



CURRICULUM NEWS

Year 8, Semester One, 2015

Welcome to the first edition of Year 8 Curriculum News for 2015.

The Curriculum News will continue to be sent each semester, in addition to the 'Lalor Eagle' newsletter, as a part of our commitment to sharing the responsibility of the education of your child with you, the parents. At this time, students are very busy completing a range of assessments across many subject areas, as teachers prepare to write the Semester One reports. It is very important that all students always work to be best of their ability in all classes and organise their time effectively to complete assignments and prepare for tests. If any students are experiencing difficulties in completing any of the set work or in relation to level of understanding, then it is vital that they communicate these concerns with their classroom teachers, so that they can offer additional support or resources to assist. The 'parent interest' article in this addition relates to the importance of reading; something that seems to be lost to this generation, as they tend to spend more time looking at screens, rather than curling up with a good book. Please encourage your child to read as widely as possible and spend more time reading from pages, rather than 'posting' on virtual pages.

If you have any queries regarding curriculum matters please contact me.

Ms Kaylene Kubeil

College Curriculum Leader

ENGLISH - The Year Eight English classes have had a fun and engaging term. They have focused on the film text 'Wall-E' and have learnt about film techniques and editing. Students worked on completing an assignment using Multiple Intelligences. One of the components of the assignment was presented to the class. Students also completed an Oral Presentation which gave them the opportunity to develop their public speaking skills. It was pleasing to see the students work both independently and collaboratively on developing their thinking and creative skills.

In Term Two students will be reading the novel 'Trash', and they will explore the theme of friendship. Students will have the opportunity to develop their vocabulary skills and write a text response based on the novel. We look forward to continuing our learning journey and refining our reading and writing skills.

EAL (ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE) – This year the Year 8 EAL students began with introductory activities. The students shared information about themselves and then interviewed other students in the class. This led to the writing of short biographies. The class read the novel 'Parvana' by Deborah Ellis and completed chapter activities and summaries in their workbooks. Students will also complete a Text Response for the novel. This will be a short essay in a letter form. The letter will be to the character Parvana. It will be written in paragraphs with an introduction and a conclusion. The novel tells the story of a young girl growing up in war torn Afghanistan. This extended writing will be completed in Term Two. Following this the concept of newspaper issues and "Letters to the Editor" will be introduced and students will also be working on Oral presentations and a unit on science fiction from their workbooks.



NUMERACY - Numeracy Support is continued into Year 8, continuing the success seen in Year 7. The focus is on why this maths is being learnt rather than just learning new concepts. The aim of the program is to continue the success seen in the classroom and to apply success through more structured assessments. The program is used to reinforce the key concepts covered in year 7 and to allow the more complicated ones to be introduced due to the confidence of the students being higher. Number skills and its application to real life situations was the main emphasis for Term One. Continued work on timetables also allowed students to practise common arithmetic calculations. The Mathletics program can also be used to support work being done in class and to engage students in other activities.

MATHEMATICS - The number concepts that began in Year 7, were continued to a slightly higher standard in Year 8 during Term One. Students studied topics including Integers, Positive and Negative Numbers, Order of Operations and began work on the relationship between Fractions, Decimals and Percentages. A greater emphasis on the use of a calculator to tackle more complex arithmetic computations was encouraged. Students expanded on their knowledge of Indices, with the majority of classes finding the test on Indices rather challenging. Some practical aspects of Percentages and Decimals regarding bills, sales and shopping receipts made these topics more relevant to student's lives. By discussing this sort of application of Mathematics, students gain a greater appreciation of why certain topics need to be learnt in Mathematics.

As with all Year 7 to 10 Maths classes, most classes have been timetabled into computer rooms at least once a fortnight to enhance maths concepts taught in class through Mathletics. Mathletics motivates students in wanting to learn Mathematics in a non-threatening, interesting way. Activities are set by the student's teacher and usually involve practice of concepts that are suited to each student's abilities and to the expectations of the Australian Curriculum.

Quite a number of students at Year 8 finished the term with bronze certificates for their great work in Mathletics.

HUMANITIES - This term has been an eventful one. The Humanities department has begun to implement subject content to match the changes outlined by the Australian Curriculum. Within History, Civics and Citizenship has been incorporated, with Business and Economics included in our Geography units.



Within Year 8, students have focused on life in the Middle Ages, with special attention paid to the Ottoman Empire. Once again, students have examined the development of civilization and the various features of daily life associated with the Ottomans. They have completed a Document Analysis Test and will be completing a research assignment in the coming weeks to assess their capacity to gather and organize relevant historical information.

In the coming term, students can expect to begin examination of European life in the Middle Ages, with a focus on the Black Death; and life in Feudal Japan. Students will also enjoy an interactive Middle Ages Incursion towards the end of Term Two, featuring information and activities surrounding life in the Middle Ages.

