



MERCHANT TAYLORS'
Prep

MTP Year 8 curriculum

ENGLISH

Autumn Term

The focus in the first half term is modern poetry. Pupils tackle a number of poems that explore the modern world we live in, as well as studying poetic craft in general. The pupils have opportunities to do some independent research on a modern poet in the form of a project, as well as producing some of their own poetry. During the second half of the term, pupils study a module based on the Victorian novel. The focus is on a number of key scenes in Charles Dickens' 'Great Expectations'. Pupils analyse Dickens' techniques and the way in which he creates character and conveys settings so effectively. Pupils also conduct a number of written and research tasks connected to the theme of Victorian literature and participate in a half-termly debate.

Spring Term

This term, pupils study a module based on the art of delivering a speech. Pupils will analyse a variety of speeches with the ultimate task of writing and delivering their own. In the second half of the term, pupils will engage with Golding's 'Lord of the Flies' with a focus on writing an essay that relays their analytical and critical thinking. Towards the end of term, all pupils will take part in the 'MTP500', a school-wide short story competition.

Summer Term

In the first half of term, the pupils are primarily focused on three main elements: comprehension skills, creative writing and understanding grammar rules. This is to ensure they are as well-prepared for the main components of their summer exam as possible. In the second half of term, the pupils enjoy a creative curriculum. Tasks will include a number of activities including a script-writing project, a comedy sketch and a debating competition.



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MATHEMATICS

Autumn Term

This term, pupils spend a great deal of time practising, consolidating and extending skills, knowledge and concepts developed last year. Pupils continue to explore aspects of algebra including solving more complex equations and indices. They also delve further into geometry and statistics. There is a continued emphasis on solving more complex word problems using a range of strategies while justifying their reasoning.

Spring Term

In order to reflect the changes in Maths papers at 13+ and at GCSE, a problem solving approach continues to be central to the way in which the material is covered. The pupils build on their knowledge of geometry by using a practical approach for the unit on shape which will cover nets, volume and surface area. Later in the term we explore other aspects of algebra including factorisation, simultaneous equations and linear and quadratic functions. Pupils also prepare for the Junior Maths Challenge which takes place early next term.

Summer Term

After the Junior Maths Challenge, the focus is on developing problem solving skills and mathematical reasoning and preparing for Year 9 Maths. Additionally we cover Pythagoras and standard form to prepare the pupils for Year 9 Maths and provide them with solid foundations on which to build the skills required for the Maths IGCSE examinations.



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SCIENCE

Autumn Term

Year 8 start the year looking at electric circuits and investigating the differences between series and parallel circuits. This leads into a study of electromagnets, including the ways in which they can be used. Later in the term pupils learn more about plants, including a more in-depth study of photosynthesis and how plants reproduce. Pupils are also taught about the role of plants in the water and carbon cycles. This then leads into learning about ecosystems, which includes learning about how populations are changing and how they can be protected and conserved.

Spring Term

In the Spring Term, pupils study a variety of chemical reactions with plenty of opportunity to practise their practical skills. Pupils will also practise using word and symbol equations to describe reactions. Pupils will then look at light and investigate refraction.

Summer Term

In the Summer Term, pupils learn more about human biology, learning about key organs and organ systems. We also devote time to revising and recapping the topics covered earlier in the year ahead of the exams.

After the exams, pupils have an opportunity to do some independent research into an aspect of Science they are interested in; this is a culmination of all their practical work throughout their time at MTP. They start by planning their investigation carefully before gathering their data. They then analyse their data and present their conclusions.



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MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Autumn Term

Pupils carry on with the Studio 2 Rouge textbook (intermediate level). This term's topics include local area, types of accommodations and rooms in a house. Lessons consider new, advanced vocabulary and also build on previous knowledge. Furthermore, great emphasis is placed on grammatical aspects such as French spellings, adjectives, comparatives, present, past and future tenses for regular and irregular verbs.

Spring Term

Coverage of the Key Stage 3 curriculum continues with the topic of "La France a du talent" which includes expressing dreams and ambitions. Grammatical structures such as modal verbs, command forms and past/present/future tenses are explained and embedded. Spanish and German will be introduced to pupils in the second half of the term to inform language choices at their next school.

Summer Term

Students carry on with their foundation course in German and Spanish in order to help them with language options at their next school. They will be preparing for the summer exam. They then tackle further preliminary GCSE language work by designing presentations on various aspects of French culture.



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GEOGRAPHY

Autumn Term

This term Year 8 look at some field work techniques on the school site, to be followed by an extensive microclimate project. They also spend some time looking back over previous topics and sharpening their approach to Common Entrance level Geography.

Spring Term

This term the boys collaborate to research and deliver a presentation on a major theme of geographical concern such as climate change, the pros and cons of HS2 or the impact of population growth. We also begin to focus on global location and a 'round the world' challenge so that boys have a broader knowledge of the essential human and physical features across the planet, as well as sharpening their map skills. They are strongly encouraged to build their knowledge of global location further as part of enrichment.

