

# THINKING, TEACHING



# & Learning at Paignton Academy



Issue No:4 - April 2026

# Welcome



## Welcome to Issue 4 of the Thinking, Teaching & Learning Newsletter

As we begin another busy and productive term, it is wonderful to see the continued enthusiasm for learning across our classrooms. In this fourth issue of our Teaching and Learning Parent Newsletter, we're excited to share some of the ways our pupils are developing their skills, confidence, and curiosity both in and beyond the classroom.

Term 3 was an important academic milestone for many of our students. In January, Year 9 pupils completed their PPEs, and we were delighted to see some outstanding results across a range of subjects. These assessments provided valuable insight into students' progress and highlighted the hard work and commitment shown by both pupils and staff.

Term 4 has also been a significant period for our Year 11 students, who have completed their final PPEs ahead of the GCSE examinations beginning on 8th May. Mock examinations provide an important opportunity for students to prepare for the demands of the final exams, helping them to refine revision strategies, build confidence, and identify areas for final focus as they approach the examination season.

This commitment to learning has continued throughout the Easter holiday, with departments offering subject revision sessions across the two-week break. These sessions were well attended by students in the final weeks leading up to the start of the examination period, demonstrating their dedication and determination to succeed.

In this issue, we are pleased to share examples of teaching and learning from across the school, along with insights into how our staff continue to support students in achieving their best.



# Celebrating Student Success in the Year 11 Spring Term PPEs

We are delighted to share the outstanding achievements of our students in the Spring Term PPE's examinations.

Many of our learners demonstrated exceptional academic performance, achieving Grade 7, 8, and 9 across a range of subjects.

These remarkable results reflect the very best of our CARE values, particularly Ambition and Excellence. Our students have shown what can be accomplished through determination, resilience, and a commitment to hard work. Their success is not only a measure of academic ability but also of the dedication and perseverance that underpin their learning journey.

Achieving these top grades requires focus, preparation, and a growth mindset. We are incredibly proud of every student who embraced these challenges and demonstrated what is possible when ambition meets effort.

As a school community, we want to celebrate these achievements and recognise the incredible journey our students have undertaken. Their success sets a powerful example for others and inspires us all to strive for excellence. Congratulations to all our high achievers, you embody the very best of our CARE values, and we look forward to seeing your continued success in the final exams.

## Waterleat Road

*Jack Adams, Lacey Belsher, Poppy Bidmead, Mason Bowden, Ruby Harrison, Harry Hoare, Brandon Holmes, Summer Levy, Evie Moorey, Aminta Sharland, Callum White, Cole Woodcock, Evie York, Lucy Cutcliffe, Alfie Pitty, Cian O'Reilly, Star Knight, Cody Easterbrook, Seb Mika, Taylor Oldfield, Cody Westercott, Blake Wren, Jenson McDermott, Diego Monk, Hollie Waltham, Casey Perry, Daniel Anthony, Bayanai Belcher, Jasmin Boadle, Jayden Kilkenny, Sehmolpreet Kaur, Issac Lee, Isabelle Sullivan, Jacob Yeoman, Lucas Curus, Aminta Sharland, Aliasha Brown, Charlotte Forrest, Summer Skelly, Ruby Harrison, Paige Redman, Lacey Belsher, Hollie Waltham, Summer Skelly, Madison Bishop, Evie Moorey, Keira Redhead, Rebecca Devine, Biona Biju, Jessica Buswell, Nevana Sozou, Tegan Taylor.*

## Borough Road

*Olly Kirby, Scott Wilkinson-Cross, Keira Clarke, Lilia Copeland, Oli Richardson, Harvey Savage, Spencer Clark, Harry Jeffs, Louis Stuart, Tegan Batchelor, Nathan Cann, Maisie Crisp, Jack Jenner, Julia Kasprowicz, Nicolas Szarpak, Scarlett Muscott, Leandro Lauriaga Lauigan, Ivy Bowskill, Charley Heal, Silver Brugee, Eva Slough, Vegas Waller, Luke Wilkins, Carys Button, Shelby Blamey, Willow Mochan, Amelia Castell, Jaiden Endacott, Kelsey Morling, Eric Acatiei, Jessica Tully, Alexandre Guerin, Natan Stychno, Michael Thompson, Alfie Whitfield, Seb Mika, Mack Nettleton-Stokes, Katie Buckingham, Archie Cound, Ronnie Swindlehurst, Alfie Hudson, Lucas Millington, Ruby Daniel-Brown, Kelsey Morling, Starla Delgado, Oli Waite, Amelia Holding, Brianna Brooking, Fiona Akter, Khaled Althaljeh, Macy Bird, Spencer Clark, Natan Stychno, Holly Platt, Alife Whitfield, Alexandre Guerin, Lewis Chambers, Callum Stidson, Amelia Holding, Nathan Cann, Jamie Gruit, Silver Brugee, Poppy Ellis, Fiona Akter, Holly Platt, Scarlett Butler, Grace Ferguson -Parker, Ivy Bowskill, Silver Brugge, Keira Clarke, Shelby Blamey, Leticia Rodrigues*

