

Year 9 Autumn Curriculum Update - September 2026

YEAR 9 AUTUMN TERM OVERVIEW

Welcome to the 2026-27 academic year at Brooklands Academy!

2026 has been a huge year for us so far. Not only did we de-amalgamate from Walton High, but we also won Most Inspiring Secondary School of 2026, achieved the ARC Bronze Award and the Woodland Trust Gold Award.

As we begin our new exciting chapter as Brooklands Academy, our values of A Place to Belong, A Place to Learn and A Place to Achieve are at the forefront of everything we have been working hard to embed into our school, staff, students and community with us continuing to look at ways to improve communication, teaching and learning within our classrooms, consistency and building connections with Tutors.

A new year always means a chance for reinvention. Reinvention starts by taking chances. We encourage our students to approach September with the mindset of saying yes! We want to support our young people in taking calculated risks so that they can thrive in school and beyond. The yes might be to a new enrichment activity, a challenge within the classroom or to a new friend! Saying yes to something new is saying yes to personal growth!

Welcome to the new academic year, let's do this!

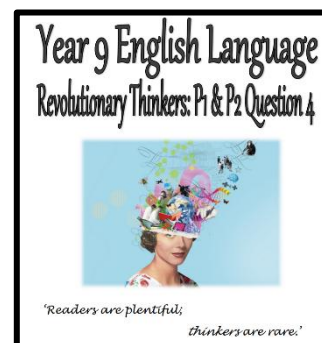
All the Progress Leaders at Brooklands Academy

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Throughout this term, students will build upon their abilities to interpret and analyse the language and structure of texts, building their knowledge of the GCSE English Language exam skills.

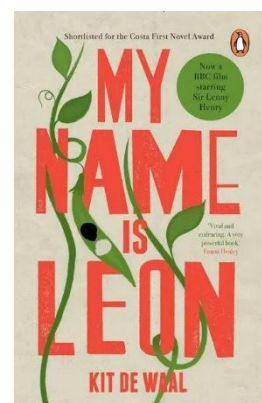
Through the theme of Survival and the dystopian genre students will be introduced to a selection of both fiction and non-fiction texts; reading accounts of survivors who found themselves in perilous situations and identifying dystopian characteristics in extracts such as The Hunger Games.

In the second half term, students will develop their ability to recognise conventions within genres. Existing texts will provide inspiration for their own creative writing pieces, where they will craft their own fiction writing to showcase the skills they have developed.



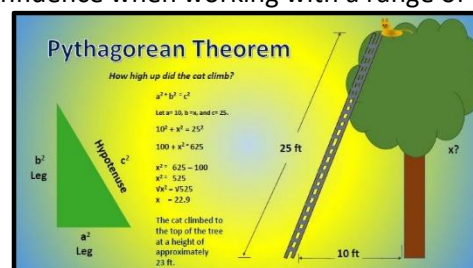
ENGLISH LITERATURE

This term, students will be studying My Name is Leon by Kit de Waal, a powerful and thought-provoking novel that explores themes of family, identity, belonging and resilience. Through Leon's journey, students will consider the experiences of children growing up in care, as well as the importance of friendship, community and understanding others' perspectives. The novel also provides opportunities to explore the social and historical context of Britain in the 1980s, including issues of race, diversity and equality. By the end of the term, students will have developed their skills in interpreting, analysing and evaluating a literary text. They will learn how to construct thoughtful responses to a range of questions, using relevant references and evidence to support their ideas. Students will also explore the writer's methods, analysing how language and structure are used to convey meaning and create an emotional impact on the reader, while considering the contextual influences that shape the novel's messages and themes.



MATHS

In Year 9, students continue to develop and consolidate the mathematical skills introduced in Key Stage 3, while building the foundations needed for future GCSE study. During the autumn term, students explore key number topics including properties of number, percentages, fractions, and standard form, strengthening their numerical fluency and confidence when working with a range of calculations. Students also study area and volume, developing their understanding of geometrical measures and their application in practical contexts. In algebra, they learn to solve equations and inequalities and work with formulae, building essential algebraic reasoning skills. The curriculum further develops proportional reasoning through the study of rates, ratio, proportion, and rates of change. Throughout the term, students are encouraged to communicate their mathematical thinking



clearly, apply their knowledge to problem-solving situations, and develop accuracy and resilience when tackling increasingly challenging concepts. This broad and balanced curriculum provides a strong foundation for success in the later stages of secondary mathematics.

