



# Victorian Essential Learning Standards

## Sample Unit

## In the News

Level 4: Interpersonal Development, Personal Learning, Civics and Citizenship, English, Information and Communications Technology, Thinking Processes

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## Introduction

In *In the News* students undertake a research activity on an issue in the local community and report to the class using a multimedia slide-show presentation. Students develop an action plan to address the issue and write an article which could be published appropriately.

Students use multimedia software to compose, record and revise their report. Students identify photographs and sound to use in their slide shows and enhance the presentation. During the research they use strategies such as brainstorming, planning, questioning, note making, action planning, composing and revising, and they refine their editing skills through improving their own texts. Students learn how context, purpose and audience shape and influence written texts. They set personal goals and evaluate their own learning and social interactions throughout the unit.

This unit provides opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement against the standards in Interpersonal Development, Personal Learning, Civics and Citizenship, English, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Thinking Processes.

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## Learning focus

This unit addresses learning focus statements from all three strands at Level 4:

### **Physical, Personal and Social Learning**

Interpersonal Development

- develop roles and responsibilities for working in groups

Personal Learning

- reflect on a personal learning goal

Civics and Citizenship

- research an issue that is relevant to the local community

### **Discipline-based Learning**

English

- develop text for a multimedia presentation on an issue
- plan, rehearse and give a presentation on their issue to the class
- develop an article for publication on an issue



## **Interdisciplinary Learning**

### Information and Communications Technology

- plan and use information and communications technology to inform class members about their issue

### Thinking

- develop questions to assist in researching their issue
- use a range of sources to research their issue.



## Victorian Essential Learning Standards

*In the news* can be used to assess student achievement against a range of Victorian Essential Learning Standards.

The table below shows how some Level 4 standards might be applied to this unit.

Strand	Domain	Dimension	Key elements of standards Students:
<b>Physical, Personal and Social Learning</b>	Interpersonal Development	Working in teams	... work effectively in different teams and take on a variety of roles ...  ... accept responsibility for their role and tasks.
	Personal Learning	Managing personal learning	... describe task progress and achievements, suggesting how outcomes may have been improved.
	Civics and Citizenship	Community engagement	... present a point of view on a significant current issue or issues and include recommendations ...
<b>Discipline-based Learning</b>	English	Writing	... produce, in print and electronic forms, a variety of texts for different purposes using structures and features of language appropriate to the purpose, audience and context of the writing.
		Speaking and listening	... plan, rehearse and make presentations for different purposes.
<b>Interdisciplinary Learning</b>	Information and Communications Technology	ICT for creating	... independently use a range of skills, procedures, equipment and functions to process different data types and produce accurate and suitably formatted products to suit different purposes and audiences.
	Thinking	Reasoning, processing and inquiry	... develop their own questions for investigation.  ... collect relevant information from a range of sources and make judgments about its worth.

For further advice see the [Assessment](#) section (see page 13).



## Teaching and learning activities

This unit focuses on researching and presenting an issue using information and communications technology (ICT). Throughout the unit, teachers provide class sessions on the use of ICT to support students' increasing knowledge, skills and behaviours in using multimedia tools. This could include:

- creating slides
- choosing a variety of slide templates and/or designing slide templates
- copying and pasting between programs
- importing appropriate graphics and sound files.

Refer to [Unit resources](#) (see page 14) for materials required for this unit, including teacher and student support materials.

Before commencing the activities, teachers outline the research task and presentation to be undertaken by students.

### Research task and presentation

In groups, using a variety of sources, students select an issue that is of concern to people in the local community, for example:

- pollution or water quality in main rivers and creeks
- availability of parklands and recreational spaces
- provision of emergency services
- supporting people and families through volunteer and charity groups
- decision making processes
- rights of groups and individuals.

Each group develops key questions on the issue, and each group member is allocated one question to research. As a group, students prepare a slide-show presentation on their issue for the class. Each group member participates in the presentation which will include:

- one slide, with text, for each research question
- speaker notes for each slide
- photographs or images that have been scanned or downloaded from a digital camera
- appropriate sound to support the presentation.

Before commencing their research, students reflect on and record their personal goals for this unit. Teachers provide appropriate feedback to individual students throughout the unit, including suggestions for modifying goals, and encourage them to record in their diary, at different points, their progress in achieving their goals. Teachers discuss student reflections when appropriate and use these reflections to assist in the setting of future personal learning goals.