# Art

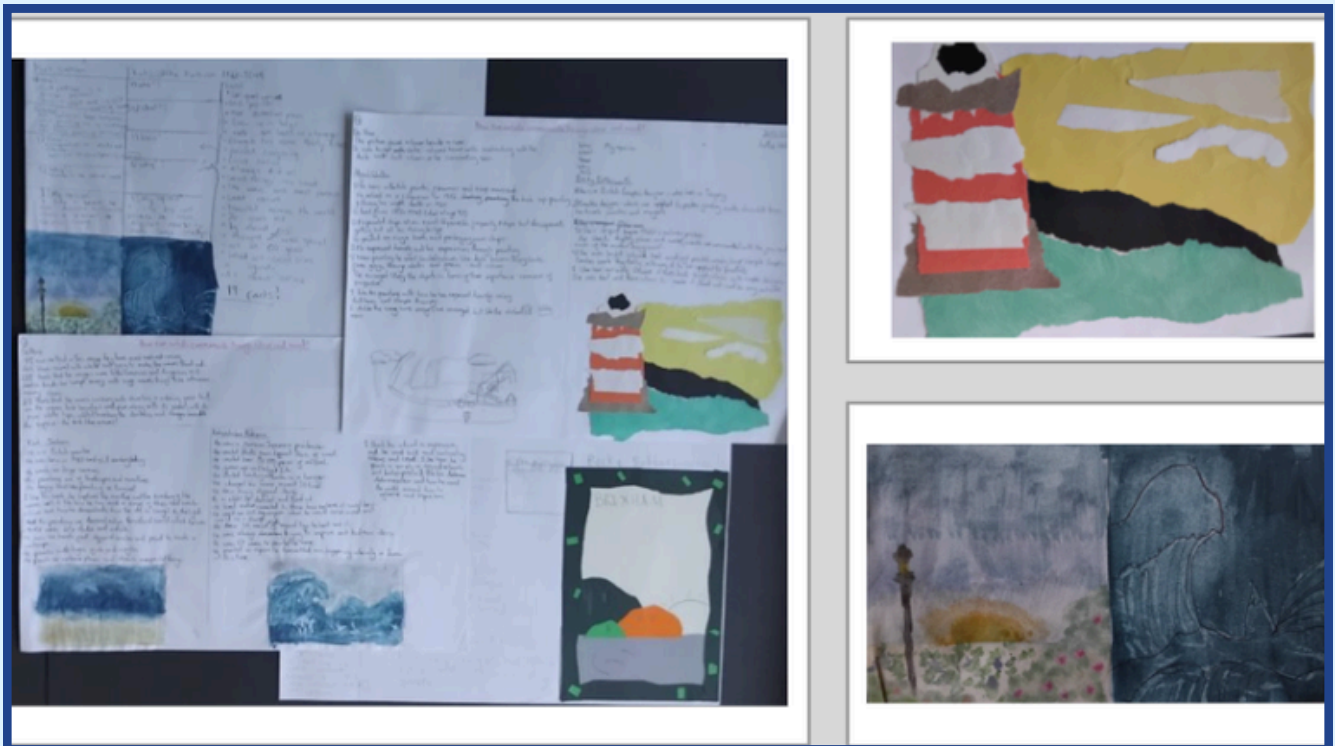


## Year 7 Art and Design: How can artists communicate through colour and mood?

As part of the Wish You Were Here project, students have engaged in artist research focused on a diverse range of seaside-inspired practitioners, including Kurt Jackson, Katsushika Hokusai, Alfred Wallis, and local artist Becky Bettsworth. Students explored how each artist communicates their artistic intentions through colour, mood, and composition.

Students then produced a series of drawings and paintings that explore these techniques. Through these practical activities, they have begun to make more informed and intentional artistic decisions, applying their understanding of how visual elements contribute to atmosphere and narrative. This allows students to think more metacognitively as they must reflect and consider how their artwork links to the researched artists style, media, and subject matter.

The creative activities reinforced the core knowledge that artists can communicate through their use of colour and mood. Students applied this understanding by selecting and manipulating colour deliberately to generate a specific atmosphere within their work, linking their practical work to the artistic methods observed within their research.





## Year 8 Art and Design: Can we embrace happy accidents and learn from mistakes?

As part of the Come Fly with Me project, Year 8 students have been investigating how artists use experimentation, purposeful play and unexpected outcomes to develop creative ideas. Central to this work has been the embracing of 'happy accidents'— recognising that unplanned results and mistakes can contribute meaningfully to the artistic process. This approach has supported students in understanding that better artwork often emerges from trial, error, and adaptation.

Students applied these ideas while developing their 3D making skills through the creation of imaginative hybrid bug sculptures. This practical task required students to manipulate materials confidently, solve structural challenges and make ongoing refinements as their work progressed. Throughout the lessons, students were encouraged to think metacognitively by continuously evaluating their decisions, utilising elements that were considered 'mistakes' and continuously refining their techniques.

By engaging with experimentation and purposeful play, students demonstrated that artists utilise play with materials, ideas, and even perceived failure as valuable tools for creative progression. Their clay hybrid bugs reflect not only technical development but also a growing confidence in taking artistic risks and learning through the making process.



