



Steiner Education Australia

AUSTRALIAN STEINER CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK 2011

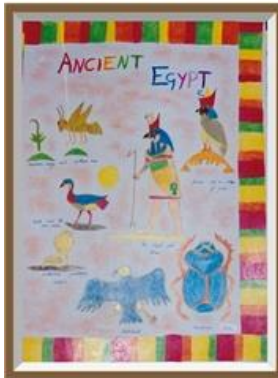
HISTORY INTRODUCTION

Original ACARA Recognition October 2011

Changes made in this version of the Document

Sept 2014 Changes made to terminology relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as per ACARA guidelines

The Integrated Approach to History



Project

Ancient Egypt
Main Lesson
Class 5



Drawing



Multimedia model



Sewing & embroidery (satin)



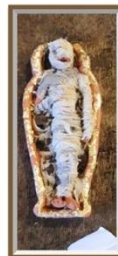
Collage - class 6 project



Modelling



Beeswax



Fabric



Metalwork

Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework

HISTORY

General Introduction

This History Curriculum Framework is based on the extensive indications given by Rudolf Steiner and curriculum resource materials developed by teachers in Steiner schools both in Australia and Internationally. It is being prepared in collaboration with Steiner Schools in Australia through a process of consultation with learning area consultants and the advisory panel as well as opportunities for individual school and teacher response. This Curriculum Learning Area should be read in conjunction with the Educational Foundations and Academic Alignment Paper, the Position Papers on Kindergarten, Stage 1 and 2 (Primary) as well as Stage 3 and 4 (High School).

Introduction - Educational Rationale for the Subject

This History Curriculum is designed to be used by both new and experienced teachers to support and supplement their research, planning, teaching and assessment. It is informed by International and Australian Steiner Education Research and Curriculum Publications as well as broader recent science education research.

History is the story of the development of humanity. Humanity's story needs to be represented by excerpts from each time and in each place in building a picture of its biography. A civilisation may grow and then decline but the ongoing development of humanity is visible in the thread of world cultural history. Placing the student into this stream of time knowing the triumphs and pitfalls of the past prepares them to take their place in the present with insight, connection and a sense of purpose toward creating a positive future.

In history we witness also the power of the one and of the many. The strength and presence of mind, the calm focus and the release of the personal life for a higher purpose embodied in the hero propels humankind forward. But it is also the story of the contribution of every human being in a community as a parent, worker, artist or philosopher. Historical biographies provide a view of significant and representational lives, and pictures of personal and moral dilemmas, triumphs and sufferings and provide the student with a context for future ethical considerations.

The mythological roots arise in a different consciousness. Here we find the story of the evolution of the human spirit as it moves from a focus on the spiritual world known with a picture consciousness to an increasing awareness of self as an autonomous individual.

The history curriculum is built on a sequence of narrative history which moves from the home and family and local surroundings of the child to mythological and then episodic or biographical history before the conceptual, the study of cause and effect and the symptomatic reflections begin. Kieran Eganⁱ notes that in our cultural history rationality did not displace myth but grew out of it and suggests that if we wish to develop a later rich rationality we should attend to this historical development in individual development. Steiner education has followed this developmental picture for many decades and teacher research upholds his insights.

.. curriculum then might be characterized as constituted of the great stories of the world. The world they are to make sense of has a vivid and dramatic history, and I think we can relatively easily reconceive our primary curriculum in terms of telling children the story of science and technology, the story of mathematics, the story of history, the story of art, and the stories of all our ways of sense-making. This requires our reconceiving these areas of sense-making in terms of those oral capacities children have already most highly developed-rather than, as we tend to do, in some logical scheme beginning with what seems to us the simplest logical components and working "up" from there. Third, we reconceive teachers, not as increasingly de-skilled purveyors of prepared texts, worksheets, and tests, but rather as our culture's story-tellers.

Kieran Eganⁱⁱ

These stories and studies need, in our multicultural world, to encompass more than the western perspective but also the world of Asia, the Pacific, the Americas, Africa and the Middle and Near East. History is interwoven with the geography of cultures, their needs for physical survival, food and water, their openness to the world or their remoteness and their climate of warmth or bitter cold. The various cultures and faiths, ways of understanding the world in different contexts or places, need to meet each student and integrate the past of all our diverse human experiences. History can help us discover ultimately where we stand now.

History reveals the potential for growth and reconciliation that exists in each conflict or crisis. It shows the paths that allow apparent extremes to meet to work toward a path of balance. It also shows the hidden wisdom of the blows of destiny that are not visible in the present but are revealed much later. Through the High School history curriculum the students, with their personal struggles for freedom and individuality, frequently find reflections in pivotal events of history. They come to an understanding of the universality of human experience of challenge and change.

