

Year 8 Curriculum Newsletter Autumn Term 1

English



What are we doing this half-term? Novel Study:

This half term, students will study *The Bone Sparrow* by Zana Fraillon. Through the novel, students will explore themes of identity, belonging, hope, friendship, and social injustice while gaining an understanding of the experiences of refugees and people living in immigration detention. They will develop their reading skills by making inferences, analysing characters and themes, and exploring the writer's language and methods.

Assessments: Students will complete three checkpoint assessments during the term: a reading skills check, a guided formative assessment with detailed feedback, and a final summative assessment.

How can parents help? Please encourage your child to read regularly, as this is one of the best ways to improve literacy skills. Support them in completing their home learning, and remember to sign their reading log each week.

Maths



What are we doing this half term? (1) Number skills such as percentage of amounts, percentage change and handling money. (2) Algebra such as index laws, simplifying expressions and solving equations.

Assessments: There will be a triweekly unit assessment after every topic as described above.

How can parents help? Ensure your child has the correct equipment for every lesson such as a pencil, ruler and their own scientific calculator. encourage your child to engage fully with SPARX (the maths homework platform) spending at least 40 minutes per week doing their home learning - they should be completing 100% of the tasks each week

Geography



What are we doing this half term? Y8 students will delve into types of primary activities. Investigating diversification in the farming industry and how food miles and sustainable food production are now important parts of this industry. This topic includes a fieldtrip to Bocketts Farm to ensure students will develop their enquiry, data collection and analysis skills.

Assessments: Check point assessments and an end of topic written assessment, short and long answer questions.

How can parents help? Ensure your child has the correct equipment including glue, scissors and pens for annotating answers. Testing students on the information on their revision pages helps build their confidence. Make sure the literacy sheet is fully completed and test students to confirm that they know the keywords and definitions. Make sure the revision notes for the assessment follow the guidance on the revision help sheet.

History



What are we doing this half term? Congratulations on surviving the War of the Roses and seeing in the new dynasty known as the Tudors. First, we will investigate how Henry Tudor strengthens his grip on the English throne. We will then meet the infamous Henry VIII and his various wives, establishment of the Church of England and analysing interpretations on whether he really was that terrible! We will then move on to his children and their influences on England: Edward VI and his changes to the church, Bloody Mary and her human barbeques. We will be visiting Hampton Court Palace in September to find out firsthand about the Tudor Religious Rollercoaster.

Assessment: checkpoint knowledge and skills.

How can parents help? Books, documentaries (including *Horrible Histories!*) films and weekend trips to historical sites. The Tower of London or the *Horrible Histories* Terrible Thames would be great London outings.

French



What are we doing this half term? In year 8 French, students start by building upon the topic of family which was previously encountered in Year 7. This time, the focus will be on the world of work. Students will learn to talk about themselves and also other people, use opinions to explain why and use Modal verbs in the present tense.

Assessments: students will be doing a vocabulary test every two weeks. The end of Module test will be Mid-October.

How can parents help? Highlight the importance of language learning in our global world for encouraging tolerance of other cultures as well as giving them the edge in business. Do not allow your child to use online translators and instead, remind them we expect them to use language seen in class. Testing your child on key vocabulary and grammar ahead of assessments will help build confidence.

Spanish



What are we doing this half term? In year 8 Spanish, students start by building upon the topic of family which was previously encountered in Year 7. This time, the focus will be on the world of work. Students will learn to talk about themselves and also other people, use opinions to explain why and use the conditional mood.

Assessments: students will be doing vocabulary test every two weeks. The end of module assessment will be Mid-October.

How can parents help? Highlight the importance of language learning in our global world for encouraging tolerance of other cultures as well as giving them the edge in business. Do not allow your child to use online translators and instead, remind them we expect them to use language seen in class. Testing your child on key vocabulary and grammar ahead of assessments will help build confidence.

Religion, Philosophy and Ethics (RPE)



What are we doing this half term? Year 8 students start the year by exploring a fascinating question: What makes someone worth following? Through the lives of extraordinary individuals from Jewish, Christian and Muslim backgrounds, students will investigate courage, compassion, forgiveness, justice and sacrifice. We will discover how people such as Martin Luther King Jr., Elie Wiesel and Óscar Romero used their beliefs to challenge injustice and make a difference in the world around them. Students will consider whether moral exemplars are born or made and evaluate which qualities make someone a genuine role model.

Students will need to learn key vocabulary carefully, engage thoughtfully with real-life stories and come to lessons ready to debate challenging moral questions.

Science



What are we doing this half term?

- 1) Food and digestion in Biology lessons
- 2) Atoms, Elements and Compounds in Chemistry lessons
- 3) Heating and cooling in Physics lessons

Assessments: 3 (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) assessments carried out in class over the half term.

How can parents help? Ensure your child has the correct equipment such as a pencil, ruler and their own scientific calculator. The BBC bitesize is a useful resource - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zng4d2p>. It would be useful to have a KS3 Science revision guide for revision purposes. - <https://www.amazon.co.uk/KS3-SCIENCE-REVISION-LEVELS-GUIDES/dp/B008MWXGFO>

Drama



What are we doing this half term? Building on skills and techniques learnt in Year 7, students will start year 8 with a unit about The Demon Barber of Fleet Street - Sweeney Todd. Using this story students will create drama based on aspects of his life and apply new techniques whilst honing performance skills.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on new drama vocabulary learnt during the unit and their ability to use the dramatic techniques explored.