# Drama



## Year 10 Drama Students Begin Their GCSE Devising Journey

Year 10 GCSE Drama students have begun work on Component 2: Devising Drama, an exciting part of the course where students collaboratively create their own original performance pieces. This term, students have been exploring a range of stimulating starting points to inspire their ideas. These have included historical and thematic sources such as the Salem Witch Trials, the theme of truth and lies, the song "Human", and the evocative image of an empty swing. Each stimulus has encouraged students to think creatively about character, narrative, and the messages they want to communicate through performance.

To support their work, students have also taken part in two Devising Discovery Workshops delivered in partnership with Doorstep Arts and undergraduate drama students from the University of Exeter. These workshops have given students the opportunity to experiment with professional devising techniques and collaborate with theatre practitioners and university students. The project culminated in a sharing platform performance at the Northcott Theatre in Exeter, where students performed the work developed during the workshops alongside other schools in Devon.

A key part of the devising process is research. Students must investigate the themes and contexts behind their chosen stimuli so that their performances are both creative and rooted in factual understanding. This research helps them shape carefully structured pieces of theatre that communicate meaningful ideas to an audience.

One particularly strong example of this has been seen in the extended homework. Many students explored the history of witchcraft persecution, examining the connections between the Salem Witch Trials, the Pendle Witch Trials, and the concept of modern-day "witch hunts" in 21st-century society. Their work has shown thoughtful engagement with how fear, suspicion, and misinformation can influence communities both historically and today.

We look forward to seeing how these ideas continue to develop as students refine their devised performances over the coming weeks.

**Witchcraft**

**Definitions:** Witchcraft is the use of magic by a person called a witch. Traditional witchcraft means the use of magic. Esoteric witchcraft means the use of magic for spiritual and other purposes. The most common one we all read meaning.

**Salem Witch Trials:** Judicial proceedings centered with the crimes of witchcraft took place in the town of Salem, Massachusetts, in the late 17th century. There was a ban on witchcraft for harm done through witchcraft but the ban of the witchcraft act 1633 made witchcraft something to be taken seriously. The "Salem Witch Trials" were a series of hearings and prosecutions of people accused of witchcraft in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692.

**Herbs:** A collection of herbs used in witchcraft. Includes: Dandelion, Echinacea, Garlic, Ginseng, Lavender, Marjoram, Rosemary, Sage, Thyme, Valerian, Yarrow.

**European Witch Trials:** Between 1500 and 1700, Europe experienced a period of intense witch persecution. The witch trials were a series of hearings and prosecutions of people accused of witchcraft. The trials were often based on spectral evidence, which is evidence that the accused was seen or heard doing something when they were not present. The trials were often based on the testimony of children, who were often the first to be accused. The trials were often based on the testimony of women, who were often the first to be accused. The trials were often based on the testimony of people who were often the first to be accused.

**The Pendle Witch Trials:** The Pendle Witch Trials were a series of hearings and prosecutions of people accused of witchcraft in Lancashire, England, in 1612. The trials were based on the testimony of children, who were often the first to be accused. The trials were often based on the testimony of women, who were often the first to be accused. The trials were often based on the testimony of people who were often the first to be accused.

**Modern Witchcraft:** Modern witchcraft is a form of magic that is based on the use of herbs and other natural elements. It is often based on the use of herbs and other natural elements. It is often based on the use of herbs and other natural elements. It is often based on the use of herbs and other natural elements.

**Apprenticeship:** An apprenticeship is an arrangement between a professional and a student. It is often based on the use of herbs and other natural elements. It is often based on the use of herbs and other natural elements. It is often based on the use of herbs and other natural elements.

**Witchcraft:** Witchcraft is the use of magic by a person called a witch. It is often based on the use of herbs and other natural elements. It is often based on the use of herbs and other natural elements. It is often based on the use of herbs and other natural elements.



# Drama

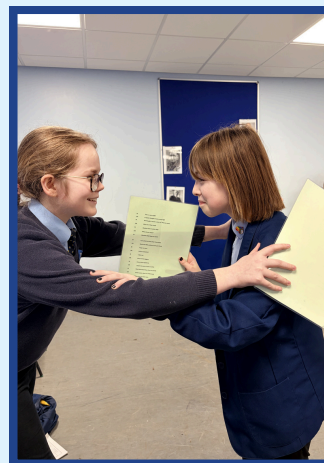
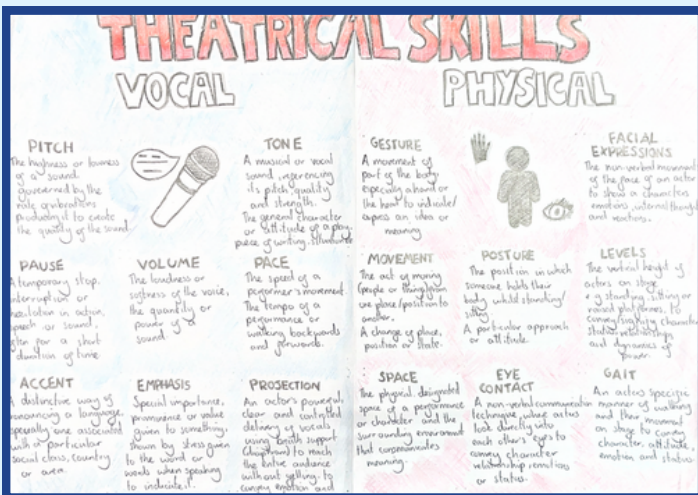
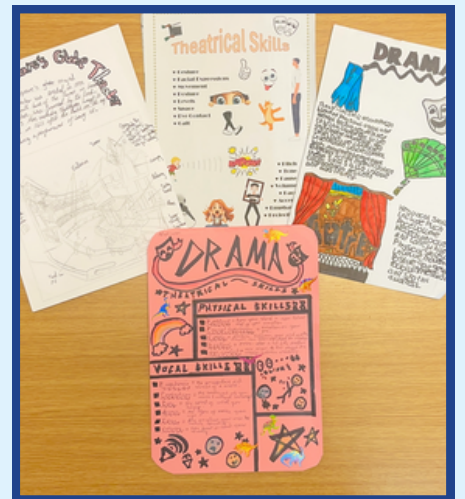