In the study of history an integrated and rich curriculum is necessary. Music, folk dance, festivals and learning languages other than English contribute to the development of a global historical understanding. A threefold approach is apparent as in all subject areas. With cognitive skills, the students gain an understanding of people, culture, historical times and societies. In the affective/feeling realm, the curriculum works to develop healthy attitudes and values – of tolerance, empathy and initiative. In working with the need for initiative, the curriculum develops their ability to communicate with each other and with others of different cultural backgrounds to create a positive future out of the present challenges.

Aims of the History Curriculum

The Australian Steiner Curriculum History K-10 aims to develop in each student:

- Moral and ethical thinking through exploring the challenges and outcomes of past human endeavour.
- A sense of being in the stream of time as the student recapitulates the path of humanity which evolves towards greater conscious individual awareness, autonomy and discernment.
- The ability to sense the stream of future possibilities coming toward them, intersecting with the effects of the past, and to find true human freedom in the creative decisions of the present.
- A sense of being inspired with confidence and empowerment through the understanding that out of challenge the human spirit rises, finds voice and courage for the deed and new possibilities emerge for both the individual and the community.
- Empathy with the individual human being and with other cultures from a historical and global perspective and thus a feeling of kinship with the universal human journey in all its places and times, leading therefore to possibility to experience the other in human encounter beyond stereotype and thus the ability to view themselves and others with equal measure of compassion and objectivity
- Clear, informed and heart-felt thinking and the discernment to perceive the diverse threads that weave through history.
- The ability to read from the sources of history their authenticity, potency of meaning and their contribution to the journey of humanity.
- The ability to appreciate perspectives of people in different circumstances and times
- A sense of the history that brought them to their own time and place – foundation for considering how future may unfold and a belief in themselves and the courage to act upon their ideals.

The Steiner History curriculum does, in this process, aim to develop in each student (from the ACARA History Draft Curriculum Version 1):ⁱⁱⁱ

- Interest in, and enjoyment of, historical study for lifelong learning and work, including their capacity and willingness to be active and informed citizens.
- Knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the past and the forces that shape societies, including Australian Society.
- Understanding and use of historical concepts, including evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, significance, empathy, perspectives and contestability.
- Capacity to undertake historical inquiry, including skills in the analysis and use of sources, communication and explanation.

Content Strand Descriptors

The Australian Steiner Curriculum History is organised into two interrelated strands: firstly Historical Engagement and Understanding, and secondly Historical Skills.

Historical Engagement and Understanding

This strand moves from personal, family, local to state or territory, national, regional and world history. There is a progression from the ancient times to the present which begins with mythological and narrative history, moves to biographical and episodic before leading to the consideration of historical motive and the broad development of human consciousness.

In addition, in this holistic curriculum there are content elaborations in other learning Areas such as English, Mathematics and Science which form part of the overall approach to History and are noted in the Curriculum Content by Year and the convergence charts. The study of History in the High School is strongly interconnected with studies in music, literature, geography, art and the sciences.

An enrichment of this strand occurs through the **Festivals and Seasons** and the **Languages Other than English** component. The seasonal festivals connect students to the cyclic stream of time of the world in relation to the larger universe. The cultural festivals bring experience, and later awareness, of historical and cultural pivot points that connect us to our heritage. Steiner curriculum begins the study of foreign languages from year one. The experience of foreign language is seen to bring a cultural dimension through literature, folk tales, songs and crafts as well as later formal historical studies.

Whenever feasible the studies are enriched by excursion, exploration and opportunities for practical application of the concepts studied.

Historical Skills

In alignment with our Educational Foundations the development of skills moves from comprehension and communication through narrative recall and artistic/dramatic interpretation in Stage 1 to written narratives and descriptions in Stage 2 and evidence based descriptions, explanations and discussions in Stage 3. In the High School active thinking and clear expression is encouraged through discussion and critical analysis. Students develop skills in research, synthesis and analysis. Students are encouraged to examine events and issues from a number of perspectives.

From Stage 1 immersion in historical narrative there is increasing use of sources and changing perspectives in Stage 2 and then deepening research, analysis of sources and interpretation in Stage 3 and 4.

Curriculum Organisation

STAGES

Stage 1 K-Class 3

K-Class 2

Children slowly come to an understanding of the concepts of history and the past, through an experience of time, as they are immersed in daily and weekly school and home rhythms and seasonal and yearly celebrations. Home and Family themes speak of the time of the past, of grandparents and community heritage.

Folk and Fairy Tales and Legends told during this stage provide a rich tapestry of historical and cultural understanding from many countries. These tales are retold, enacted, rewritten and illustrated. Indigenous Stories from the Dreaming are interwoven. In Class 2 the stories of inspirational lives such as those of the Saints are added to in depth studies such as the Celtic World.

