

Year 7 Spring Curriculum Update

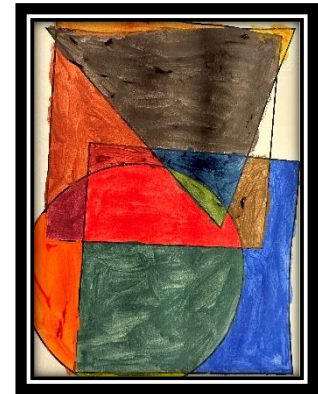
January 2024

YEAR 7 SPRING TERM OVERVIEW

Since the beginning of September, students from both campuses have accumulated an impressive total of 92,066 points as a year group. This remarkable accomplishment has been acknowledged and celebrated by both the year group and the entire school community.

In addition to this our Year 7 students and their personal tutors have been developing their oracy skills by engaging with The Day and Writer of the Week. Students have enjoyed a wider range of activities linked to developing their knowledge of current affairs as well as reading.

During our learning walks and observation of students during break and lunchtime, we have observed a high level of engagement and maturity in our students. Many are actively seeking opportunities to develop leadership skills and support other students. It has been lovely to see our Year 7 working collaboratively and supportively both in and out of lessons.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Working with the theme of Fantasy and Freedom, this term students will be developing their comprehension and inference reading skills and their creative writing.

In the first half term, students will focus on analysing how other writers have created freedom through fantasy texts. We will look at both the language and structural devices they have used to express the writer's thoughts and feelings clearly. This includes learning how to write an accurate response with evidence from the text.

In the second half term, students will have the freedom to create their own fantasy worlds through their writing. They will learn how to build interesting characters, create settings and develop a narrative using a range of language techniques.



ENGLISH LITERATURE

Students are currently studying David Cullcutt's play *Salem*. This intriguing playscript of fear, police, peer-pressure, and suspicion has students enthusiastically debating themes such as responsibility in relationships, crime, and the death penalty. With so many different opinions in the class, everyone is keen to present their ideas on characters like Samuel Parris and whether his actions are justified.

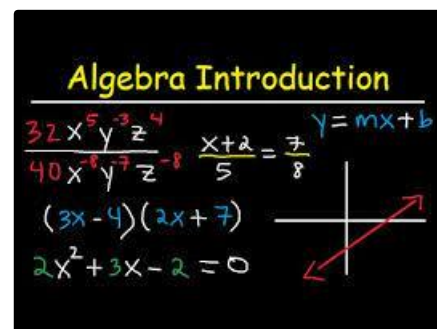
Later, in the term, students build on their understanding of the genre and explore a range of writing to analyse how conventions of language and structure are used for effect.



MATHS

Since the Autumn Term 2 students are now taught in ability sets. All students are taught the same topics and in the same order. While some students may delve deeper into certain topics and explore multiple methods for performing calculations, others may spend more time on particular skills and delve less into these areas.

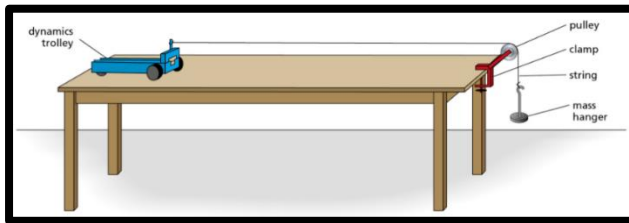
Throughout the Spring term Year 7 is primarily focused on Algebra core skills required to be successful in maths. Within each topic there are plenty of opportunities for students to explore the basic principles of the subject; understanding why we do what we do; and considering multiple different approaches to solving equations. For the remainder of the Spring term students' learning will focus on Number, where students will extend their knowledge of fractions, decimals and percentages from the Autumn term; and begin to look at ratio and study the relationships between different numbers.



SCIENCE

This term students will advance their scientific knowledge and understanding of Physics and Chemistry. They will develop scientific skills through numerous experiments and investigations that help answer questions about the world around them. This will equip them with the scientific knowledge required to understand the uses and implications of science, today and for the future.

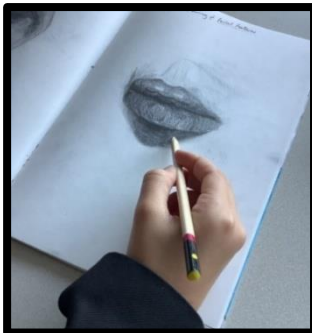
In Chemistry they will look at molecules and the different chemical reactions and how to write them as equations. This will give an opportunity to build confidence in their practical skills and learn



through investigations. Also providing a foundation of understanding to be built upon in upcoming years. For Physics they will delve into how the world works, by looking at forces and how they affect the world around us. Whilst also strengthening their Maths skills by working with calculations.