## Year 7 Drama Explore Shakespeare's Macbeth

Year 7 Drama students have been taking an exciting journey through theatre history. In Term 3, students explored the origins of performance through Greek Theatre, learning about chorus work, storytelling techniques, and the powerful use of voice and movement used in ancient performances. In Term 4, their focus shifted to Elizabethan Theatre, where they have begun studying William Shakespeare's Macbeth.

Through practical drama activities and written work, students have been exploring characterisation, dramatic techniques, and key moments from the play. They have experimented with staging scenes, developing characters such as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, and considering how tension and atmosphere can be created in performance.

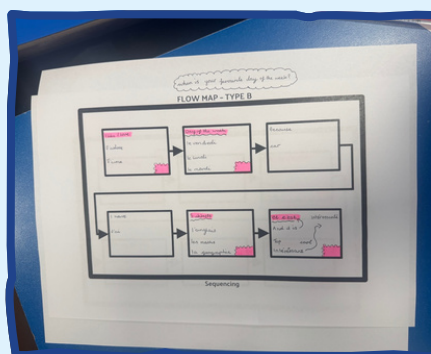
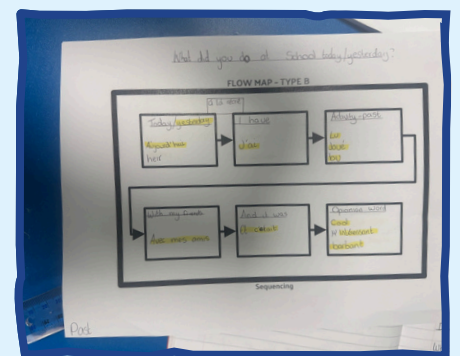
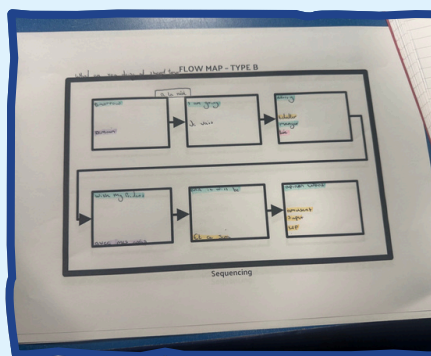
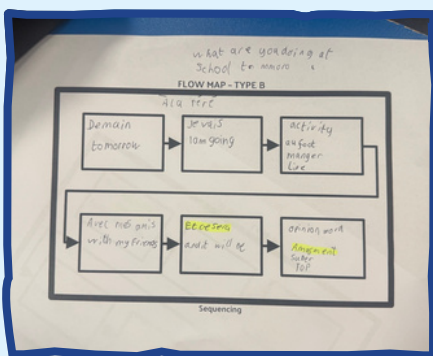
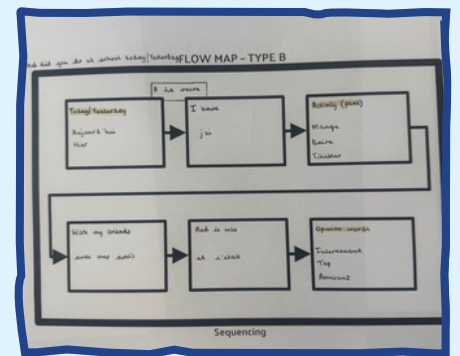
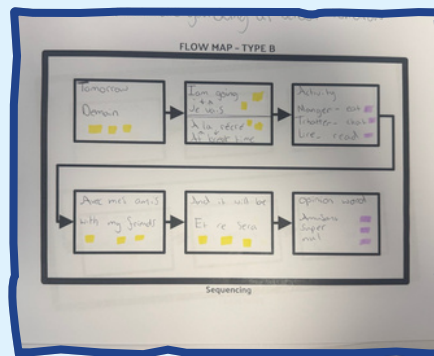
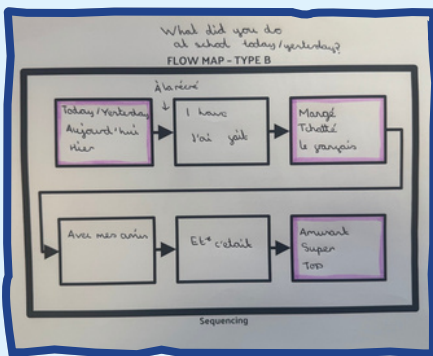
Students have produced excellent work both practically and in their written responses and homework, showing creativity, confidence, and a growing understanding of how theatre has developed across different historical periods. It has been fantastic to see their enthusiasm as they bring Shakespeare's dramatic world to life in the classroom.





