Year 8 Curriculum Newsletter Autumn Term 1

English



What are we doing this half term? Refugee Boy: We will begin the year with a novel study, Refugee Boy by Benjamin Zephania. In this unit, students will explore the plight of refugees and social injustices as well as exploring the novel itself using a range of inference skills. This unit will also tie in with non-fiction, such as news and reporting of world issues and how this is used to shape our opinions.
Assessments: three checkpoint assessments across the first term including a skills check, a guided formative assessment with detailed feedback and a summative assessment.
How can parents help? Please encourage your children to read (we always ask this, it really does develop their literacy skills), complete their home learning, and always sign their home learning reading log. read (we always ask this, it really does develop their literacy skills), complete their home learning, and always sign their home learning reading log.

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 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.

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.

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 KS3 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

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 earnt 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 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.

Religion, Philosophy and Ethics (RPE)



What are we doing this half term? Year 8 students start the school year by delving into **Philosophy** and asking the question 'How do we know anything for certain?' If you've seen the movie 'The Matrix' you will understand the philosophical enquiry we are dipping our toes into. We will look at the difference between fact, opinion and belief whilst exploring the concept of 'reality'.
How can parents help? Students will need to learn their key vocabulary carefully and will need to come to lessons ready to think deeply.

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

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

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 Becketts 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.

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. that they are organised

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. with learning the

Design Technology (Rotation)

What are we doing this half term? We will be looking into forces that act upon materials when we use the in products and polymer-based materials. We will manufacture a pen holder from acrylic and crate a small night light. We will be trained how to use the pillar drill, polishing machine, plastic heating equipment, the vacuum former and soldering irons. We will focus on finishing skills to create high quality products. We will also cover the concept of quality assurance, quality control and tolerance within manufacturing.

Assessments: Students will be assessed on the Acrylic pen stand practical work which they have the opportunity to focus on quality. Students will be assessed on their small night light, in which their soldering skills and ability to construct a vacuum formed case will be the focus.

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.

DT Graphics (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. In Graphics, Students' will be designing and constructing a robot character using paper engineering. The theme will be to related to environmental issues.

Assessments: Students will be assessed in the areas of Investigation (analysing flat-pack products and analysing their appropriateness for the fair), Designing (designing different products that could be sold) and Evaluating (evaluating the final product).

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.

DT Textiles –(Rotation)

What are we doing this half term? Students will use recycled fabrics or clothing to design a Block printing drawstring bag. Throughout the project, students will look at quality control, fabric construction, hand-sewing, machine stitching, embroidery, applique, seam allowance and templates. The drawstring bag project will allow students to develop independence whilst using the sewing machine, as they will have to ensure that they have sewn in the correct places to construct the product accurately. This particular Textiles project will challenge their problem-solving skills and ability to work to a high quality.

Assessments: Design sketches will be assessed as well as the practical outcome of the bag itself.

How can parents help? Discuss the project, look at existing drawstring bags for a variety of applications. Help them to experiment or practice sewing skills at home.

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 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 com-

Food and 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.
Practical lessons include: Sausage Pasta Bake, Goujons, Margarita Pizzetta, Irish Soda Bread, Veggie chilli Nachos, sausage Noodles, Fruit Muffins, Thai fishcakes, Doughballs and garlic butter
Assessments: 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 practical. In addition, where students provide ingredients for practical's 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 Teamwork when carrying out practical investigations