Summer Term

This term the boys complete a global challenge, continuing their work on global location and preparing for their final exam. They also produce a short presentation related to tourism.



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HISTORY

Autumn Term

This year, pupils consider why some wars are particularly resonant. They begin this term by looking at the reasons why the First World War has been so widely represented in culture, both at the time and subsequently. They investigate why Remembrance Sunday is important in our national historical consciousness, designing their own war memorial. They build the key skill of multi-causal analysis, developing the complexity of their arguments in essay writing. They then look at the end of the War and the Treaty of Versailles, considering its terms and legacy for the twentieth century. Candidates for 13+ focus on the specific demands of the papers set by their target schools.

Spring Term

This term, the pupils continue to develop their understanding of how wars are remembered, contrasting their study of World War One with the events of the First Crusade. The pupils study a range of sources, judging their utility and considering different interpretations and the legacy of the Crusades as a whole in both the short and long term. In the second half of term, the pupils investigate conditions in Interwar Germany, considering the rise of Hitler and analysing the impact of the economic conditions on his grasp of power. Candidates for 13+ focus on improving the skills in timed conditions required by their target schools.

Summer Term

This term the pupils reflect on ethical issues during World War II: attacks on civilian populations, the holocaust and dropping the atomic bomb. In preparation for the exams, the pupils practise their source analysis and ability to construct written arguments. Alongside this, the pupils research for an ancient history project, finding and assessing their own source material before submitting an independent piece for consideration for the prize. They end the term by considering the extent to which the lessons of history should, and do, make them hopeful.



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LATIN

Autumn Term

We continue with Cambridge Latin Course, finishing Book II. Our language study consists of the pronouns *hic* and *ille*, imperative verbs, the vocative case and present participles. Culturally, we look at the worship of Isis, and medicine and science. Our myth topic is *Metamorphoses*, Ovid's stories of change. Finally, in our language design work, we complete our working vocabularies, and begin exploring how the words fit together (grammar).

Spring Term

The pupils explore Stages 21 and 22 of Cambridge Latin Course in Book III. Their grammar focus is perfect passive participles and perfect active participles. The cultural context will be Roman Bath, and magic and curses. We continue to study Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, using Daniel Morden and Hugh Lupton's storytelling as a starting point.

Summer Term

The pupils revise participles, and explore the plural of neuter nouns. In preparation for Year 9, the pupils also learn about the ablative case and prepositions. The cultural context is Roman religion. In mythology, we learn about the Greek view of Fate.



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THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION & ETHICS

Autumn Term

In theology, we learn about the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ as portrayed in the Gospels. We explore the beginnings of Christianity by examining Pentecost in Acts.

In religion, we begin our study of religious rites to do with death, focusing on 6 world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism).

Spring Term

We complete our study of religious rites to do with death.

In philosophy, we explore the lives and thought of Nietzsche, Wittgenstein and Sartre.

Summer Term

We complete our study of the lives and thought of Nietzsche, Wittgenstein and Sartre.

In ethics, we explore several areas to do with life and death.



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ART & DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Autumn Term

Year 8 study portraiture. The pupils create a variety of responses to their own image in pencil tone, chalk and charcoal. They learn to mix and blend skin tones before choosing a portrait artist to investigate. Pupils will consider aspects of identity and character and channel these themes into a concluding painting on canvas.

Spring Term

Year 8 conclude studying Portraiture with a painting on canvas. After the half term we begin a design and technology project in which we learn about electronics - using components and skills such as circuitry and soldering to design and assemble a powered vehicle.

Summer Term

This term pupils continue with their self-directed prototype project. In small teams pupils design and build a vehicle using electronic components and learn how to solder while creating their motorised dream car.



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DRAMA

Autumn Term

This term, the pupils undertake a theatre studies project exploring the history of theatre via an evolving selection of dramatic texts leading towards their production auditions in the Spring Term.

Spring Term

This term the pupils audition and commence rehearsals for the school production to be performed in The Lalani New Barn Theatre this June.

Summer Term

This term rehearsals continue for the farewell production which will be performed in The Lalani New Barn Theatre at the end of June.

COMPUTING

Autumn Term

In Computing, the pupils build on their knowledge of internet safety. They develop their understanding of coding by using the Python programming language, and linking it to their BBC Microbit. They also start preparing for the UK Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge in November. In the second half of the autumn term, they create apps.

Spring Term

In Computing this term, the pupils create digital apps using the BBC Microbit and a range of programming languages. Then they create web pages, using fundamental HTML code.

Summer Term

This term the pupils complete working on their robotics projects. Then, they work on a stop frame animation project.



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MUSIC

Autumn Term

Pupils spend this term studying bass lines and their role in music. They explore the key features of different bass accompaniment patterns, such as riffs, broken-chord patterns, Alberti bass and walking bass lines, and their application in different styles of music. They revisit and extend their learning about keyboard performance by learning to play a range of bass accompaniments using correct fingering in the left hand. They also develop their understanding of staff notation by learning about musical notation in the bass clef.