## Activity 1: Thinking about issues

### Predicting from headlines

Teachers present students with headlines related to local issues and ask them to predict what the associated article will be about.

Students predict and record ideas under the headings: What, Where, When, Who, Why, How.

### Predicting from pictures

The following questions could be selected from a Lucky Dip to stimulate discussion about pictures on a local issue:

- What might have happened before/after the picture was taken?
- What might be beyond the picture that is relevant?
- What does it remind you of? How does it make you feel?

### Local news

The class collects local newspaper articles on local issues. Students work in small groups to discuss:

- What sorts of issues are commonly represented in newspapers?
- Are there issues they know of that are not represented in newspapers?
- What style of language is used in these articles?
- How are headlines used to attract the reader?
- What is the perspective of the writer?
- What is the perspective of people interviewed?
- Who would you ask if you wanted other perspectives?

Students form six groups and are allocated one coloured [thinking hat](#) (see *Teaching and learning resource*) each. Each group considers the issues in one article – from the perspective of their thinking hat only. Each group then chooses a representative to record their ideas and present them to the whole class. After each presentation, students from other (coloured thinking hat) groups can add ideas.

Students stand along a line (marked ‘Agree’ at one end and ‘Disagree’ at the other) and respond to statements made by their teacher about the issues; for example, ‘Pollution in our local creek is an important local issue.’ This activity can be repeated later (see Activity 6) to see if opinions change after student research has been completed.



## Activity 2: Identifying the research issue

In this activity research groups are established and the issue for the research is identified. Teachers review, if necessary, the responsibilities associated with [group roles](#) such as reporter and timekeeper (see *Teaching and learning resource*) and explain the requirement for students to take on different roles within their groups over the course of the unit. Students develop descriptions for the roles required for researching, developing and presenting the issue. Students record in their journals throughout the unit how they have contributed to the group.

In their groups, students list issues from newspaper articles discussed in Activity 1 that are of interest in the local community.

Using a [multi voting strategy](#) (see *Teaching and learning resource*) each group selects an issue to research.

Using a [K-W-L-H](#) (see *Teaching and learning resource*) process each student reflects individually on the issue, then shares their understanding and questions with the group.

Each group discusses their research and prepares a brief oral report for the class. In the report students identify:

- information they know about the issue
- how the issue may impact on the local area (a [graphic organiser](#), see *Teaching and learning resource*, would be useful here; for example, a cause-and-effect wheel, flow chart, fishbone, mind map or concept map)
- what else they need to find out about
- how they will research their information.

Class members ask questions and provide feedback on each group's issue.

Each group lists **five questions** that become the basis of their group research. The number of questions from each group can be modified depending on group numbers and the complexity of the questions. Each group member is allocated one question to research. The results of each student's research will be used in a slide-show presentation, each student contributing one slide.

Referring to the [Research project criteria](#) sheet (see page 15), teachers discuss with students the research and presentation requirements. The criteria are modified or developed further as negotiated. (Teachers assess each group and each student uses the criteria to complete a self assessment.)

Each group completes a research proposal. The proposal can be developed using ICT. In the proposal, students outline:

- why the issue is important to them and the local community
- how they will develop their research
- a timeline showing when and by whom tasks will be completed.

Each group modifies their proposal after class discussion.



Students reflect on the requirements of the research task and set goals for themselves, identifying any knowledge, skills and behaviours that they will monitor and improve for their own learning. This can include working with others. Students record their goals and reflections in a [reflective journal](#) (see *Teaching and learning resource*) and complete a self assessment of their goals at the end of the unit.

### Activity 3: Organising the research

Each group member begins to organise the research for their allocated question, including the use of a range of sources such as newspapers, data from interviews or surveys, books and the Internet, and develop a reference list. Teachers discuss with students requirements for their reference lists. Information on websites could include the address, author, date last accessed and a summary of information contained on the site.

Students could include any of the following in the research presentation:

- photographs
- newspaper clippings
- drawings
- recordings of interviews
- summaries of surveys.

Students could use an electronic graphic organiser to plan their research ideas and research questions.

They develop an outline of interview/survey questions, including identifying who will be interviewed/surveyed and when the interviews/surveys are to be conducted. They discuss their outlines with other group members and respond to feedback.

