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.

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.

History

What are we doing this half term? Now that we have studied the first Tudor monarchs, we move on to looking at the rule of Elizabeth I in depth this half term including the defeat of 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.

Maths

What are we doing this half term?: (1) Algebra: simplifying expressions, expanding brackets, factorising, substitution and solving. **(2) 2D & 3D shapes and solids:** plans & elevations, area & circumference of a circle, cylinders, Pythagoras. **(3) Real life graphs:** direct & inverse proportion, distance-time graphs, rates of change.

Assessments: There will be an open book unit assessment after each topic and a bigger assessment covering all of 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 homework platform) spending at least 40 minutes per week doing their home learning - they should be completing 100% of the tasks each week.

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 revisit 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.

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: 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 a green pen for peer and self-assessment. Read relevant books about migration, such as the graphic novel Illegal by Eoin Colfer, to see the adversities faced by migrants. Make sure the revision notes for the assessment follow the guidance on the revision help sheet, to include definitions, diagrams and explanations to aid in learning the information. Testing students on the information on their revision pages helps build their confidence, that they can recall relevant information.

Religion, Philosophy and Ethics (RPE)

What are we doing this half term? In this unit Yr8 students explore how science and religion offer different ways of understanding the world. They examine key questions about the origins of the universe and life, including the Big Bang and creation stories. Students learn how religious and scientific views can conflict, complement, or coexist. They discuss ethical issues like evolution, miracles, and the role of faith. Critical thinking and respectful debate are encouraged throughout.
The unit aims to develop students' ability to evaluate diverse perspectives thoughtfully.

Assessments: Students will need to learn their key vocabulary carefully and will need to come to lessons ready to think deeply about the questions in class.

How can parents help? You can support your son/daughter by encouraging them to see two sides of the argument, ask them about their RPE lessons at school.

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 shells and pine cones 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.

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.

Assessment: Students will be assessed in performance as key roles and will have a written test to assess their core knowledge of this period of theatre history.

French



What are we doing this half term? In year 8 French this term, students will learn to express themselves about pocket money and what they do to earn some money. They will also learn how to organise meeting friends or giving excuses.

Assessments: Reading and translation / Dictation

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 this term, students will learn to express themselves about pocket money and what they do to earn some money. They will also learn how to organise meeting friends or giving excuses.

Assessments: Reading and translation / Dictation

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.

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.

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.

DT Textiles –(Rotation)



What are we doing this half term? Students will use recycled fabrics or clothing to design a Puggly Mascot. Throughout the project, students will look at quality control, fabric construction, hand-sewing, machine stitching, embroidery, applique, seam allowance and templates. The Puggly Mascot 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 mascot itself.

How can parents help?: Discuss the project, look at existing mascots for a variety of events or teams. Help them to experiment or practice sewing skills at home.

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**.**
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 realworld situation, so discussing what customers might want from the products they buy would be useful.

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.

Food and Nutrition



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.

Students are set practical evaluations to reflect upon their practical outcome and own personal performance in practicals. In addition, where students provide ingredients for practical 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