YEAR 8 Curriculum Newsletter Autumn Term 2

📖 ENGLISH

What are we doing this half term? Tension writing. In this creative writing unit students will use short film clips and a range of extracts to build their creative writing skills. They will learn about the use of language devices and structure to craft a piece of tension writing, as well as the accurate use of sentences for effect.
Assessments: There will be a creative writing assessment which tests writing skills.
How can parents help? Please ensure your child's spellings homework and reading log are completed, that they complete their Lexia, and always bring a reading book to school. If you can listen to your children read too, that is even better! If you can encourage your children to read a range of poetry and have discussions with them about the content within them that would be hugely beneficial.

➗ MATHS

What are we doing this half term? (1) Algebra: Simplifying Expressions, Expanding brackets, factorising, Substitution and Solving Equations (2) Ratio and Scale Drawings.
Assessment: there will be open book checkpoint assessment after each topic and a bigger assessment covering all the work since September before the end of term.
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 home learning 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 explore the world's changing population. Students will study population pyramids and how they can help us plan for the future. They will also look at the causes and impacts of migration. Throughout this topic students will develop their enquiry 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.

🔬 SCIENCE

What are we doing this half term? (1) Biology – Digestion topic is completed **(2) Chemistry** –Elements topic is completed (**3) Physics** – Forces topic is completed.
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 KS3 bitesize is a useful resource for homework tasks and revision - https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zng4d2p.
Students to complete weekly Sparx science tasks.

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🏅 PHYSICAL EDUCATION (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 invasion games, net games, striking and fielding games, aesthetic activities and athletics.
Assessments: students will be assessed throughout the practical blocks of work.
How can parents help? Please ensure students complete home learning tasks on time and that they are organised with their full kit on PE days.

🎵 MUSIC

What are we doing this half term? Students are learning about tonality and harmony in its foundational format.
Assessments: Students will be assessed on their appraisal skills in a listening assessment.

🏰 HISTORY

What are we doing this half term? Once we have finished studying the first Tudor monarchs (Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary I) we move on to looking at the rule of Elizabeth I in depth. Why was her rule known as a 'Golden Age' and does it deserve this reputation? Watch out for an invasion by the Spanish Armada, hang on kids' fireships ahoy!

How can parents help? Books, documentaries and weekend trips to historical sites. Windsor Castle would make an easy day trip or the Tower of London for a bigger day out.

🎨 ART & DESIGN

What are we learning this half term? Year 8 students investigate the 'Natural World' as a starting point for their first project this year. Artists such as Maggie 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 completed all their Art & Design home learning. Gathering natural forms such as shells 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 lessons and at home.

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RPE

What are we doing this half term? In this unit, Year 8 students will deepen their understanding of **Islam**, one of the world's major religions and the faith of over a billion people. Students will explore core Islamic beliefs, including the nature of Allah, the Prophets, holy books, angels, life after death and the importance of faith in the lives of Muslims today. Through discussion, enquiry and reflection, students will consider how religious beliefs shape attitudes, choices and identity in the modern world.

As part of their RPE (Religion, Philosophy and Ethics) studies, students will develop key skills in analysing religious teachings, explaining beliefs and evaluating different viewpoints. They will be encouraged to think critically, ask challenging questions and support their opinions with evidence and reasoned arguments.

This unit supports Thamesmead School's vision of being committed to excellence, nurturing individuals, respecting our community and fulfilling potential. Students will explore themes such as responsibility, compassion, justice and respect, helping them to develop confidence in expressing their own views while gaining a deeper understanding of the beliefs and experiences of others. [teachback.co.uk]

Parent and carers can support learning at home by discussing topics covered in lessons and encouraging students to explain what they have learned. Exploring different beliefs together helps students develop curiosity, empathy and the confidence to engage thoughtfully with the diverse world around them.

HISTORY

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How can parents help? Books, documentaries and weekend trips to historical sites. Windsor Castle would make an easy day trip or the Tower of London for a bigger day out.

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DRAMA

What are we doing this half term? Year 8 will study the 16th Century Theatre form Commedia Dell'arte this half term and will see the connections between this form of theatre and current comedic actors today. Students will explore the basic conventions of this style of street theatre and will develop their mime and physical skills whilst learning about the key stock characters; Pantalone, Zanni, El Capitano and Columbina. Students will be assessed in performance as key roles and will have a checkpoint written test to assess their knowledge of this period of theatre history.

How can parents help? Please ensure your child completes their revision for the test, and it is always valuable to see live theatre when possible

FRENCH

What are we doing this half term? In year 8 French, students will learn how to talk about pocket money and ways of earning pocket money. They will also learn how to arrange to meet friends and make or give excuses.

Assessments: vocabulary tests throughout the half-term and reading, translation and dictation tasks for the end of module assessment.

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 us 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 will learn how to talk about pocket money and ways of earning pocket money. They will also learn how to arrange to meet a friend and make or give excuses.

Assessments: vocabulary tests throughout the half-term and translation, dictation and reading tasks for the end of module assessment.

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 us language seen in class. Testing your child on key vocabulary and grammar ahead of assessments will help build confidence.

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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- 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. Design a piece of jewellery (inspire - keyring) to appeal to your friends. Make jewellery at home using modelling clay.

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. Visithttps://www.moma.co.uk/childrens-art-competitions

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🍎 FOOD & NUTRITION

What are we doing this half term? The focus this year is on developing and refining the basic skills taught in year 7, developing accuracy and control across a range of equipment. More complex dishes featuring meat, chicken and alternative proteins are introduced this year. These intermediate skills build on the foundations of the basic skills learned in year 7 and prepare students for year 9. Our students come from a variety of different cultures so a focus in year 8 is International and British cuisines. This year also introduces the concept of different nutritional needs based on life stage, and food choice based on ethics. Students are exposed to a variety of food related messages from different sources so in year 8 we focus on how different factors affect food choice such as religion, celebration, dietary needs, peer pressure and the media.

How will they be assessed?

Students will be given regular verbal feedback within their practical lessons 'in the moment'. This allows students to act upon this feedback immediately for the maximum impact on progress.

Students will be assessed via written and practical assessments.

Home Learning

Students are set practical evaluations to reflect upon their practical outcome and own personal performance in practicals. In addition, where students provide ingredients for practicals they will continue to develop their weighing and measuring skills at home when preparing their ingredients for lessons.

Students are encouraged to practice their practical skills out of lessons by helping to prepare and cook meals at home.

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

Learning how to cook independently

Developing organisational and time management skills

Developing problem solving skills and the ability to overcome challenges

Teamwork when carrying out practical investigations

Learning through practical activities

💻 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 re-visit computational thinking and apply this problem-solving process to the programs they write in Python.

Assessments: Students will be asked questions every lesson on the programming knowledge they have acquired. They will do an end of unit assessment assessing their knowledge on problem solving and the Python programming language.

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.