SCIENCE

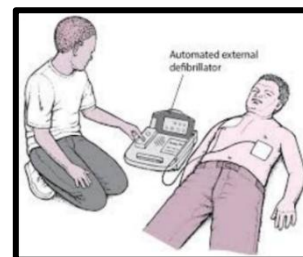
During the autumn term, Year 9 pupils will begin their GCSE Science courses (OCR Gateway A), building on the foundations established in Key Stage 3 and introducing more advanced scientific concepts.

In Biology, pupils will start with B1, which focuses on key principles such as cell structure, microscopy, and the organisation of living organisms. They will develop their understanding of how cells function and how biological systems are structured.



In Chemistry, pupils will study C1, where they will explore the fundamental ideas of matter, including atomic structure, the periodic table, and how elements are organised. They will also begin to develop an understanding of basic chemical reactions.

In Physics, pupils will begin P1, learning about fundamental concepts such as energy, including different energy stores and transfers, as well as how energy is used in everyday situations.



Throughout these units, pupils will continue to develop their practical skills, scientific reasoning, and ability to apply their knowledge to new situations. This marks an important step as they transition into GCSE-level study and begin their exam courses in earnest.

ART

In Year 9 Art GCSE. This year students are introduced to a project themed around “Food” which is a versatile topic that allows students to develop personal ideas while exploring a wide range of materials, techniques and processes.

Students will begin by creating observational studies from real food and packaging, experimenting with drawing, painting, photography, and mixed media. This project is designed to support their Component 1: Personal Portfolio, which forms 60% of their final GCSE grade. They will also explore how artists and designers from across different movements and cultures have responded to the theme of food — from Pop Art to contemporary sculpture.

Throughout the project, students will address all four Assessment Objectives, which are central to GCSE Art & Design:



- AO1: Develop ideas – Researching artists, cultural influences, and contextual sources related to food.
- AO2: Refine work – Experimenting with a wide range of techniques such as painting, drawing, collage, digital manipulation, and 3D processes.
- AO3: Record ideas – Observational studies, sketches, photography, and written reflections.
- AO4: Present a personal response – developing a final outcome that reflects individual style and intention linking Food.

In Year 11, students will complete Component 2: the Externally Set Assignment (EST exam project), which counts for 40% of the final grade and includes a 10 hour final piece produced under exam conditions. The skills and independence built through this “Food” project will help prepare them for the structure and expectations of the externally set task.

BUSINESS STUDIES

This term, Year 9 students will begin their Business Studies journey by developing an understanding of the fundamental principles of business and enterprise.

Students will explore: What businesses are and the different types of businesses. Business aims and objectives and why these are important for success. Entrepreneurs, including the characteristics and skills needed to establish and grow a successful business.

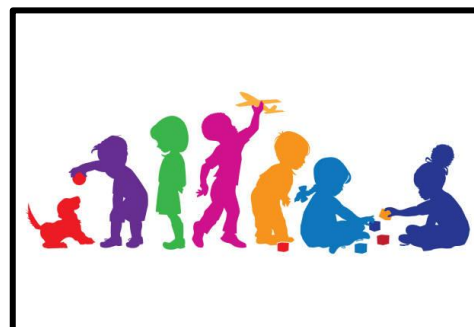
Sources of business ideas and how entrepreneurs identify and develop business opportunities. An introduction to marketing, including the purpose of marketing, identifying customer needs, market research and the marketing mix.



Throughout the term, students will apply their learning to real-life businesses through case studies, discussions and practical activities. They will develop key analytical, communication and decision-making skills while gaining an appreciation of how businesses operate in a competitive environment. By the end of the term, students will have established a strong foundation in Business Studies, preparing them for more advanced topics later in the course.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Students have made a fantastic start to Child Development. So far, we have been looking at growth and development, the difference between the two with examples, why babies and children may have variations in these and have even used case studies to plot and track babies’ growth from birth. We will then be asking students to read the growth charts and follow the centile lines to establish if babies are growing as expected. Students will be able to share ideas on why babies’ may experience problems with growth and possible complications with their development. We will be introducing the different types of professionals and individuals who support babies, children and their families and what their roles and responsibilities are. We will be looking at the five areas of



development: physical, cognitive, language, emotional and social development. We will also be looking at what milestones babies and children should be meeting at each age and stage of development.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

This term, students have launched into the exciting world of Computer Science with a focus on two key areas: System Architecture and Python Programming.

In the first part of the term, students explored the inner workings of modern computers by investigating System Architecture. They examined the role of the Central Processing Unit (CPU), learning about its purpose, key components, and the factors that affect its performance. This gave students a solid understanding of how computers process and execute instructions—knowledge that underpins much of their future learning in the subject.



