

Year 5
Autumn Term 2025/2026 - Our Learning



Curriculum Overview - Year 5

English Reading

I am not a Label by Cerri Burnell (Curriculum Link: Science - Earth and Space)

Summary:

These short biographies tell the stories of people who have faced unique challenges which have not stopped them from becoming trailblazers, innovators, advocates and makers. Each person is a leading figure in their field, be it sport, science, maths, art, breakdance or the world of pop.

The Explorer by Katherine Rundell (Curriculum Link: Geography, History, Art - All Things Mexican)

Summary:

A group of children must survive in the Amazon after their plane crashes. Fred, Con, Lila, and Max are on their way back to England from Manaus when the plane they're on crashes and the pilot dies upon landing. How will they survive?

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens (abridged)

Summary:

A Christmas Carol recounts the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, an elderly miser who is visited by the ghost of his former business partner Jacob Marley and the spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come. After their visits, Scrooge is transformed into a kinder, gentler man.

English Writing

Narratives: Biography, Third Person Stories set in Another Culture, Dialogue in Narrative, Persuasive Adverts and Poems that use Word Play

This term we are focusing on writing a biography based on our Science unit of Earth and Space. We will then be writing stories and dialogues based on the books we will be reading and history lessons linked to the Maya. Towards Christmas, we enjoy creating persuasive adverts and performing these to the class. Pupils will finish the term reading and performing poems. We learn the features of each narrative and consider our audience and the purpose for the writing. For each of our writing units we consider the four stages of planning, drafting, editing and publishing. We give particular consideration to grammar, punctuation and spellings at the editing and publishing stage. Our writing links to other subject areas and we aim to be inspired to write as part of our wider studies.

All things Mexican: Art, Geography and History

Art

Art Strand: World Art: Drawing: Mesoamerican Art

We will learn about Mayans and Aztec religious art and what it symbolises, experimenting with techniques in their sketchbooks to see what works and what doesn't. We look at a variety of types of source materials including images on screen, images in books and websites, artwork in galleries and objects in museums and we understand the differences. We create observational sketches of the Aztec Sun stone and the double headed snake, drawing with an increasingly confident awareness of 2D and 3D geometric forms. We use our sunstone design to make a more complex form in 3 dimensions, using clay and acrylic paint. We make studies of artefacts and learn about techniques and processes used. We use some of what they have learned from the studies to produce original work and use reflection bubbles to make careful judgements about our own and others' work.

Art Strand: Portraiture: Sculpture: Mesoamerican Art

Using sketchbooks, we will explore the role of Mayan and Aztec warriors in their society. We research Eagle and Jaguar warriors and ceramics, creating observational drawings, understanding the difference between sketching and creating more deliberate marks and drawing lines, shapes and forms neatly and evenly with more confidence, blending tones from light to dark smoothly. We study significant works of art and describe the art, social and historical factors, thinking about the process, when, and how was it made? We discuss what formal elements have been used- line, tone, colour, shape, form, composition, pattern and texture. What emotions does the work convey? We experiment with techniques in their sketchbooks to see what works and what doesn't. We label these experiments for our own learning and record keeping. We design and make a more complex 3D headdress, using a range of modelling materials, understanding how to finish work to a good standard. We learn to take risks when trying out materials, investigate and explore the properties of materials. We feel safe to take creative risks and follow their intuition (fed with skills knowledge) and define our own creative journey.

Geography

North and South America: Locating Countries and Biomes

We will explore the physical and human geography of Mexico and compare how settlements were established through Mayan and Aztec civilisations. We learn how to locate countries in North and South America and important cities on a world map. We will learn about longitude, latitude and the different environmental regions (biomes) in Mexico and North America.

History

The Maya Civilisation: A non-European society that provides a contrast with British history

We will learn who the Ancient Maya were, where they lived and how they grew to be so powerful. We will research the significant events in Maya culture and analyse what evidence there is for this. We will also be studying primary and secondary sources in order to understand what the Maya city states were like, how the Maya lived and their interesting inventions. We will then compare this ancient civilisation to the Anglo-Saxons in the UK.