## How Flow Maps Boosted Understanding and Achievement in French

These flow maps have allowed for students to break a sentence down into individual sections making it easier to remember but also easier to understand the process in which we build sentences in French. Since using these this term student grades have improved. One particular student went from an Emerging to a Secure and another from Developing to Mastery. An increase in understanding particularly from our SEND students has been seen due to the chunking used.



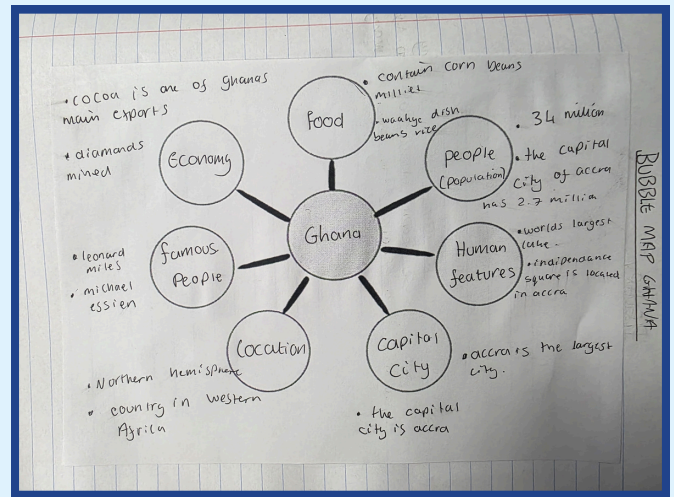
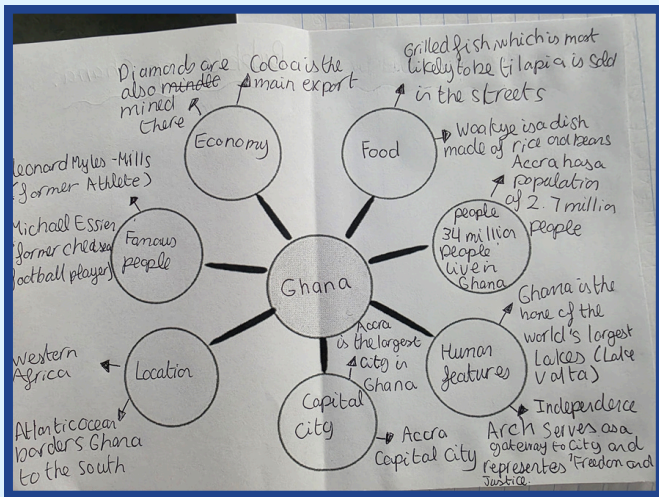
# Geography



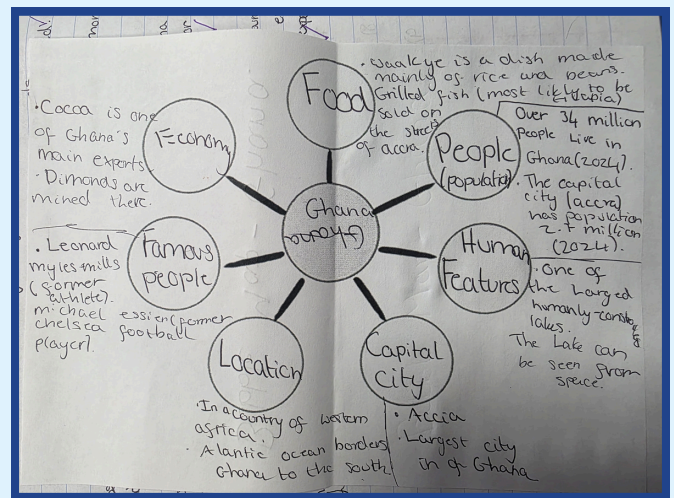
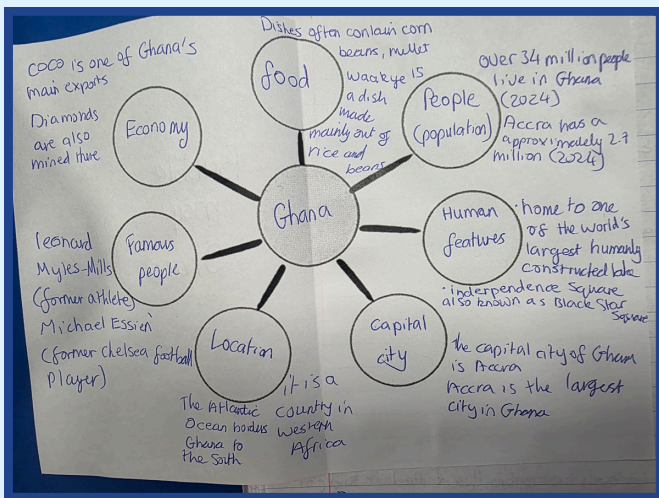
## Year 7 Bubble Maps: Exploring What Makes Ghana an Engaging Country

In Geography Year 7 students have been learning about Ghana to build their knowledge of the world.

