

What is explaining?

To explain is to make an idea, concept, situation, relationship or meaning clear by communicating more in-depth information. Explaining how to solve a problem might include writing down the steps needed to achieve a result or talking to someone to guide them to a solution. Explanations enable an audience to gain insight into, and make deeper connections with, questions such as who, what, when, where, why and how.

A process of explaining may include:

- identifying additional information to support an idea
- making connections to support the additional information
- sharing your understanding of the additional information.

Explain 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 explain 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).

Explain in the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0

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

Explain 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				CD				
Year 1		AS CD						
Year 2		AS CD						
Year 3	AS	CD		AS CD	AS	CD		CD
Year 4		CD		CD	AS CD	CD		CD
Year 5	AS CD	AS CD	AS	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	AS CD	CD
Year 6	AS CD	AS CD	AS	AS CD	AS	AS CD	AS CD	CD

Explain 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													
Years 1–2													
Years 3–4													
Years 5–6							AS	AS	AS	AS	AS	AS	AS

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

Year/s	Learning area/subject	AS	CD
Years 1–2	Health and Physical Education	Students explain how personal qualities contribute to identities.	describe their personal qualities and those of others, and explain how they contribute to developing identities AC9HP2P01
Year 3	Mathematics	Students use practical activities, observation or experiment to identify and describe outcomes and the likelihood of everyday events explaining reasoning.	make, compare and classify objects, identifying key features and explaining why these features make them suited to their uses AC9M3SP01
Year 4	Science	They (students) explain the role of data in science inquiry.	explain the roles and interactions of consumers, producers and decomposers within a habitat and how food chains represent feeding relationships AC9S4U01
Year 5	English	They (students) explain how language features including literary devices, and visual features contribute to the effect and meaning of a text.	explain characteristic features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text AC9E5LY03
Years 5–6	Technologies: Design and Technologies	Students explain how people design products, services and environments to meet the needs of communities, including sustainability.	explain how people in design and technologies occupations consider competing factors including sustainability in the design of products, services and environments AC9TDE6K01

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.

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