STEM Subjects: Mathematics, Science, Design Technology and Computing

Mathematics	We learn about the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reasoning with large numbers• Adding and subtracting• Line graphs and timetables• Continuing verbal reasoning and arithmetic skills
Science	Earth and Space (Curriculum Link: Writing - Biographies) <p>We explore and describe the movement of the Earth and other planets relative to the sun in our solar system. We will also be investigating how the movement of the moon is relative to the Earth. We will describe the sun, Earth and moon as approximately spherical bodies and finally, we will use the ideas of the Earth's rotation to explain day and night and the apparent movement of the sun across the sky.</p> Forces (Curriculum Link: DT - Mechanisms, Spring Term) <p>We explore what forces are, including gravity, and how they act on an object. We investigate water and air resistance, conducting exciting experiments. We learn about the effects of friction and then prepare to design our own mechanisms.</p>
Design Technology	Food and Nutrition (Curriculum Link: Mayans and Mexico - History and Geography) <p>We will look to different countries to see what can be learnt from different cultures' diets. We focus on good health and well-being and how modern British food represents an eclectic mix of cultures. We will develop our understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of pre-prepared food and develop techniques for cooking.</p>
Computing	Computer Systems and Networks <p>In this unit, we will develop our understanding of computer systems and how information is transferred between systems and devices. We will consider small-scale systems as well as large-scale systems. We will explain the input, output, and process aspects of a variety of different real-world systems. We will also take part in a collaborative online project with other class members and develop our skills in working together online.</p> Using Scratch <p>In this unit, we develop our knowledge of 'selection' by revisiting how 'conditions' can be used in programming, and then learning how the 'if... then... else...' structure can be used to select different outcomes depending on whether a condition is 'true' or 'false'. We represent this understanding in algorithms, and then by constructing programs using the Scratch programming environment. We learn how to write programs that ask questions and use selection to control the outcomes based on the answers given.</p>

Personal Development

Personal Development	Being me in my World We think and plan for the year ahead, goals we could set ourselves as well as the challenges we may face. We explore our rights and responsibilities as a member of the class, school, wider community and the country we live in. We learn about our own behaviour and its impact on a group as well as choices, rewards, consequences and the feelings associated with each. We also learn about democracy, how it benefits the school and how we can contribute towards it.
	Celebrating differences In this unit, we explore culture and cultural differences. We link this to racism, debating what it is and how to be aware of our own feelings towards people from different cultures. We revisit the topic of bullying and discuss rumour spreading and name-calling. We learn that there are direct and indirect ways of bullying as well as ways to encourage others to not use bullying behaviours. We consider happiness regardless of material wealth and respecting other people's cultures.

Foreign Languages, Music, Physical Education and Religious Education

Foreign Languages (German)	Myself: Hobbies (Curriculum Link: Personal Development) We revisit key vocabulary and grammar from Years 3 and 4, and are introduced to The Language Magician assessment tool. We will learn different ways to express our preferences in terms of: favourite subjects, sports, music and authors. We explore the verbs in 'Überraschung,' by Mies Van Hout and read 'Ich ' by Philip Waecheter and discuss the text. To finish the unit we plan and create a book about ourselves using the new vocabulary and sentence structures we have learnt. As a link to the end of term RE topic, we learn about the use of light as a symbol of truth in German Christmas and create our own traditional decoration.
Music	We enjoy music lessons from specialist music teachers from the 'Sing Academy' focussing on learning key musical skills predominantly through singing, where appropriate. Further information about Sing academy can be found here: Sing Education This term we will be exploring: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading Notation: Time Signatures• Developing Sight Reading Skills: Melodies (Glockenspiel)

Physical Education	Real PE Unit 1: Personal We focus on practising the fundamental movements skills of coordination (ball skills) and agility (reaction). Through games such as Tennis and Hockey, we learn to use awareness of space and team play. Pupils will be able to persevere with a task and begin to evaluate their own performances.
	Tennis We learn the sport of tennis in this unit. Through a variety of games we develop hitting the ball, body shape and hand eye coordination skills. We will further develop our knowledge of the different shots and how to serve accurately.
	Gymnastics: Rhythmic and Bench Sequences Pupils learn how to perform a variety of skills using hand and low apparatus (such as a bench). They learn to put together a sequence of moves (jumps, balances, crawls etc) as a group using the apparatus.
	Real PE Unit 3: Social This unit focuses on children learning to negotiate and work collaboratively through a range of games and activities. They will develop communication skills and give each other positive and constructive feedback to inform and improve performance.
Religious Education (RE)	Islam: Beliefs and Values We explore the concept of beliefs and values; the key question for this unit is 'How special is Allah to Muslims and does praying at regular intervals help Muslims in their everyday lives?'
	Christianity: Christmas We explore the concept of incarnation and address our key question: 'Is the Christmas Story true?' We will learn about eyewitness testimony and the different types of truths. We will finish the unit by comparing different accounts of the Christmas story from Luke and Matthew and expressing our own thoughts.