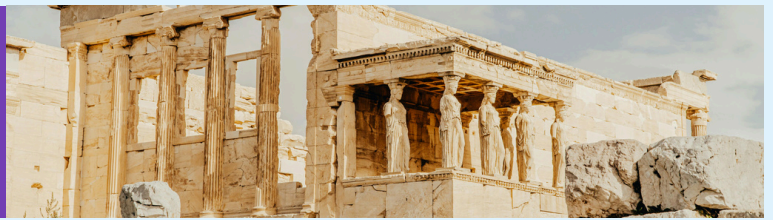
These bubble maps were created while summarising notes from various printed sources.



Year 7 Bubble Maps: Exploring What Makes Ghana an Engaging Country



# History

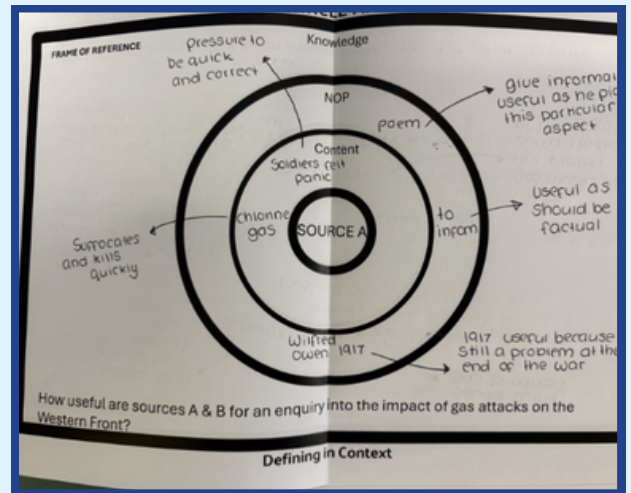


## YEAR 10 HISTORY

### CIRCLE MAPS UNLOCK OUR THINKING ABOUT SOURCES AND THEIR USEFULNESS!

Year 10 have been working as professional Historians this term, identifying how sources can be useful in understanding key historical enquiries.

To support their learning and thinking about these sources, we applied the Circle Map to aid direct thinking towards certain aspects of these sources. This allowed them to approach this GCSE question by connecting the Content of the source and what it tells us, with their knowledge and the authorship of the source – which can be quite a complicated process.



Students approached this with resilience and determination, which was very apparent when it came to writing the actual essay response. Well done Year 10!

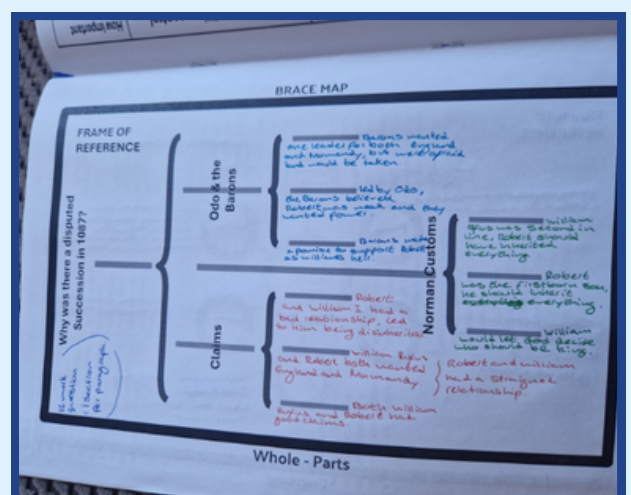


## YEAR 11 HISTORY

### BRACE MAPS FOR PLANNING A GCSE QUESTION!

In preparation for their final GCSE PPEs this half term, students have been revising their prior content to be able to apply this to their exams. We utilised the Brace Map to aid us in breaking down our plan into the two different assessment objectives; Knowledge & Analysis.

The Brace Map allowed the applying of the structure of the essay into 3 separate aspects, which would form the paragraphs required to answer this question. It further allowed clear thinking about the required knowledge and then analysis to support the explanation of their understanding to show why a particular outcome happened in the past.



# Music



## MUSIC LESSONS HAVE SPANNED A VARIETY OF TIMES AND PLACES THIS TERM!

**Year 7** students have begun learning how to play the ukulele, which originated in Portugal but was popularised in Hawaii.

This includes learning different chords to be pulled together into ensemble performances of popular songs.



Year 7

**Year 8** students are experimenting with BandLab Education, a cloud-based music software that allows students to create music using a vast range of instruments and techniques.

Their topic is traditional Indian music this term, and so they have been using tablas and sitars to create Indian inspired compositions on BandLab Education.



Year 8

**Year 9** are studying rock and roll, learning what made this genre unique and how it impacted music going forwards.

Their performances focus on the 12 bar blues, walking basslines and swung rhythms.



Year 9

**Year 10** have been learning about Baroque, Classical and Romantic era music, including famous composers such as Tchaikovsky, and what musical features make all of these styles unique.

**Year 11** have been focusing on finishing their coursework before the end of their music GCSE and have also been revising hard for their upcoming exam.