SCIENCE - In Term One, students completed the topics of Science Skills and Physical and Chemical Change. While completing Science Skills, students refreshed their memories, from Year 7, on what scientists do, collecting and presenting data and the key components of conducting scientific experiments and research, including the associated safety rules. Currently students are finishing the chapter on physical and chemical changes and using the Particle Model to demonstrate key differences between these two changes. They are also looking at the atomic theory and how chemical reactions occur, including looking at some of these basic

reactions. Students will then learn about Elements, Compounds and Mixtures. They will take a close look at Atoms, including the sub-atomic particle of Protons, Electrons and Neutrons, which is new and exciting. The Periodic Table is also central to all this knowledge and it is expected that students are able to learn some of the common Elements, including their symbols from the table. An inquiry project will also be completed from this chapter, in which each student will be focus on a specific Element. It is hoped that by the end of Term Two, all classes will start work on looking at Cells, specifically plant and animal cells. We will study their structures and functions, which will involve extensive use of the school microscopes. Finally, it is important to remember that Chapter (Topic) Tests, Practicals and set Homework continue to be completed as these are all vital for understanding. It is expected that all students study at home several evenings prior to the chapter test day and use their notes, handouts and the textbook to guide their revision.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Well done to all the Year Eight students who have made a positive start to their second year of Health & Physical Education. During Term One, each class has taken part in various Athletic events. This allowed students to select appropriate events to compete in at the Athletics Carnival held in early March. Students have also taken part in Fitness Testing activities, which measure fitness components such as muscular strength, endurance and flexibility. The aim is to record each student's individual fitness levels from Year 7 to Year 9. In theory classes, students covered the topics of 'Risk Taking-Alcohol', 'First Aid', 'Relationships' and the 'Benefits of Exercise'. Their assessment for these topic including an assignment on 'Alcohol' and a semester test covering all content taught in Semester One. The Alcohol assignment gave students the opportunity to score a range of points from eighteen different tasks, all with various scores. This allowed students to select tasks they could excel in and receive the highest possible grade. In practical classes for Term Two, students will develop their motor skills, fitness and ability to work with others in the following units, Basketball, Hockey & Badminton. They will conclude the semester by taking part in two weeks of Hip Hop lessons conducted by a professional dance teacher.



ART AND DESIGN - Students have explored the theme of traditional Japanese Notan Designs. Students investigated the techniques of positive and negative space through their designs using coloured paper and a contrasting colour scheme. This enabled students to have a clear understanding of the process involved and how to create symmetrical or asymmetrical balance.

Students then took these artworks one step further and transformed their designs into large paintings on paper with a warm and cool colour scheme. These vibrant paintings exhibit student's ability to mix colours and blend from light to dark.

MUSIC - Students started the term by studying the different periods of Western Music, focussing on the study of classical music with Mozart as the main composer. They have just completed the study on Beethoven representing the main composer of the Romantic period. Students have also been expanding their knowledge on music theory and notation, by learning groupings of notes and rhythms. In addition, they have started to learn how to perform these rhythms using classroom percussion instruments. As part of their assessment, Year 8 students will research and compare the lives of Mozart and Beethoven. They will also learn how to play more challenging piano pieces on the keyboard and more complex rhythms using percussion and perform these individually to the class.

FOOD TECHNOLOGY – The year 8's have been building on and refining their skills from the previous year, enhancing their prior knowledge and developing a passion for food. They have completed a range of topics such as investigating and taste testing a range of cheeses to find out how to evaluate ingredients using sensory descriptors so that they can make informed choices about what they eat. The students have been able to learn how to modify ingredients to make a recipe healthier and also incorporate that into an assessment task. Some of the recipes that have been included in this semester have been the Chicken and Leek pies as well as Nasi Goreng. The food cooked at this level requires more skill from the students and really tests their culinary ability. It has been great to see a lot of enthusiasm from the students this semester.

PRODUCT DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY – The students in our Year 8 classes have built on the skills and techniques developed in Year 7. They have constructed a cake server from acrylic plastic, requiring skills in



sawing with a coping saw, grinding with the belt and disk sander, filing and thermo bending. Their second project was a pencil box with a sliding lid requiring skills in measuring, cutting with a tenon saw, chiselling, assembling with glue and nails, sanding and varnishing. The third project was a dust pan made from tin plated steel requiring skills in measuring, cutting, folding and joining. The fourth project is a pig money box made from acrylic plastic and the fifth project is a copper repousse using a range of copper tooling techniques. All production activities, drawings and evaluations are recorded in their log books. Safety procedures are an important part of the program. The students were required to

complete a research assignment on Plastic Materials. Most of the assignments were completed by the due date and of high quality. Many projects were completed to a very high standard and displayed in the library.

LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTRE - It is encouraging to see many Year 8 Classes visiting the library, whether to choose reading books for English or to conduct research for various assessment tasks.

Teacher Librarians will be conducting information sessions on 'How to Write Bibliographies'. It is important for students to include correctly formatted bibliographies in their completed work to acknowledge the sources of their information, as well as to use other people's ideas ethically.

LANGUAGES - MACEDONIAN - Term one saw the year 8 Macedonian class revise their knowledge of year 7 whilst learning how to describe themselves and their family members. Students also looked at the unit of Our House which required them to look at and practise their Future and Present Tense. Like other language students Macedonian students looked at the tradition of Carnivale. Students' Cultural assessment task for Term One was Carnevale in Strumica. Term two will see Year 8's looking at Orthodox Easter, Food, shopping and also the History of Macedonia. The semester will finish off with a look at Macedonian Easter.