They can also broaden their knowledge and understanding beyond the curriculum during Science club. KS3 Science club runs on a Tuesday 3:15-4:15pm at Walnut tree and Wednesday 3:15-4:15pm at Brooklands. Students last term engaged in topics such as: flame tests, light boxes and colours, microbiology, looking at surface tension and Chemistrees.

ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN



Students at Walnut Tree, who study Art in their creative rotation, will be exploring Formal Elements. This project aims to equip students with a knowledge of a range of skills in Art, using terminology to explore a range of mixed media outcomes incorporating line; shape; colour; tone; pattern; form and texture.

Students at Brooklands, who study Art in their creative rotation, will be exploring portraiture. This project aims to equip students with a knowledge of proportion, a confidence in the use of tone and an understanding of colour mixing using paint. Students study the work of Chuck Close and produce a piece of work in response to this.

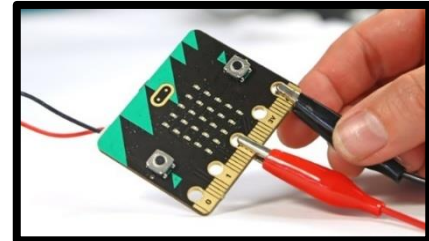


An Independent Learning project accompanies each creative rotation, so please ask your child about their plans for their independent outcome. Homework is set on Firefly for students to refer to after the lesson.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

In the first term Year 7 looked at the topic of E-Safety which included best practices when accessing online websites and platforms, phone use and staying safe with technology. Students then got some hands-on coding experience with the BBC MicroBites, Year 7 were introduced to algorithms and even created some flowcharts. The block base programming of the Microbits gave students of all levels the opportunity to use the knowledge gained when learning about algorithms in a practical way.

Going forward students will be learning about Spreadsheets and Computer Architecture.



DANCE

We have come back into dance this term with a bang! This half-term we explore the musical 'Hairspray'. Students learn about the historical context of musical theatre and the many different styles of dance within 'Hairspray'. We will enjoy learning the upbeat sequences and students will be creative whilst choreographing their own movement sequences, ensuring to include many popular 60's style dance moves.

Next half-term, students learn about the wonderful world of contemporary dance. Students will learn that this style is expressive and combines several dance genres. Everyone will be exploring this style practically and be encouraged to connect the mind and body through fluid dance movements. Students will also be trying out counterbalances and counter tension balances as part of this unit, which is always great fun.

It has been great to see so many keen students involved in the school musical and keen to be involved in upcoming performances.



DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Design Technology students in Year 7 start by making a key fob using Polymers and workshop tools. This project introduces them to the equipment and processes we use in Design Technology, as well as the creative design process. They will go on to design and make a mobile phone holder using manufactured board. There is a DT club for KS3 at Brooklands and Walnut Tree. Students need to ask their teacher for details.



DRAMA

We are very thankful for the great start to the year. Students have shown great flair and ability learning the performance skills taught and we have been so proud at how they have worked so well together.

This half term we will explore the play 'Mean to be Free' by Joanna H. Kraus, the story of Harriet Tubman, a celebrated abolitionist and social activist, and the so-called 'Underground Railway' of 150 years ago America. The play places two children as central characters and we perform scenes and apply skills taught, to present the play. Students then understand that drama can inform, educate and entertain and they will learn that script work is much more than learning lines, it is also understanding history, context and themes.



In the second half of the term students then follow an immersive theatre project based on a true story of an old house in Northumberland. Students learn to create and show atmosphere, they learn to think, speak, answer and act in role with little time to rehearse and at the same time solve a mystery of what actually happened at the big house on the hill.

After school activities are focused on the school show this first half-term, and we invite you to see 'Godspell' at The Venue at the end of half term.

FOOD AND NUTRITION



Students will develop basic key cooking skills and practise these by making a range of products (dippy divers, bruschetta, fruit salad and fruit crumble). Students will also learn to apply the hygiene and safety procedures when working with Food and will demonstrate these during their practical lessons. Students will be introduced to topics such as food waste, seasonality and food miles and will consider environmental issues associated with food.

GEOGRAPHY

This term we have shifted our focus from Milton Keynes and the United Kingdom to look at places much further from home – Oceania and Antarctica! Students will learn about ecosystems that span around the world and become familiar with the natural diversity of Australia before looking at the features and threats to the Great Barrier Reef.