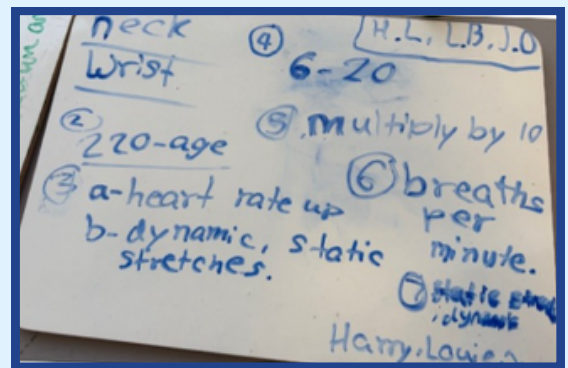
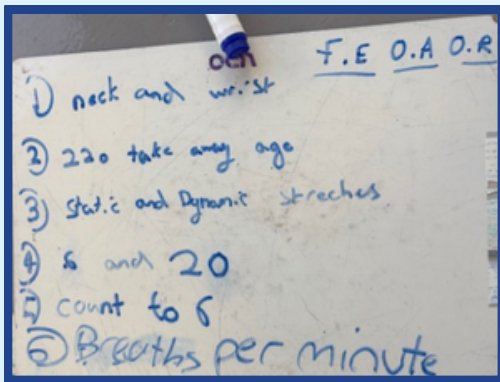


## Year 7 Physical Education: Health Related Fitness

Our Year 7 learners have been exploring the effects of exercise within their HRF lessons, with particular focus on Heart Rate and the impacts on the body as a result of sustained physical activity.

Students have been assessed throughout the sequence of learnings using a variety of questioning techniques, but were asked to reflect their understanding of the core knowledge associated within this learning journey throughout their assessment lessons, and this brought about some really pleasing responses from our PE learners.

The excellent feedback that they were able to articulate within their answers to the questions posed was really pleasing to see, and this further emphasised the strong engagement that they have demonstrated throughout this sequence of learning.

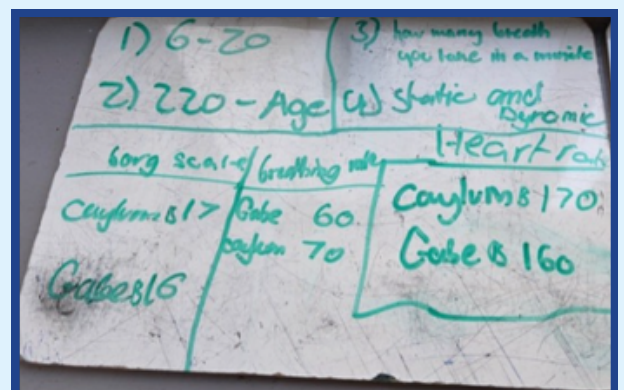
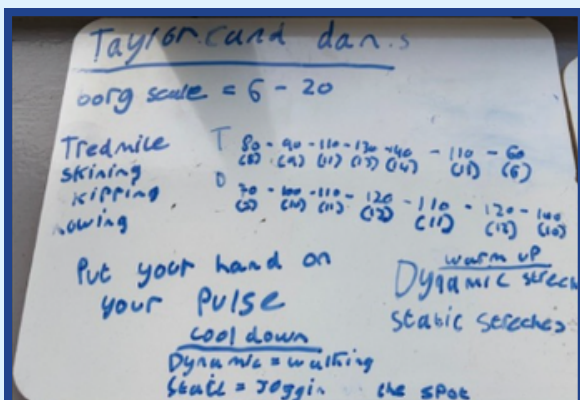


## Year 8 Physical Education: Health Related

Our Year 8 PE learners have also developed their understanding of Health Related Fitness over the last term, with focus on their ability to articulate complex knowledge of the effects of exercise on the body.

Students have been assessing the effects within their lessons and have been challenged throughout this sequence of learning, to explain the impact these effects have had on the body as a result of their rate of perceived exertion (RPE)

The knowledge that they have reflected within the assessment episodes in our lessons has been pleasing, but our learners were able to take this a step further by articulating this knowledge brilliantly within our assessment lesson that took place at the end of their sequence of learning. This required students to monitor their own heart rates and then attribute their RPE to a BORG scale rating, which they were able to perform well as part of their assessment.



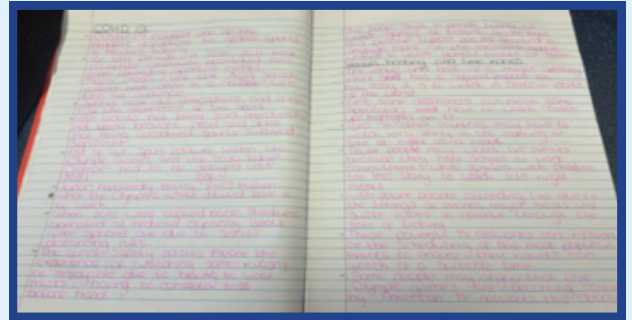
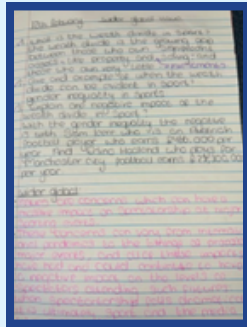


## Year 10 Sport Studies: R186 Sport and the Media

Throughout the course of the last two terms, our Year 10 Sports Studies learners have continued to progress throughout their study of component R186 Sport and the Media, which equates to 20% of their overall GCSE grade.

Our Sport students have already learnt about the different media outlets which provide coverage of sport, so have turned attentions to the positive and negative impacts that the media has on sport from a wider coverage perspective, and have been developing their written work within their lessons to support their preparation for their non examinable assessments within these bespoke areas.

