

TEACHING AND LEARNING GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Welcome to our monthly Learning Newsletter. These newsletters look to help you to implement tried and tested learning strategies at home, in order to benefit your child and further enhance their educational experiences in the long term.

GCSE Grades

The Year 11 GCSE exams have begun with the usual mixture of relief and further anxiety. As a parent you may be aware that there have been major changes to the examination system, with a new 9-1 grading system being phased in to reflect a more demanding curriculum.

A 9 is the highest grade, while 1 is the lowest, not including a U (ungraded). Three number grades, 9, 8 and 7, correspond to the previous grades of A* and A - this is designed to provide more differentiation for high ability pupils.

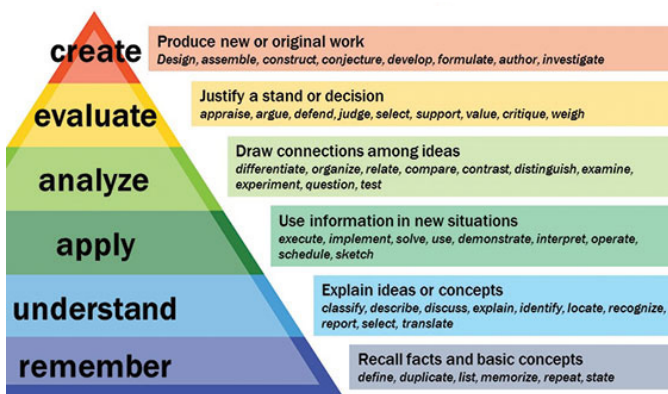
The exam watchdog, Ofqual, has indicated that fewer grade 9s will be awarded than A*s and that anyone who is awarded a grade 9 will have performed exceptionally well.

Most subjects will be reported in these number grades this summer and from now on, with the exception of Electronics, Graphics, ICT and Resistant Materials this summer.

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

Higher Order Skills

When planning lessons, teachers at Priory refer to something called Bloom's taxonomy which classifies and ranks critical thinking skills by order of difficulty. Critical thinking skills allow a child to think independently, find and fix mistakes, solve problems, evaluate alternatives, and reflect on their own beliefs. To create thinkers as opposed to students who simply recall information, we must incorporate the higher levels into lesson plans and tests.



The difficulty of a question or an assignment can be measured by the level of the critical thinking skill required. Simple skills such as being able to recall a diagram can be measured quickly. More sophisticated skills such as the construction of a hypothesis take much longer to be assessed.

As a parent you can encourage deeper thinking by asking your son or daughter to do more with learning

/ information than simply recalling it eg, use new learning and turn it into an educational video or game for others.

General Knowledge / Life Skills

With the advent of the internet, it's easy to find out pretty much anything you want to know. However, we can sometimes take it for granted that children have picked up simple general knowledge and life skills.

Talking about the Royal wedding with a pupil recently I found that they had no understanding of the family tree of the Royal family. Simple general knowledge and basic skills such as reading bus timetables are things pupils need to know to develop into worldly, independent adults.

Could half term be a time to explore some general knowledge and life skills together?

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Issue Focus: Critical Thinking

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if you wish to discuss anything
covered in this newsletter