

YEAR 9: AUTUMN

Welcome to our Autumn term Curriculum Letter. There are plenty of extra-curricular activities for students to get involved in this half term and many departments will be running exciting activities.

More general information about the curriculum can be found here.

The departments that teach your child have contributed below to let you know what students will be studying this term.

ART

Year 9 visited the National Marine Aquarium on 2nd October and engaged in 5 different drawing workshops, led by aquarium staff. This is such a fantastic resource to have locally, and we have taken each Year 9 group for over twenty years! Outcomes have varied from aboriginal paintings, clay vases, junk fish, various printmaking outcomes and much more! This year, pupils are working on Venetian Mask-Making pieces, inspired by the colours, shapes, patterns and textures encountered at the aquarium.

COMPUTING

Year 9 learned about the basics of Python code and are now working on nesting and developing complex storylines that feature multiple pathways.

DRAMA

Pantomime
In this fun and energetic unit, students explore the colourful world of pantomime, building on their understanding of Commedia dell'Arte, physical comedy and stock characters. They learn about the familiar ingredients of pantomime, including exaggerated movement and facial expressions, slapstick comedy, audience participation, songs, dance and traditional character types such as the hero, villain, sidekick and dame. Through practical drama games and exercises, students develop their communication, physical expression, confidence and ability to work as part of an ensemble.

Students then work collaboratively in groups to rehearse and perform their own mini pantomimes based on familiar fairy tales such as Cinderella, Aladdin, Goldilocks and Jack and the Beanstalk. They develop their characters through exaggerated voice, movement and facial expression, while incorporating slapstick routines, music and choreography. The unit culminates in an assessed performance, where students are encouraged to stay in role, work successfully as an ensemble and, most importantly, create an entertaining and joyful performance for their audience.

ENGLISH

Students will build on their work on Shakespeare in the summer term by beginning Year 9 with the study of Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet'. Students will explore the text both analytically and creatively, beginning to consider how the meanings and style of the play is shaped by the context in which it was written.

Students then develop their Language analysis skills for GCSE by considering a range of texts from across different cultures and time periods that are inspired by Romeo and Juliet. Looking at Noughts and Crosses, Fair Rosaline, These Violent Delights and other media, students will develop their ability to make links between texts, to consider the importance of context and to be inspired in their own creative writing.

GEOGRAPHY

In geography, students have been learning about Tectonic Hazards including the causes and consequences of volcanic eruptions and how this hazard can be managed. They will be continuing to explore this topic with a focus on the causes and impacts of earthquakes and tsunami's and their management. This topic builds skills of teamwork, sequencing and interpreting maps alongside building detailed knowledge of geographical patterns, processes and landscapes and the complex interactions we have with them. This topic is also part of our GCSE so students are getting a headstart on the skills and language they would need for GCSE geography in year 10.

HISTORY

Pupils will continue their study of Nazi Germany, building on their previous learning about the rise of Hitler to explore what life was like under Nazi rule. They will examine how the Nazi regime controlled everyday life, including the experiences of different groups within German society. Their learning will then move on to the causes of the Second World War, followed by presentations exploring the key events and turning points of the conflict. Pupils will also study the Holocaust, developing their understanding of the persecution and murder of six million Jews and other victims of Nazi oppression. They will investigate the controversial decision to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and consider the consequences of this decision. Through project work, pupils will explore life on the British Home Front, before uncovering the intriguing stories behind Operation Foxley and Operation Grey Wolf. The term will culminate in an exciting code-breaking lesson focused on the Enigma machine, allowing pupils to experience the challenges of wartime intelligence and codebreaking.

Alongside their historical knowledge, pupils will continue to develop essential historical skills. They will explore how to analyse historical sources, focusing on identifying bias, making inferences and evaluating the usefulness and reliability of evidence. They will also develop their extended writing skills, learning how to construct well-developed PETAL and to communicate clear, supported and analytical historical arguments.

MATHEMATICS

Students will extend their understanding of number, algebra, data and proportion through increasingly sophisticated mathematical techniques. They will develop fluency with powers, roots and indices, including zero, negative and fractional indices, and apply these skills when working with standard form and calculations involving very large and very small numbers. In algebra, students will simplify expressions, expand and factorise brackets, solve equations involving fractions and brackets, and begin working with quadratic expressions, building the foundations for future graphing and GCSE study. Students will also deepen their statistical understanding by constructing and interpreting a range of data displays, analysing averages and spread, and using scatter graphs and lines of best fit to identify relationships and make predictions. In addition, they will apply ratio and proportion in a variety of real-life contexts, including financial calculations, currency conversions and direct and inverse proportion problems. Throughout the course, students will strengthen their problem-solving, reasoning and analytical skills by applying mathematics to increasingly complex and realistic situations.