As the term progresses, students begin their journey into Python, one of the most widely used programming languages in the world. They are introduced to the core principles and syntax of Python and begin solving structured problems through hands-on coding tasks. To support this, students have access to CSUK: Coder+, an online platform packed with challenges and activities they can complete both in class and at home.

To support learning beyond the classroom, students and parents can access the following resources:



Video Tutorial – Systems Architecture:

<https://student.craigndave.org/videos/slr1-1-systems-architecture>



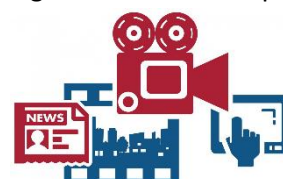
Python Programming Platform – CSUK: Coder+:

<https://coder.csuk.io>

We're excited to see students developing both their theoretical understanding and practical skills as they continue their computing journey!

CREATIVE MEDIA

This term, students will uncover the secrets behind how media products create meaning and influence audiences. As they explore the foundations of Media, learners will become media detectives, learning how to read and interpret texts through both denotative (literal) and connotative (implied) layers of meaning. Through the analysis of exciting real-world media products, including Christian Dior advertising campaigns and blockbuster film trailers such as Fast & Furious and Mission: Impossible, students discover how media creators carefully craft messages to engage, entertain and persuade audiences. Along the way, learners will



will

explore the powerful stylistic codes that shape everything we see and hear on screen, from mise-en-scène and cinematography to lighting techniques and sound design. By investigating how these creative choices work together, students will develop a deeper understanding of the media industry and the techniques used by professional producers. Putting their newfound knowledge into practice, students will then apply their analytical skills through a textual analysis writing task, constructing thoughtful and evidence-based responses that reveal the hidden meanings within media products. This engaging unit provides the perfect introduction to Media, encouraging curiosity, critical thinking and creativity while helping students see films, advertisements and digital media in a whole new light.

DANCE

Year 9 begin their GCSE Dance journey by starting with teacher-led technique classes to build upon their dance skill-set. These technique classes, as well as theory-based sessions on Safe Dance Practice will also lend themselves to preparing students for Section A of the final written exam at the end of Key Stage 4. GCSE Dancer's will also be given plenty of opportunities for performances, creating choreography and watching live Dance in the theatre. Performing Arts also offers a range of extracurricular opportunities, including Dance Company, Drama Club, and our annual School Musical, alongside many other performance opportunities at Brooklands. Speak to a Performing Arts teacher if you would like to get involved!



DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

In Year 9, students focus on developing their skills in Design Thinking and Communication. They begin by exploring a range of graphical drawing techniques, including isometric and exploded drawings. These visual skills are complemented by mathematical modelling, using both 2D and 3D design software to bring their ideas to life in a digital environment.

As part of their design journey, students learn about stakeholders and the principles of user-centred design. They investigate how products are tailored to meet user needs by analysing existing designs and creating detailed technical specifications for their own concepts.

Prototyping plays a key role in the curriculum, with students experimenting with a variety of materials such as woods, metals, and plastics. This hands-on exploration helps them understand the properties and potential of different materials in product development.

Finally, students are introduced to modern manufacturing processes and techniques, including laser cutting and 3D printing. These experiences provide valuable insight into how products are made and refined, preparing students for more advanced design challenges in the future.



DRAMA

To begin their GCSE Drama journey, students will be exploring all units that are to come in 'Introduction to GCSE Drama'. Throughout this unit, students will explore devising, scripted performance as well as the start of the written components to ensure that they are prepped and ready for these throughout their journey. This will allow students to understand expectations, as well gain a better understanding of the performance and written components of the course and what skills will be crucial to their success.



Year 9 students are encouraged and expected to attend Drama Club, which will allow them to work on their performance skills as well as a better understanding of directing, scriptwriting and production. Students are encouraged to audition for our upcoming annual musical!

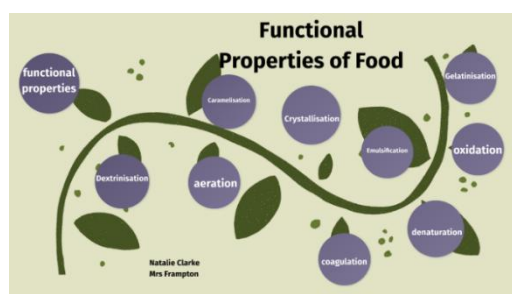
ECONOMICS

Unit 3.1 – How markets work. Students have begun exploring the fundamentals of economics by examining the purpose of economic activity and how goods and services are produced to meet needs and wants. They have been introduced to the key resources used in production, known as the factors of production, and how these influence decision-making. A key focus has been understanding that scarcity means choices must always be made, and every choice carries an opportunity cost. This foundation will support students as they develop a deeper understanding of how markets operate.



