Dear Year 6 families,

I hope you have all managed to find some enjoyment and peace over the Easter period, and I hope everybody is well and trying to keep in good spirits.

Today is the first day of the Summer A half-term which lasts 5 weeks. I have provided a parent curriculum map for this half-term, but also wanted to write this post explaining some of my ideas.

Our new topic is: **The History of the River Thames**

By the end of these 5 weeks, I would like each child to have produced their own book with the title ‘**The History of the River Thames’.**  I will give you an example of how this book could be created later in this post.

What this means, is that children will need to become historians and researchers in order to find out and write about the Thames’ history. This could include themes such as: the Romans, the Celts, the Tudors, the Victorians, trade and the docklands to name a few.

It would be fantastic to see children’s work as they are creating the sections of their book, children can do this by uploading pictures of their work and posting it to Google Classroom. They can do this on the main feed page, or send documents and images to me directly. It would also be great to see the final piece of work at the end of the half-term. Again, this could be through uploading multiple pictures or scanning (if you have the facilities).

As researchers, I want the children to find their own areas to research and write about. However, I also have three sections that I want every child to include in their book.

These are:

1. An introduction to the River Thames

In this section children need to introduce the River Thames and include general facts such as how long it is, how many locks it has, what a lock is, which parts of the river has no locks and why. Children will also need to compare the Thames with some other well-known rivers around the world (at least 4 other rivers).

Water bodies - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNWuQD7QHBc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e0pfqlqg-M>

Rivers-<https://central.espresso.co.uk/espresso/primary_uk/subject/module/frontscreen/item1196044/grade2/index.html>

Rivers around the world - <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t2-g-004-world-rivers-fact-sheets>

The Thames in London is a ‘tidal river’. What does this mean? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUB7IflBBrc>

Which century are we in? How do we know? (This is not about the Thames, but as this is a history topic, children need to understand this to help them understand some of the material they’ll use in their research)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wm-RYHVXBCM>

1. The River Thames in London

In this section, children will research historical information focused on the River Thames in London. Some areas to research include:

The History of London Bridge - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lB3MUS5oNnI>

Some tricky language, but good information about houses and shops being built ON the bridge.

Frost fairs - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fM923V4G6zs>

The Great Stink - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD7nRrSH_VE>

<https://central.espresso.co.uk/espresso/modules/news/tv_news/history/080630h_stink.html?source=search-all-all-all-all&source-keywords=thames#words>

3. Trade & The Docklands

In this section, children will need to research how the river was used for trade with other countries. They should find out which goods were exported to which countries and which goods were imported from which countries. They will also need to research and write about the docklands and their importance.

Working on the docks - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEVJTIXEq0g>

Which goods would be brought in and out of London on the Thames? <https://cosimathames.weebly.com/trading.html>

I have included some websites and videos to support the children in their research for these sections, however children are not limited to these websites and should be looking for appropriate websites themselves to aid their research.

It would be really great if people could share websites and videos that they have found useful in a post on Google Classroom, it would help to create a great atmosphere of team-work and community even though we are all in our individual homes.

Aside from the 3 sections outlined above, the children can choose some areas of their own interest to include in their books. An example of this could be how the River Thames is used today, and how today’s use compares to the use of the Thames during the Victorian era. Another idea for a section is important people throughout the Thames’ history, such as Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Joseph Bazalgette. I would recommend children have about 4 or 5 sections in their books. It would be nice to see some in-depth research done.

It would also be nice to see diagrams, drawings, paintings, collages and sketches (any types of artwork) in their books. The pieces of art don’t necessarily need to be IN the book, especially if children want to make a larger piece or a 3D model. So children could just make these pieces of art and then label them with the title of the section of the book they belong to.

The book will need a glossary. As children undertake this project, they will encounter lots of new words and phrases which they will need to find the meanings and definitions of. I am constantly reminding children that they should never just ignore a new word, they must find out the definitions. So this is a perfect chance for them to practise this skill! Some examples of words they will need to find the definitions for and include in a glossary are: dock, lock, ebb, flow, current, lighter, tugboat, import, export, industry. (To name a few!)

I want children to be creative during this project. Make your work colourful, make it eye-catching, make it informative, make sure you present it neatly. If you think you have a really good idea, follow that idea through – you are in charge of this piece of work. If you need help or just want to ask me a question about something or even tell me what you’re planning to do, send me a message on Google Classroom. I’m looking forward to hearing from all of you and seeing the work you produce.

Some other websites / videos that will be useful are:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/articles/2009/03/17/river_thames_facts_feature.shtml>

<https://www.riverthames.co.uk/thameshistory/>

<http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/riverthames/>

<https://www.dkfindout.com/uk/>

Woolwich ferry - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DcZ24pbUC4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WgtlFtzT3E>

The Thames in 1935- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NObu5VXfTVI>

As far as timetabling goes, children should aim to complete a section of their book each week. If they spend an hour a day on this project, they should have enough research and work done to complete a section. However, if children want to spend more time on the project they can do so.

A recommended timetable has previously been posted on Google Classroom, and we are not asking children to do any extra hours unless THEY want to.

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Aside from this project, children will be set daily activities for English and maths (there will also be weekly activities for other curriculum areas such as: science, geography, computing, music, art, D.T and R.E.).

The majority of these activities will show the children the answers and explanations in some way, so they won’t need to send anything back to me on Google Classroom (unless they want to!).

One thing that Ms. O’Reilly and I would like is if the children make notes as they complete these activities to aid their memory and understanding of what they are learning. They should copy out questions and write out their answers in to their books as well as completing the on-screen activities. Children are familiar with this, because we have done this style of learning in class. It also give children an opportunity to work on developing their neatest handwriting!

For most of these activities, there is an explanatory video, which will then be followed by a quiz or activity which checks the children’s understanding and gives them a chance to practise the new skill.

Between the River Thames book project and the daily activities, children will have plenty of work to aid their learning. Please remember, we do not want to overload the children during this time. They need to take regular breaks from academic work. Parents, remember that each child works at their own pace and they may not complete all of the activities every day. Please do contact me and let me know if you have any concerns or questions that I can help with.

Kind regards,

Mr. McKenzie