LANGUAGES- FRENCH - Students spent a couple of weeks learning about "time" and had a formal assessment on the topic. They have also been studying adjectives, nouns and prepositions.

Year 8 students have also been exposed to hearing and following more instructions in French. In Term Two, students will continue to study more complex sentences in French, as well as extend their reading & listening skills. They will focus on "food" for their next topic and prepare a menu in French for their Cultural assignment. At least twenty students have expressed their interest in participating in this year's Alliance Francaise Poetry Competition.

LANGUAGES – GREEK - In Year 8 there are two Greek classes, which both comprise of beginners and advanced students.

This term the class undertook the following topics, The House, Easter and Greek Independence Day.

For their assignment, students utilised their ICT skills and had to create captivating brochures selling their dream homes with descriptions written in Greek. To undertake this task students were exposed to Greek real estate sites and the terminology utilised, which proved to be quite interesting.

Furthermore, it exposed students to the fact that most people in Greece living in large cities reside in apartments which is a marked difference from the students' personal perspectives.

LANGUAGES – ITALIAN - The year 8 Italian class had the very difficult task of learning about 'Verbs', a tough part of the Italian grammar, students made verb machines on their computers in order to assist them in practising. The year 8 Italian classes will be challenged next term with completing their first unassisted orals. Students will need describe a student from overseas, discussing where they live, the languages they speak and also their hobbies. These are the areas covered in the personal identity topic of 'Dove abiti?' 'Where do you live?' Students will also have the opportunity to participate in the Swinburne Junior poetry competition. This is great preparation for the Dante Alighieri Competition at Melbourne University in Year Nine.



Read any books lately?

Here are 10 Reasons Why You Should Read More Books:

1. To Develop Your Verbal Abilities

Although it doesn't always make you a better communicator, those who read tend to have a more varied range of words to express how they feel and to get their point across. This increases exponentially with the more volumes you consume, giving you a higher level of vocabulary to use in everyday life.

2. Improves Your Focus and Concentration

Unlike blog posts and news articles, sitting down with a book takes long periods of focus and concentration, which at first is hard to do. Being fully engaged in a book involves closing off the outside world and immersing yourself into the text, which over time will strengthen your attention span.

3. Readers Enjoy the Arts and Improve the World

A study done by the NEA explains that people who read for pleasure are many times more likely than those who do not to visit museums and attend concerts, and almost three times as likely to perform volunteer and charity work. Readers are active participants in the world around them, and that engagement is critical to individual and social well-being.

4. It Improves Your Imagination

You are only limited by what you can imagine, and the worlds described in books, as well as other people's views and opinions, will help you expand your understanding of what is possible. By reading a written description of an event or a place, your mind is responsible for creating that image in your head, instead of having the image placed in front of you when you watch television.

5. Reading Makes You Smarter

Books offer an outstanding wealth of learning and at a much cheaper price than taking a course. Reading gives you a chance to consume huge amount of research in a relatively short amount of time. Reading books at home have been strongly linked to academic achievement.

6. It Makes You Interesting and Engaging

This goes hand in hand with reading to become smarter. Having a library of information that you have picked up from non-fiction reading will come in handy in any academic or scholarly conversation. You will be able to hold your own and add to the conversation instead of having to make your excuses and leave. You will be able to engage a wider variety of people in conversation and in turn improve your knowledge and conversation skills.

7. It Reduces Stress

Studies have shown that you only need to read, silently, for six minutes to slow down the heart rate and ease tension in the muscles. These studies also show that Readers have significantly lower stress levels than non-readers.

8. It Improves Your Memory

Typically, when you read, you have more time to think. Reading gives you a unique pause button for comprehension and insight. The benefits of this increased activity keeps your memory sharp and you're learning capacity nimble.

9. To Discover and Create Yourself

Until you become yourself, what benefit can you be to others? With the endless amount of perspectives and lives we can read about, books can give us an opportunity to have experiences that we haven't had the opportunity to, and still allow us to learn the life skills they entail. Books are a fast track to creating yourself and your identity

10. For Entertainment

All the benefits of reading mentioned so far are a bonus result of the most important benefit of reading; Its entertainment value. If it were not for the entertainment value, reading would be a chore but it needn't be. Reading is not only fun, but it has all the added benefits that we have discussed so far. Much more enthralling than watching a movie or a TV show (although they have their many benefits as well), a good book can keep us amused while developing our life skills.

Adapted from <http://whytoread.com/why-to-read-10-reasons-why-reading-books-will-save-your-life/>

Key Learning Area Leaders - English – E. Bruno and J. Stephens, EAL – R. Medcalf, Humanities – P. Leos & J. O'Hara, Maths – A. Constantinou, Science – S. Russo, Arts – C. Koronowicz, HPE – V. Leckie, Languages – E. Tatray & Library Resource Centre – S. Graetsch