FOOD AND NUTRITION

Year 9 students will begin the term by developing a strong foundation in nutrition, food hygiene, and safety, preparing them for success throughout the course. Students will build confidence in a range of practical skills by making a variety of dishes, learning key techniques such as knife skills, bread making, pastry making, and sauce making. They will also explore how ingredients work, including investigating the different functions of eggs in recipes. As part of the course, students will take part in food science investigations, where they will explore how and why ingredients behave in cooking. These experiences will help prepare them for their future Non-Exam Assessment (NEA). Opportunities for reflection and improvement will be built into lessons, enabling students to develop independence and take pride in their progress.



Overall, the term will focus on building skills, confidence, and enthusiasm for Food & Nutrition.

GEOGRAPHY

Having commenced their GCSE Geography studies, our students now have a lot on their (tectonic-) plates! Lessons have started by exploring how the giant jigsaw pieces that make up our Earth's surface shift and move to create dramatic landscapes like volcanoes and fold mountains. Students will then look at two examples of earthquakes – contrasting the impacts and responses to events in Nepal and New Zealand – before looking at how we can live alongside tectonic hazards. Later in the term we will explore the important topic of climate change – both natural and human causes of it. Students will become familiar with some of the possible global effects and responses to the 'climate crisis', reflecting on how we can tackle it as a global community.



Students with a desire to make a positive impact on their local community and an interest in environmental sustainability are encouraged to join the school's 'eco-committee' to review the impact we have on the environment and to support projects to mitigate it.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

At the start of this exciting course, students will begin by exploring the key aspects of human growth and development across the different life stages. They will build their understanding of the various factors that influence development, as well as examine how different lifestyles and personal choices can impact individuals' health and well-being.

Throughout the term, students will complete both formative and summative assessments to support and measure their progress. Additional support is available for those who need it, with after-school sessions offered to help reinforce learning and build confidence.



HISTORY

GCSE History begins with the study of 'Conflict and Tension: 1918 – 1939' which is made up of the study of The Treaty of Versailles, The League of Nations and the causes of the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Much of this unit is based on the study of historical people so that students understand the impact that the personality and priorities of political leaders had had on the world in the past, but equally in their lives today. Human emotions such as revenge, greed, jealousy and fear will be considered as part of lessons to make lessons meaningful to students.



Exam technique work is undertaken on four distinct types of questions. Students spend time working with political cartoons and on the development of their evaluation and critical thinking skills. History lessons also focus on developing the ability of students to reach judgements supported by specific factual detail. Knowledge retrieval activities are made regular use of to ensure students are learning core material

LANGUAGES

GERMAN

This summer term, Year 9 will be learning to describe free time activities in the past and future tenses and give detailed opinions of their favourite films and TV programs. They will then move on to discussing relationships with family and expanding their cultural knowledge of different celebrations in Germany.



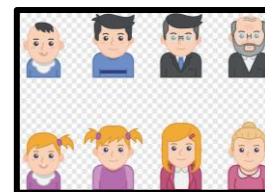
FRENCH

This term, students will begin their GCSE French studies by working on the first Edexcel unit, 'Mon Clan, Ma Tribu'. Building on the foundations laid in Years 7 and 8, they will develop their skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening through a range of activities. The focus will be on describing family members, discussing how they get along with others, exploring personal relationships, and expressing their hopes and plans for future relationships. This unit not only strengthens their language abilities but also encourages thoughtful reflection on personal and social themes.



MANDARIN

This term, we are stepping into a world where imagination shapes the perfect home—from cosy bedrooms and modern interiors to impressive building designs and vibrant neighbourhoods. We also explore how people receive information and enjoy entertainment through both traditional and digital media. Discover how homes, technology, and communication influence the way we learn, connect with others, and experience everyday life.



SPANISH



Students will start their GCSE Spanish course with the theme of My Personal World. They will look at describing family members including personality, likes, and dislikes. The grammatical aspects covered include agreement and position of adjectives, the present tense including the main irregular verbs. They will see their confidence in speaking grow thanks to a close focus on phonics and lots of in-class practice.