### Activity 4: Researching

In this activity, students commence their research. The research may take several sessions to complete, during which group members confer with each other through peer conferencing and group discussion and feedback. Each group records these interactions. The teacher confers with students, checking that they:

- identify appropriate resources
- identify appropriate information on each question
- record peer and group discussion and feedback
- summarise information from surveys or interviews
- are developing a deeper understanding of the issue
- identify possible solutions or actions to resolve the issue
- propose any limitations to possible solutions or actions
- suggest what actions they, as individuals, could take to assist in addressing the issue in some way.

The [Research project criteria](#) sheet (see page 15) could be reviewed to focus their work.



## Activity 5: Creating a slide show

In this activity, students focus on developing text, photographs and sound to support their presentation. They also develop speaker notes for each slide.

Students use a storyboard to plan the layout of the slides and indicate:

- the content of each slide (headings and text)
- the location of clip art image/s (if appropriate)
- the location of image/s captured using either a digital camera or a scanner
- the order of the slide (for example, 1, 2 ...) in the presentation.

Each student in the group discusses the format and content of their slide. Acting as critical friends, group members make suggestions about individual slides.

**Students print their slides.**

Using the printed copies, groups discuss each presentation and provide feedback for a final proof. Each group then collates their individual slides into one electronic slide-show document.

## Activity 6: Presentation and evaluation

In their groups, students take turns to present their part of the slide-show presentation. Class members discuss the presentations. Teacher and peers assess the presentations using the [Research project criteria](#) sheet (see page 15) and provide feedback to each group when appropriate. Each student completes their self assessment before the feedback session.

Students reflect on what they have learnt about their issue. Using the completed [K-W-L-H](#) (see *Teaching and learning resource*) from Activity 1, students write what they have learnt about the issue and what the issue means to them now, focusing on what they have learnt about the topic, and about themselves as group members and learners.

### Student learning statements

Students share with another student from the group their reflections. They assist each other to develop a personal learning statement describing what they have learnt and what skills and behaviours they have developed. They then write a statement on what they need to learn more about and how this could be achieved, and one skill and behaviour that they need to further develop for working in groups. They also reflect on and assess their achievements in light of the personal learning goals they set at the beginning of the unit. In their reflective diaries, they record their assessment and identify future learning goals.

### ‘Stand along the line’ again

The ‘stand along a line’ activity (see Activity 1) could be repeated at this point to see how opinions have changed. As an extension, students could be asked to convince others of their viewpoint.



## Activity 7: Considering action

In this activity, students think about how they could develop an action plan based on their gained knowledge, and consider sustainable practice. Students identify and record any actions they and others in the community could take to assist in addressing the issue they researched. They could be encouraged to think creatively by identifying possible actions and then classifying them, for example, as possible, feasible, logistically difficult or too expensive. For example, playground litter identified as a problem; possible plan to be implemented could include placing 'No litter' signs around the school or reducing the amount of garbage by bringing lunch in a lunch box.

### Writing an article

As part of their proposed action, students write an article about their issue. The purpose of the article is to describe what they learned from their research and what actions individuals and the community could take to assist in addressing the issue.

Teachers review the process for writing a feature article by drawing on the elements and examples discussed in Activity 1. This could include considering:

- suitable headings
- style of language
- sequential development of key ideas
- formatting, font size and layout
- drafting and conferencing.

Throughout the process, students share the stages of their article's development with their group, who provide feedback. Students use appropriate software to format their articles, which could be posted on the school's Internet or intranet site, published in the school newsletter, displayed around the school or sent to appropriate community bodies.



## Links with other domains

This unit is designed for groups of students each selecting an issue of interest. As an alternative, teachers could select one issue for the whole class, and each group could select particular aspects to research.

Depending on the issue, links with other domains could be made. For example, by selecting 'Pollution', links could be made to Science. Each group researches articles from current and past local and state newspapers, contacts local councils and other appropriate bodies, and interviews people in the local area. The project could include a practical science research component, such as monitoring a source of pollution in the local area.

Groups could investigate questions such as:

- Why is it an issue/problem?
- What are the different perspectives?
- Who is involved? Who is affected?
- How does it affect the local area/environment?
- What are some possible and feasible solutions?