In Class 3 the students are told stories of the Ancient Worlds, often the Ancient Hebrew world, which are rich with images of the individual responding to guidance, forming rules and a sense of community with their fellow human beings. The curriculum is immersed in the folk culture including song, dance, prose, stories, food and celebrations. In further integrated curriculum studies they experience stories and practical work in house building, its history and cultural diversity including that of indigenous peoples. They also learn about the historical development of farming in their local region and the development of tools and farming practices of indigenous cultures and colonial settlers. In mathematics they learn of the history of measurement and investigate cultures from which weights and measures originated. They also make devices used in the past to measure time in various cultures e.g. a sundial.

Stage 2 Class 4-6

In Class 4 the curriculum focuses on the local area and through this the Aboriginal life including the Dreaming stories, spiritual ceremonies, food gathering, shelter, care of the land and social gatherings and involves students in historical inquiry and crafts. Further studies of Ancient cultures are continued eg the Ancient Nordic World, the times of the Kalevala or of Beowulf. They learn about the culture and mythology as well as crafts. In a study of Writing, students are involved in making pen, paper and ink according to skills of past cultures.

In Class 5

The Ancient Times and Cultures of India, Persia, Babylon and Egypt are reviewed before a major study of Ancient Greece brings children on a journey from mythological history to narrative and episodic. They explore the development of democracy in ancient Greece from city state to a central government and re-enact the ancient Olympic Games. In Class 5 the curriculum also brings to the children the journeys and biographies of the people who explored their region and state during, and following, the early colonisation. Indigenous life is also presented in this context. In following these significant explorations, not only does the human story unfold, but an integrated sense of the geographical landscape also begins to emerge.

In Class 6

The study of the history of Ancient Greece and Alexander the Great leads on to the development of democracy in Ancient Rome. The study of Australia, including the unfolding of colonial life in relation to the geographical features and resources, forms another Main Lesson which also considers the Indigenous peoples at this time. The work on explorers extends to the whole continent. The birth of Christianity, Buddhism and Islam up to the Medieval World conclude this Stage.

Stage 3

In Class 7

The study of the medieval world continues with King Arthur and his Knights and the study of chivalry, ideals, truth and honour. The themes of expansion and individualisation inform the studies in this year. With the Age of Exploration the boundaries of the known world expand; new countries and new cultures are discovered, and with that expanded world comes a lack of certainty. The Geography curriculum includes the great voyages and voyagers – and the impact these had on the indigenous peoples of 'discovered' lands. The Renaissance is the leitmotif for work in Class 7. It marks the birth of modern history and individual consciousness and parallels the birth of new capacities in the students. Studies span the late Middle Ages to the twilight of the Renaissance.

In Class 8

Class 8 looks at revolution, change and transitions. Studies include examination of the social and political upheavals surrounding the French and American, Revolutions, the Industrial Revolution and the transition from an agricultural economy to that of present day. A biographical focus on the actions and experiences of key figures creates a human picture and the groundwork for the more analytical examination of forces of change and historical causality that forms a basis of Class 9 studies.

Stage 4

In Class 9

The students study major turning points in world history from the beginning of the 19th Century to the present. Historical factors in current affairs are considered with an emphasis on the consideration of causality and motive. Students examine the unfolding of historical themes in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region in the context of world events. They study the political, social and cultural history of Australia up to modern times incorporating multiple perspectives and experiences.

In Class 10

Historical studies include a panoramic view of human history from the migrations of early nomadic communities to the Agricultural Revolution and the rise of the great ancient civilizations. Students examine and compare characteristics of nomadic hunter-gatherer societies and the expansion of human occupation to all continents. The depth study of early history of Australian aboriginal peoples constitutes a major element of the first unit. The evolution of human culture and society is examined, from the life of the hunter-gatherer to the sophisticated and complex societies including those of Sumer, the Tigris Euphrates River Valley, the Indus Valley and the Yellow River Valley in China, and the Americas. An important theme is the inter-relationship between human societies and their environments.

Students use and evaluate evidence from the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology in examining the evolutionary past and influences on culture and social structure.

As the student matures generalisations about inner experience are less useful and true. They become less impressionable as group and work on increasingly independent, individualised study projects. Although the present project extends only up to Class 10, brief overviews of Major Topics in Class 11 and 12 are included below.

Class 11

Medieval History: from the fall of Rome and rise of Christianity and Islamic Civilisation, The Renaissance to Age of Enlightenment.
History through music.

Class 12

World History – Modern History: perspectives, inner questions, challenges
This includes the Global economy and the third World.
History through Architecture.
Australian History – cultural identities.

ⁱ Kieran Egan *Teaching as Storytelling*, IERG, 2001 *Supplement*

ⁱⁱ Kieran Egan *Teaching as Storytelling*, IERG, 2001 *Supplement* p 26

ⁱⁱⁱ ACARA History Curriculum 2011