MUSIC

Students have made a strong start to GCSE Music. They have been exploring the elements of music, focusing on key terminology to support their listening and understanding skills. Alongside this, students are developing their performance skills in preparation for showcasing their work later in the academic year.



PE

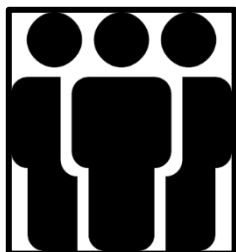
Year 9 PE offers students the opportunity to further develop their skills and take on greater responsibility within lessons. Students in the Girls PE Groups will participate in Netball, Basketball and Table Tennis, refining advanced skills, exploring tactics and developing leadership qualities through team activities and competitive games. Students in the Boys PE Groups will continue with Football, Tag Rugby and Health & Fitness, focusing on game management, tactical awareness, fitness development and performance analysis. Within Health & Fitness, students will use the fitness suite to explore the components of fitness in greater depth. They will complete a range of fitness tests, analyse their results and select one component of fitness as a personal area for development. Students will then design, implement and monitor their own fitness programme, learning how to track progress over time and evaluate the effectiveness of different training methods. Students will be encouraged to take a more active role in evaluating their own progress and supporting others, helping them become more confident and independent



performers. Extracurricular clubs and fixtures will continue to provide opportunities for students to represent the school and further develop their sporting potential.

PSYCHOLOGY

Year 9 students will start their Psychology course with an introduction to Psychology. This will give them a foundation understanding of what psychology is and introduce them to different explanations of human behaviour, as well as a range of key terms used in psychological research.



In the second half term students will start their study of the crime topic. They will learn different explanations of criminality and the different punishments and rehabilitation programmes given to offenders. Students will continue to learn about how psychologists conduct their research and will be developing the skills of description and evaluation which will be an important skill in their GCSE study of psychology. All students have the opportunity to attend weekly support sessions, they can find the details for these on the Psychology noticeboard.

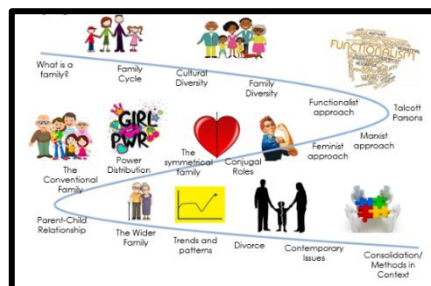
RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

Students will begin this term by building on the ultimate questions studied throughout Key Stage 3. Students will complete a project exploring the Philosophical question 'Why is there evil in the world?' This will provide students with an understanding of suffering in the world. Students will continue to explore this idea within the context of Islam where they will have the opportunity to discuss concepts of God, Jannah and Jahannam and how this life affects the Day of Judgement.



SOCIOLOGY

Year 9 Sociology students will start their course by learning the core sociological theories and concepts. This includes the principles and views of functionalism, Marxism, feminism and the New Right, and concepts such as social norms, values, laws, socialisation and culture. After the first half-term of introductory content, students will begin their Research Methods unit. This is the only topic that appears on both of their final GCSE papers, and will require students to explain the different primary, secondary, quantitative and qualitative methods used by sociologists, including interviews, questionnaires and statistics. Students will then evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of these research methods and examine their usefulness through real-life examples of sociological research into topics such as family life, criminal behaviour and education.



The topic will finish with students reviewing the different stages of the research process and they will have the opportunity to design their own sociological research project to consolidate their learning.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Character Development equips students with the skills, knowledge and values needed to thrive in school and beyond and forms an important part of our Holistic Curriculum. This is a timetabled lesson that students do with their Form Tutor every Week A Wednesday, session two.

For the first half-term, students will be learning about Respect and how to show this in our community. Students will develop an awareness of how to resolve and manage conflict effectively and safely, before looking at forms of conflict and inequality in society, such as issues around gender and how to form a fairer and well-functioning society. The half-term will finish with students studying misogyny, particularly how this appears online, and where to seek support for harmful online content.

The second half-term's theme for Character Development is Mental Health. Students will be developing their understanding of mental health language, stigma and strategies so that they can recognise problems, seek support and improve mental wellbeing. There will also be a focus on anxiety, in terms of how it affects people and ways to manage it.



Year 9 will also have an assembly being delivered by iCaSH (Integrated Contraception and Sexual Health) on the week beginning the 28th September. They are an NHS service who already offer age-appropriate assemblies in various schools across Milton Keynes. Their assemblies will be used to introduce their services and discuss sexual health, contraception and STIs.