



An Introduction to Society and Culture Stage 6 in the New HSC

The new *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus* replaces the current 2 Unit and 3 Unit syllabus for *Society and Culture* (1995). The new syllabus is to be implemented in Year 11 in 2000 and will be first examined in 2001.

The syllabus provides information that was formerly available in the KLA handbook. This includes descriptions of course requirements, assessment weightings for internal and external assessment and examination specifications.

What is similar?

The Society and Culture syllabus has been revised with minimal change to content.

What are the overall improvements?

- Terminology and instructions across the syllabus have been clarified, and a glossary included.
- The skills of research and investigation are developed through the definitions and explanation of research methodologies. The integration of social and cultural research through the 'learn to' section in each study requires students to apply research skills in relation to the content in the study. This promotes the process of research and encourages motivation for lifelong learning.
- There is a clear link between objectives, outcomes and content in the new syllabus that focuses student learning through the course outcomes.
- Assessment is related directly to outcomes through internal assessment, components and weightings, examination questions and marking criteria and performance scales.
- There is greater comparability between options in the course.

The following changes have been made to particular sections of the syllabus.

Rationale, Aim and Objectives (p 6, 8)

The Rationale for the Society and Culture syllabus now details the conceptual nature of the course and the goals of achieving intercultural understanding, effective citizenship and lifelong learning. The aim flows from this rationale and identifies awareness, understanding and critical appreciation of the interactions between persons, societies, cultures and environments across time, as essential elements in the pursuit of social and cultural literacy. These goals are developed through the knowledge and understanding, skills, and values and attitudes objectives of the course.

Course Structure (pp 9–11)

Reorganisation of the Preliminary course in Society and Culture has delivered the following compulsory elements:

Preliminary course:

- The Social and Cultural World
- Personal and Social Identity
- Intercultural Communication

HSC course:

Core:

- Social and Cultural Continuity and Change
- Personal Interest Project

Depth Studies (TWO chosen from the following):

- Popular Culture
- Belief Systems
- Equality and Difference
- Work and Leisure.

Outcomes (pp 12–13)

- Outcomes are designed to provide a framework to describe what students should know and be able to do as a result of teaching and learning in the course and are aligned to the descriptions of content.
- The Stage 6 outcomes have been reduced in number and organised in relation to the objectives.
- The HSC course outcomes build upon those of the Preliminary course in terms of increased rigour, complexity and skill level. All outcomes are more explicitly linked to the syllabus content.
- Outcomes have been developed to cater for the full range of students.

Content (pp 15–44)

- There is clear differentiation of outcomes and content between the Preliminary and HSC courses.
- The scope and depth of course content is made clear by the description of what students will learn.
- Revision of the introductory section of the Preliminary course, *The Social and Cultural World*, provides a succinct introduction to the course.
- Sections from the current syllabus' namely, *Coming of Age in Today's World* and *Adolescence*, have been reviewed and amalgamated in the new topic, *Personal and Social Identity*, which reflects contemporary sociological thought and practice.
- *Intercultural Communication* has been incorporated as a Preliminary course study. The knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to this depth study are significant to the aim of achieving social and cultural literacy.
- Sections of the current 2 unit course, *Looking Ahead at Tomorrow's World*, and the 3 unit course have been reviewed and aspects incorporated in the new Core Study, *Social and Cultural Continuity and Change*.
- The concepts of power and authority, gender, technology, continuity and change are now to be applied across all sections of the Society and Culture Stage 6 syllabus.
- The HSC Depth Studies have been revised to ensure each reflects contemporary sociological thought, and to ensure any possible overlap with other courses is eliminated.

Assessment (p 50–57)

- School-based assessment is more prescriptive than in the past with the requirement that application of methodologies and secondary research, oral and test tasks are addressed in the components. The assessment components, weightings and tasks have been designed to develop a range of activities which do not replicate the external examination.

What will be needed to teach this subject?

- *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*.
- Society and Culture Higher School Certificate Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplement (the sample examination, marking guidelines and draft performance scale).

Current resources are appropriate for use with the new syllabuses although there may need to be some adjustment in the way teachers use them.

A further subject-specific document is being developed by the Board of Studies for distribution later in the year. This will assist teachers with the implementation of the revised syllabuses.

A list of a number of resources will be placed on the Board's website, <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>.

The Board of Studies will also provide assessment support materials, which will be generic across subjects.

Cross-sectoral professional development workshops (Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Commission and members of the Association of Independent Schools) for Society and Culture Stage 6 will be held. Venues and dates for these workshops have been published on the *New HSC* website — <http://www.newhsc.schools.nsw.edu.au> — and distributed to schools. The materials from the workshops will be available on this website.

CURRICULUM SUPPORT for Teaching in Human Society and It's Environment 7–12 — a publication distributed each term by the Department of Education and Training — will carry an HSC supplement.

Assessment and Reporting Bulletin — published each term as a joint venture of the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools — will build on principles outlined in Board of Studies' newsletters and assessment support materials.

The Society and Culture Association Inc. will be providing the following professional development activity:

- *Integrating Outcomes in the New Society and Culture Preliminary Course*, an Inservice to be held on Saturday August 7th, 1999.

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