MFL: FRENCH

This half term, Year 9 students will continue their study of Tu veux sortir? (Would you like to go out?), developing their ability to make and discuss social plans in French. Through a variety of speaking and listening activities, pupils will build confidence in communicating about leisure activities and experiences with friends.

Students will reinforce key vocabulary related to making plans, including discussing places to go, times and arrangements, and giving excuses or reasons when plans change.

The major grammar focus will be the perfect tense, enabling students to talk about past experiences and describe an evening out in detail. Pupils will practise forming the perfect tense with both avoir and être verbs and will learn to recognise and use a range of common irregular past participles accurately.

By the end of the unit, students will be able to make arrangements confidently, understand conversations about social plans, and describe past outings with increasing detail, accuracy and fluency in French.

MFL: GERMAN

This half term, Year 9 students will study 'Going out', developing their ability to make plans, arrange social activities and talk about outings with friends.

Students will learn vocabulary related to places to visit, methods of transport, and the questions and answers needed for making plans.

In grammar, pupils will focus on the past tense, enabling them to describe previous outings and social events in detail. They will also develop their understanding of the conditional tense, allowing them to discuss what they would like to do and suggest possible activities and plans.

MFL: SPANISH

This half term, Year 8 students will continue their study of Mi colegio (My School), developing their ability to discuss different aspects of school life.

Students will learn vocabulary related to extra-curricular clubs and activities, allowing them to discuss what they do beyond the classroom. They will also develop language to describe what type of student they are. In addition, pupils will learn how to describe an ideal teacher, giving and justifying their opinions using a wider range of vocabulary and structures.

In grammar, students will focus on the important distinction between ser and estar, learning when to use each verb accurately when describing people. They will also develop their use of the conditional tense to express what their ideal teacher would be like.

By the end of the unit, students will be able to discuss school life in greater detail and express their ideas and opinions with increasing accuracy and confidence in Spanish.

MUSIC

In Year 9, students will be developing their knowledge of Reggae features and primary chords through songwriting, exploring popular song structures and lyric writing exercises.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In Year 9, pupils begin to take greater ownership of their PE journey through the opportunity to select different sporting pathways based on their interests, strengths and aspirations. This approach allows pupils to develop their skills and understanding in greater depth, supporting those considering GCSE PE whilst also encouraging continued participation and enjoyment in sport beyond the classroom.

Throughout the term, pupils have focused on refining more advanced technical skills and improving the consistency and effectiveness of their performance (Hands), developing greater tactical awareness, decision-making and the ability to analyse performance (Head), and demonstrating independence, resilience, leadership and effective teamwork (Heart).

By providing pupils with greater choice and opportunities to specialise in activities they enjoy, we aim to build confidence, encourage lifelong participation in physical activity and support a smooth transition into their GCSE years, whether they choose to study PE as an examination subject or not.

RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY & ETHICS

Students are continuing their study of Crime and Punishment, exploring the purposes of punishment and considering issues such as community service, prison and the ethical debates surrounding the death penalty. Alongside developing their understanding of religious and non-religious responses to crime, they will practise GCSE-style exam questions. Later in the term, students may begin their study of Christian Beliefs, learning key teachings and developing the skills needed to construct extended written responses using evidence and religious teachings.

SCIENCE

Biology:

In Year 9 we have started the GCSE specification. The focus has been on fundamentals, especially looking at cell structure and use of microscopes. We are now moving this half term onto cell division, stem cells and a big focus on the three main methods of movement across a membrane - diffusion, osmosis and active transport.

Chemistry:

Students will be studying the history of the atomic model, including analysing and evaluating data, to explain how the atomic model can change and develop over time. Students will then move on to study one of the current accepted atomic models and use it to explain atomic structure and how atoms form ions in order to achieve a stable electronic structure through reaction. There will be a strong emphasis on the use of scientific models to explain abstract concepts throughout this topic.

Physics:

This term, Year 9 students will begin studying GCSE Physics, starting with the concept of Energy. They will explore energy stores and the conservation of energy, describe and evaluate different energy resources, and develop their mathematical skills through basic calculations involving work done and gravitational potential energy. Students will aim to cover these topics by Christmas, building a strong foundation for their GCSE studies.