They would also focus on:

- how well they worked effectively in different groups and their role in the team
- their capacity to plan, negotiate and monitor their own research (including developing their own questions for investigation, justifying choices they made, self-assessing progress)
- their selection and organisation of a range of data to support their viewpoint
- their production and presentation of a variety of texts using structures and features of language appropriate to the purpose, audience and context of the writing (including the accuracy)
- the way they worked independently.



## Assessment

The *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* support a combination of assessment practices:

- Assessment of learning (summative)
- Assessment for learning (formative)
- Assessment as learning (ongoing).

Further information on these can be found at:

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/assessment.asp>

When assessing student achievement, assessment criteria can be developed from relevant standards and associated tasks or activities. The table below shows a range of assessment criteria, tools and strategies applicable to this unit. Teachers could choose to use some or all of these, or use the unit to assess other standards.

<b>Standards</b>	<b>Assessment criteria (Examples)</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
<b>Interpersonal Development</b> <i>Working in teams</i>	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• work in different roles within a group</li></ul>	Teacher observations and records of students working in groups  Personal learning statements (Activity 6)
<b>Personal Learning</b> <i>The individual learner</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• reflect and record how a personal goal is developing throughout the unit</li></ul>	Self-assessment (Activity 6)  Reflections in journals
<b>Civics and Citizenship</b> <i>Community engagement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• research an issue identifying appropriate information from a range of sources</li></ul>	Research and presentation – goals and actions taken  Reflections in journals
<b>English</b> <i>Writing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• develop an informative article for the community on an issue</li></ul>	Published article (Activity 7)
<b>English</b> <i>Speaking and listening</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• present to peers and explain clearly and sequentially about their research question</li><li>• project speech appropriately to audience</li></ul>	Presentation (Activity 6)



<b>Information and Communications Technology</b> <i>ICT for creating</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• use suitable software to format and publish an article on an issue</li></ul>	Published article (Activity 7)
<b>Thinking Processes</b> <i>Reasoning, processing and inquiry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• pose appropriate questions for initiating and developing the research project</li><li>• develop a list of references from a range of relevant and appropriate sources</li></ul>	Research questions (Activities 2 and 3) Personal learning statements (Activity 6) Reflections in journals

See the *Assessment resource* for advice on developing [rubrics](#).



## Unit resources

### Websites

*At the time of publication the URLs (website addresses) cited were checked for accuracy and appropriateness of content. However, due to the transient nature of material placed on the Internet, their continuing accuracy cannot be verified. Teachers are strongly advised to prepare their own indexes of sites that are suitable and applicable to this unit of work, and to check these addresses prior to allowing student access.*

Melbourne Water

[www.melbournewater.com.au](http://www.melbournewater.com.au)

Recycle Victoria

[www.ecorecycle.vic.gov.au](http://www.ecorecycle.vic.gov.au)

Parks Victoria

[www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au)

Parliament@work

[www.parliament.curriculum.edu.au](http://www.parliament.curriculum.edu.au)

Department of Sustainability and Environment

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/index.htm>

State Emergency Services

[www.ses.vic.gov.au](http://www.ses.vic.gov.au)

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

[www.vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au)

Victorian Essential Learning Standards for information regarding Level 4 Standards

<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au>

### Teacher materials

*Teaching and learning resource*

This document provides information about teaching and learning strategies referred to in the unit. It is accessible at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/support/teaching.html>

*Assessment resource*

This document provides information about assessment strategies referred to in the unit. It is accessible at [http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/support/assessment\\_reporting.html](http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/support/assessment_reporting.html)

### Student materials

[Research project criteria](#) sheet (page 15).

# Research project criteria



Student Materials

<b>Name (student or group):</b>		
<b>Title of research:</b>		
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Teacher comments</b>	<b>Self assessment</b>
<b>Depth of understanding</b> The information demonstrates that the group has researched and understood the issue. Answers own questions.		
<b>Organisation</b> Main points are clear, relevant and accurate. Includes sources which are referenced. Managed time well.		
<b>Working in teams</b> Shows evidence of working effectively as a group in developing a clear and organised presentation. The group was able to work independently and stay on task.		
<b>Presentation</b> The layout and sequence of the slides is clear and easy to understand. Graphics and samples are appropriate. The slides were free from spelling and grammatical errors.		