How can parents help? Help your child research into the story of Sweeney Todd and ensure they complete homework on time. Try to go to the theatre when possible.

PE



What are we doing this half term? Building on skills, techniques and strategies learnt in year 7, students will rotate through the curriculum on a half term cycle, experiencing a variety of sports and activities from Netball, Football, and Rugby to the non-conventional such as Circuit training and Handball.

Assessments: Students will be assessed throughout the practical blocks of work.

How can parents help? Please ensure students are organised with their full kit on PE days.

Music



What are we doing this half term? We will be learning about different moods in Music at the start of year 8. Students will be playing major and minor melodies on the keyboards and creating a short piece in pairs. Students will develop their reading of music and understanding of scales as well as developing their skills on the keyboard.

Assessments: Performance of major and minor piece in pairs.

How can parents help? Please ensure your child has a pen, a pencil and their Music book each lesson and provide help with learning the key musical words.

DT Workshop (Rotation)



What are we doing this half term? Students' will be making exploring metal work and laminating plywood in this project and will cover subject knowledge such as: Materials and Manufacturing, Metals, Polymers, Woods, Casting (Pewter Keyring Project), Wood Processes (Bending & Laminating), Manufacture & Finishing Techniques

Assessments: Checkpoint assessment: out of 10, Skills test – Making: out of 15, Checkpoint assessment: out of 10

How can parents help? Take an interest in the project work and skills they are learning and discuss them. Help them look at products made from polymer materials and try and work out how they are made and constructed. Complete home learning from www.stem.org Watch programs such as - How it's made and follow our stem learning program for challenges to complete at home. Research contemporary jewellery designers (inspire - keyring) such as Alex Monroe and Tatty Devine.

DT Graphics (Rotation)



What are we doing this half term? Design and manufacture of a travel board/card game, including: Typography and branding, Game mechanics and board design, Industrial processes (printing, die cutting), Packaging (nets and box design), Components (playing pieces, dice/spinners) and Final evaluation

Assessments: Checkpoint assessment: out of 10, Skills test – Evaluation: out of 15, Checkpoint assessment: out of 10

How can parents help? Discuss the project and refer to board games and how people interact with them. How do board games develop skills in young people and are they still relevant in today's society? Take your child to the Design Museum or The Victoria & Albert Museum.

DT Product Design (Rotation)



What are we doing this half term? Students will be using analysis, enterprise and teamwork skills in order to design and make a prototype of a flat-pack product. In completing the project, students will look at sustainability and material management, developing an awareness of intellectual property, and will look at how products are assembled. They will also look at the importance of prototyping within the design process. The project aims to develop students' awareness of designing for a target audience, managing materials, prototyping and working with others.

Assessments: Checkpoint assessment: out of 10, Skills test – Design: out of 15, Checkpoint assessment: out of 10

How can parents help? Students will be designing a product for a real world situation, so discussing what customers might want from the products they buy would be useful. Enter design competitions. Visit <https://www.moma.co.uk/childrens-art-competitions>

Food and Nutrition



What are we doing this half term? Year 8 builds upon the skills developed in Year 7, focusing on greater accuracy, independence and control. Students will explore protein, plant-based diets, food choice factors and sustainability. They will develop their understanding of food hygiene, safe handling of high-risk foods and sensory evaluation.

Practical dishes may include: Irish Soda Bread, Veggie Chilli Nachos, Margarita Pizzettas, Sausage Pasta Bake, Chicken Goujons, Doughballs and Garlic Butter, Thai Fishcakes and Fruit Muffins.

How will they be assessed? Students will receive ongoing verbal feedback in practical lessons and complete practical skill assessments, theory checkpoints and knowledge-based assessments.

Home Learning

Students will evaluate practical outcomes and continue developing preparation skills at home. They are encouraged to prepare meals for their families and practise the skills learned in lessons.

To be successful in this subject, students will need to enjoy:

Developing precision and accuracy in practical work

Working independently

Exploring different cuisines and cultures

Evaluating food products and making informed choices

Applying nutrition knowledge to everyday life

Art



What are we doing this half term? Year 8 students investigate a variety of 'Natural World' as a starting point for their first project this year. Artists such as Maggi Hambling, Georgia O'Keeffe and Yellena James inspire students to study, respond and analyse their artwork in written and visual forms. Students create their own triptych through experimenting with a variety of mixed media and painting techniques.

How can parents help? Please ensure that your child completes all their Art & Design homework activities for this project. Gathering natural forms such as a shell and pinecones may inspire students and encourage them to notice seasonal changes in the natural world. Drawing equipment and good quality colouring pencils will support students in completing their work in lesson and at home. their work in lesson and at home.

Computer Science



What are we doing this half term? In year 7 students were introduced to computational thinking and basic programming techniques. Students will be expanding on this and will be introduced to the Python programming language. They will learn how to write small programs and use the programming techniques they learnt about in year 7. They will revisit computational thinking and apply this problem-solving process to the programs they write in Python.

Assessments: Students will be doing an assessment every three weeks as a check for understanding and mastery.

How can parents help? We ask parents to use online resources for learning Python. Parents can get their children to start looking through and using the CS Newbs website (<https://www.csnewbs.com/python>) to get a head start on the programming techniques taught in year 8. We ask that home learning is completed as this will help them prepare for the 4 assessments this term. learning is completed as this will help them prepare for the 4 assessments this term.