Year 8 Curriculum Newsletter Spring Term 1

English

What are we doing this half term? World Poetry. In this unit students will use poetry to help to study other cultures and identity. They will learn about poetic devices and structure, and continue to develop their analytical skills, all whilst enjoying a range of poems which provide an insight into other cultures.

Assessments: in week 3 students will complete a PEAL formative assessment, then in week 5 they will complete a reading and writing assessment centred around the poems studied.

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) Rounding: significant figures and estimation. 2) Coordinates: midpoints and lengths of line segments. (3) Area: Area of parallelograms, trapeziums and unit conversions. (4) Circles: Identifying parts of a circle, finding circumference and area.

Assessments: There will be a closed 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

Science

What are we doing this half term? (1) Biology - Respiration topic is completed and students start the photosynthesis topic, (2) Chemistry - Reactivity series of metals is completed and students start looking at Earth structure ,(3) Physics – Electricity topic is completed and students start the Forces topic.

Assessments: Low stake quizzes at the end of each topic.

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.

It would be useful to have a KS3 Science revision guide to aid students in preparation for summative assessments - https://www.amazon.co.uk/KS3-SCIENCE-REVISION-LEVELS-GUIDES/dp/B008MWXGFO

History

What are we studying? Year 8 students will be moving on from their studies of the Tudors to the Stuarts; investigating events such as the Gunpowder Plot, Great Fire of London and the significance of characters such as Oliver Cromwell to decide if he was a hero or villain. After half term we will move on to investigating the legacy of the British Empire.

Assessment: End of unit knowledge and skills test.

How can parents help? Discuss history with your child. Visiting historic sites and museums such the Imperial War Museum. Use sites such as BBC Bitesize, encourage wider reading and watching films and programmes such as Horrible Histories.

Geography

What are we doing this half term? Y8 students will explore the rivers, how they are formed and the impact they have on human activities and the impact humans have on rivers. Throughout this topic students will develop their enquiry and analysis skills.

Assessments: Tri-weekly 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 a green pen for annotating answers. Testing students on the information on their revision pages helps build their confidence, that they can recall relevant information. Watch the weather reports on the news, so pupils can familiarise themselves with key terms. 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, to include definitions, diagrams, explanations and colours to aid in learning the information.

Religion, Philosophy and Ethics (RPE)

Year 8 students start the school term by delving into philosophy and look into 'The Problem of Evil'.

How can parents help? 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. You can support your son/daughter by encouraging them to see two sides of the argument, ask them about their RPE lessons at school and for them to explain to you the philosophical enquiry that has taken place in class that day.

Drama

What are we doing this half term?: Students will develop their knowledge of Theatre History this term, following on from their work on Commedia Dell'arte. This half term students will learn about theatre in the Medieval Period in England. Students will reflect on life in the Medieval period and be introduced to the Guilds that people were part of in this period of history. In groups, students will create their own Medieval Mystery Play based on Biblical stories; as would have occurred in Medieval England. This Scheme of Learning builds students imagination, group work skills, directing skills and playwriting opportunities are provided.

Assessment: Students are assessed on their creation and performance of their Mystery Play, and their written evaluation of it.

Help at home: Help your child research this period of history. Watch relevant episodes of 'Horrible Histories' to support historical learning and acting style!

Spanish

What are we studying? Food and drink including ordering food and buying at a market using quantities.

Assessment: Reading aloud and writing assessment

How can parents help? Encourage your child to make a bank of flashcards to revise words and phrases. Encourage your child to learn these words and phrases by testing themselves or by testing them. Encourage your child to share what they have learnt in class.

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.

French

What are we studying? Food and drink including ordering food and buying at a market using quantities.

Assessment: Reading aloud and writing assessment

How can parents help? Encourage your child to make a bank of flashcards to revise words and phrases. Encourage your child to learn these words and phrases by testing themselves or by testing them. Encourage your child to share what they have learnt in class.

Computer Science

What are we doing this half term? They will continue to learn how to write small programs and use the programming techniques they learnt about in year 7. This includes learning how to make a program efficient by using iteration. The students will be writing Python code that using for loops and while loops. They will re-visit computational thinking and apply this problem solving process to the programs they write in Python.

Assessments: Students will be have two assessments: one on for loops and one on while loops.

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) and use this to help them practice.

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 activites 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.

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.

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: Burritos, Sausage Pasta Bake, Goujons, Margarita Pizzetta, Superveg Burger and Rainbow slaw, Irish Soda Bread

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

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.

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.

Music



What are we doing this half term? We will be exploring the history of the blues, the importance of the style's links to modern pop music today, and also the key features used across many different genres which have stemmed from the Blues as well.

Assessments: Students are assessed on their listening and appraising skills and h ow they use key vocabulary to describe key features of the Blues.

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.