Next, they will look at the causes and impacts of ‘bushfires’ in the country before turning their attention to Antarctica. Students will become familiar with how ice, 2km thick, can form in a ‘cold desert’ and how it can shape the landscape. We will introduce the concept of climate change – its causes, how it threatens Antarctica



and Pacific Island nations, and what role we can play in mitigating it. As an important concept, climate change is a theme we will return to throughout the course.

Finally, we will justify looking at the two continents together by introducing the concept of continental drift and exploring how the two landmasses were once joined and why they are no longer.

Again, this is a concept we will return to when exploring earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanoes in the future.

Students with a passion for Geography are encouraged to come along to ‘Geography club’ where they can engage in Geographical games, model making and projects. There are also a series of enrichment activities students can do independently found on Firefly at <https://waltonhigh.fireflycloud.net/geography/geography-enrichment>.

HISTORY

The first half of the Spring Term sees Year 7 History students delve into the study of ‘People and Society’. Students will examine life in the Medieval period, during Tudor times and will investigate life during the Industrial Revolution. By entering into a study that covers a broad chronological span, Year 7 will continue to deepen their historical knowledge and understanding of what life was like for ‘real people, in real places, in real moments in time’.

The Spring Term also ensures that Year 7 History students learn about life for a host of types of people with lessons focusing on topics such as ‘Black Tudors’, ‘Climbing Boys’ and ‘Women of the Industrial Revolution’. Through the study of topics such as the Black Death students will start to realise that how people react to challenging times is often very similar, despite the passage of time. A key question for this unit is ‘Was the Black Death a disaster?’ where students have to consider alternative interpretations of the impact of the Black Death, and in doing so to look at evidence from more than one perspective.



During the second half of the Spring Term students are called upon far more to think like historians by evaluating the historical reputations of a range of controversial historical characters. This unit starts with the study of key individuals from the Ancient World. It then moves on chronologically with a particular focus being placed on the reputation of King John.

LANGUAGES

FRENCH



Between now and Easter, students in Year 7 French will be using transferable words and phrases to talk about different topics. Starting with food and drink, students will learn how to say the foods they like and dislike, before moving on to learning how to order food in a café. They will be learning specifically how to order ice creams in French!

After February half term, students will move on to the topic of free time. Students will learn about sports and hobbies and how to express opinions about them. They will also learn about the future tense in French. Students will continue to learn new skills such as dictation and translation.

GERMAN

Year 7 students continue to make excellent progress through their course. In this third half term, students will be learning about physical appearance (such as hair and eye colour) and describing themselves and others in German. They will begin to describe others using the third person and learn to use intensifiers to further build their descriptions. Students will learn clothing vocabulary, as well as accusative adjective endings.



In the fourth half term, the students will be learning about school, the subjects they enjoy and what they will study in the future. Students will build on the variety of opinions and descriptions they can express in the context of school subjects. They will learn about the school systems in German speaking countries and how to tell the time in German, as well as have an introduction to the future tense to describe what they will learn in the future.

LATIN

This term, students will be learning more about Latin verbs, specifically the two main past tenses: the imperfect and perfect. They will develop their own English skills and gain a wider appreciation for tenses in our language and what they mean.



Later in the term, students will discover more about plural nouns. Students will learn how to translate sentences containing these. Students will continue to develop their translation and comprehension skills. Students will read Latin stories about Roman slavery, superstitious beliefs (including our first ever werewolf story!) and gladiators.

MANDARIN

In this half term, we will be learning about free time activities, giving positive and negative opinions. We will also be mapping our school routine and giving our preferences about school subjects and sports. During the week of Chinese New Year and Spring Festival, we will explore Chinese cultural festivities.



SPANISH

Having focused on their personal world, students will now discover more about the outer world. During the Spring term they will cover the topic of leisure and school. Their sentences will become longer, with opinions and reasons. They are going to be able to talk about their interests, their favourite school subjects, and what they usually do on a typical school day including break time activities. At the same time, they will compare school systems with Spanish speaking countries.



PHILOSOPHY

Having finished the topic of Hinduism by creating board games which demonstrate students understanding of karma and reincarnation, this half term within Religion, Philosophy and Ethics



students we will be exploring the beliefs of Buddhist philosophy.

They will be following the story of Siddhartha Gautama (also known as the Buddha) to discover his journey to enlightenment. Lessons in this topic will be based around the exploration of three Ultimate questions – what is the meaning of life, does it matter how we behave and is there life after death?