CD) in the Australian Curriculum. The following table shows the use of describe across the Australian Curriculum in Prep–Year 6.

Describe in the Prep–Year 6 Australian Curriculum AS and CD

	English	Health and Physical Education	P–6 HASS	Mathematics	Science	Technologies		
						Technologies	Design and Technologies	Digital Technologies
Prep		AS CD		AS CD	AS CD			
Year 1	CD	AS CD		CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS	AS CD
Year 2	AS	AS CD		AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS	AS CD
Year 3	AS CD	AS CD	AS	AS CD	AS	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD
Year 4	AS CD	AS CD	AS	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD
Year 5	CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS		AS
Year 6		AS CD	AS CD	CD	AS CD	AS		AS

Describe in the Prep–Year 6 Australian Curriculum AS and CD

	Languages							The Arts					
	Chinese	French	German	Indonesian	Italian	Japanese	Spanish	The Arts	Dance	Drama	Media Arts	Music	Visual Arts
Prep								AS	AS	AS	AS	AS	AS
Years 1–2								AS	AS	AS	AS	AS	AS
Years 3–4								AS	AS	AS	AS	AS	AS
Years 5–6								AS	AS	AS	AS	AS	AS

ACiQ|v9.0

Learning area/subject examples include, but are not limited to:

Year/s	Learning area/subject	AS	CD
Prep	Health and Physical Education	Students **describe** similarities and differences between themselves and others, and different emotions people experience.	express and **describe** emotions they experience AC9HPFP03
Years 1–2	Technologies: Digital Technologies	They (students) follow and **describe** basic algorithms involving a sequence of steps and branching.	follow and **describe** algorithms involving a sequence of steps, branching (decisions) and iteration (repetition) AC9TDI2P02
Year 2	Science	Students identify celestial objects and **describe** patterns they observe in the sky.	**describe** how people use science in their daily lives, including using patterns to make scientific predictions AC9S2H01
Year 3	English	They (students) **describe** how stories are developed through characters and/or events.	**describe** how texts across the curriculum use different language features and structures relevant to their purpose AC9E3LA03
Year 4	Mathematics	They (students) conduct repeated chance experiments and **describe** the variation in results.	**describe** possible everyday events and the possible outcomes of chance experiments and order outcomes or events based on their likelihood of occurring; identify independent or dependent events AC9M4P01
Year 5	HASS	Students evaluate information and data to identify and **describe** patterns or trends.	evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and **describe** patterns and trends, or to infer relationships AC9HS5S03 A
Years 5–6	The Arts: Media Arts	They (students) **describe** how media arts works created across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning.	

References

Marzano, R & Kendall, J 2007, *The New Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.

More information

This information sheet is part of a suite of resources to support teachers in the explicit teaching and assessment of students' thinking. The suite of resources includes categories of common cognitive verbs, cognitive verb overviews and a cognitive verb toolkit with information sheets, posters and graphic organisers.

If you would like more information, please visit the QCAA website www.qcaa.qld.edu.au and search for 'cognitive verbs'. Alternatively, the suite of resources can be found here: www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/p-10/aciq/version-9/cognitive-verbs-in-version-9.0.