Spring Term

During the spring term, pupils learn about Blues music. They explore the key musical features of the style, and in doing so revise and extend prior learning about chords, progressions, scales and bass lines. They learn about the history, origins and development of the genre, as well as its impact on subsequent genres such as Rock music. As well as learning to perform key features of Blues music on keyboards, pupils also develop their keyboard improvisation skills as appropriate to the genre.

Summer Term

Pupils spend the summer term exploring the music of Sub-Saharan Africa. They explore the key features of music from this part of the world, revising prior rhythmic learning and extending their understanding to include concepts such as ostinatos, cyclic rhythms, polyrhythms and syncopation. Pupils learn basic African drumming techniques on the djembe, sing traditional songs, and explore the roles of individual performers within common structures, such as that of the master drummer within call-and-response. The topic culminates with pupils working in groups to compose their own piece of music inspired by the genre.



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PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH & ECONOMIC EDUCATION & RSE

Autumn Term

The pupils will investigate leadership in their role as ambassadors within the school, and consider how to improve the way they lead and are lead, and the way they work with others. We link this to ideas of how they form their own identities, and begin to consider how this might affect their choices of careers. We also examine the dangers of smoking.

Spring Term

The term begins with a focus on relationships and sex education. Topics include puberty, relationships, contraception and consent, and we will write to parents late in the Autumn Term with further details. In the second half of term pupils focus on mental health and First Aid training.

Summer Term

Pupils look at the legal and governmental frameworks of the United Kingdom. They also consider economic issues such as tax, budgeting and the nature and importance of saving (including in a pension). They also think about how to manage the practical and emotional implications of their move to a new school.



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PHYSICAL EDUCATION (P.E.) AND GAMES

Important Note (all terms):

Pupils will need **football boots** (Autumn/Spring) AND **astro-trainers** as well as having their **indoor footwear** available in their P.E. bag. P.E. bags should always be brought into school on Monday morning and taken home to wash on Friday afternoon. This ensures that pupils always have correct kit whatever the weather.

Autumn Term

In P.E. lessons pupils further build on their hockey experience and participate through a games approach to development. Sessions are fast paced with high expectations of application and an assumption of games understanding based on previous experience. Pupils use a composite hockey stick and are encouraged to purchase their own stick in order to maximise the efficacy of their practice. Pupils require a **mouthguard** and **shin guards** for all sessions. There is a further focus on umpiring games to develop understanding with a focus on fouls and penalty corners. Pupils are involved in fixtures against other local schools.

In Games the pupils play football and with an emphasis on developing more advanced skills and tactics. Game awareness will form a significant part of sessions. Pupils are involved in a number of fixtures against other schools. General fitness is a key component of the term.

Spring Term

In P.E. lessons pupils will be involved in both net/wall games and invasion games such as basketball and volleyball. There is an emphasis on gameplay and understanding with a focus on acquiring a range of skills, to be an effective part of a team. The components of scoring, passing, dribbling, bumping, setting and spiking form a significant part of sessions to develop team performance and game effectiveness.

In Games, pupils continue to develop the principles of rugby with a focus on tackling and rucking and an introduction to mauling. All sessions follow the Rugby Football Union (RFU) continuum for safe practice. Pupils will require a **mouthguard** to take part in sessions. Pupils will take part in some matches against other schools. Pupils take part in cross country in and around the MTS lakes to further build general fitness and stamina. Pupils do have the option to play non-contact rugby and alternative activities are available for them to maintain their level or participation and fitness.



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Summer Term

In P.E. the pupils prepare for Sports Day acquiring skills associated with both track and field event athletics (throwing, jumping, sprint, middle distance running).

During Games, the pupils further develop their cricket skills in relation to bowling, batting and fielding with an emphasis on tactics and playing as a team. Emphasis is placed on recognising the strengths and limitations in the performance of others in the team with a view to pupils using this information supportively in team play. Pupils will play fixtures against other schools, and some will play in both local and national tournaments.

After Sports Day pupils take part in summer sports such as rounders, softball and ultimate frisbee.



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FURTHER INFORMATION

EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

Year 8 pupils have formal assessments in English and Mathematics in early January. Revision guidance will be provided in the first week of December.

Year 8 pupils have formal examinations in English, Mathematics, Science, MFL, Geography, History and Latin in late May. Revision guidance will be provided in the first week of the Summer Term.

PARENTAL CONSULTATIONS

Year 8 Parents' Evenings take place online in November. Year 8 tutorials take place in person in March/April. In the meantime, should you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your son's Tutor via either email or telephone.

HOMEWORK

Homework will be set on Teams.

Document changelog

Date	Note
2024-09-09	Mathematics. Music updated
2023-09-10	English, Science and Music updated
2023-06-13	Geography updated
2022-09-09	Science updated
2022-09-01	Created