This development in core knowledge has been evidenced well within their exercise books, and students have used these detailed notes to achieve positive results within the non-examinable assessments which they have completed since.



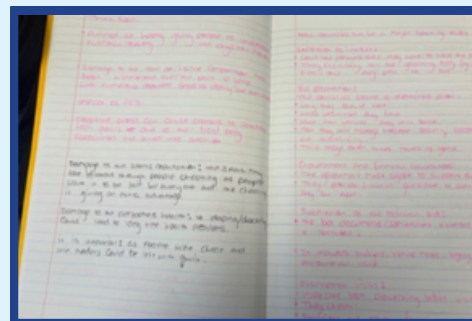
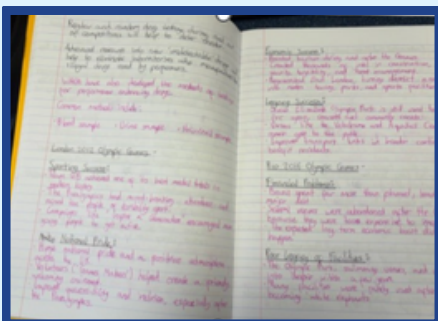
## Year 11 Sport Studies: R184 Contemporary Issues in Sport

To complete their 2 year programme of study, our Year 11 Sports Studies students are working through their final component of the course which is preparation for their R184 Contemporary Issues in Sport examination.

The students have been working through five target learning areas which focus on developing their knowledge and understanding of the key exam content and have been spending their lessons taking detailed notes to ensure that they have acquired the core knowledge required for their examinable assessment in May.

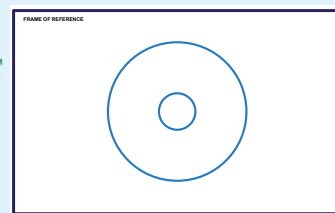
The topic areas throughout this component range the Technology in Sport, to Barriers effecting participation in sport, to the benefits and drawbacks of hosting the major sporting events, so students are being challenged with brand new material, of which they are relating to really positively.

The engagement levels from our Year 11 cohort have been really strong and that has been reflected in the development of their revision notes and the impact that these revision notes have already had has been evidenced in the positive PPE assessment grades achieved by students over the past fortnight.



# How Can Parents / Carers Support Their Child with Thinking Tools?

Parents play a vital role in helping children develop and apply Thinking Tools effectively. Here are some practical ways you can support this learning at home:



## 1. Familiarise Yourself with the Tools

Take time to understand the Thinking Tools your child is using at school (e.g. Thinking Hats, Thinking Maps).

## 2. Encourage Reflective Thinking

Ask open-ended questions that prompt your child to explain their thinking. For example:

- “Why do you think that?”
- “What other options could there be?”
- “How did you come to that conclusion?”



## 3. Use Thinking Tools in Everyday Situations

Involve your child in decision-making at home using Thinking Tools.

## 4. Celebrate the Process, Not Just the Outcome

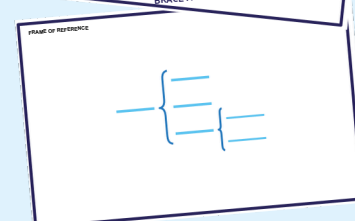
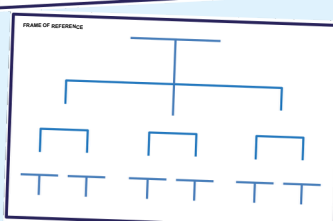
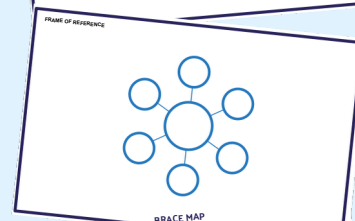
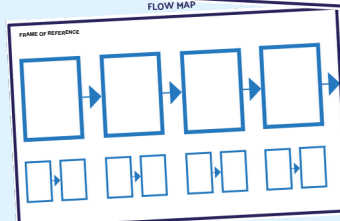
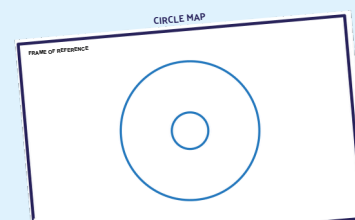
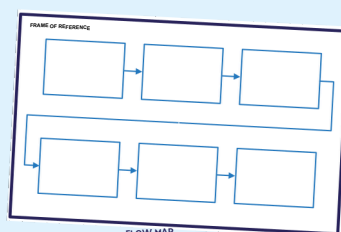
Praise your child for how they approached a problem, not just whether they got the “right” answer. This builds confidence and encourages a growth mindset.

## 5. Create a Thinking-Friendly Environment

Provide time and space for your child to think, reflect, and explore ideas. Encourage curiosity and allow them to make mistakes and learn from them.

## 6. At home you can:

- You can use the Thinking Hats to help your child think clearly and from different angles.
- Use the hats when making decisions (like choosing a holiday or solving a problem).
- Let your child lead the thinking and switch hats as needed.



# Thinking, Teaching & Learning at Paignton Academy



*Scan to access Thinking Tools  
Videos on the website*

Thinking Hats



Thinking Maps



*Our next newsletter, Issue 5, celebrating  
Thinking, Teaching & Learning  
will be published in July 2026.*