



Teaching & learning round up

In this the last of our lockdown teaching and learning round ups we will hear about some of the fantastic, innovative, and inspirational approaches being used in **English, modern foreign languages, politics** and **music** teaching this term.

English Department - Ms MacLean

Discussion is fundamental to the study of English and, therefore, the introduction of breakout rooms in Microsoft Teams has been transformational for this period of remote teaching and learning. Breakout rooms facilitate collaboration and help encourage some of our quieter students to participate more actively in lessons. From completing small-group work on a particular topic, to preparing arguments for a class debate, to compiling revision resources to share with the rest of the class, the breakout rooms have enabled us to reinstate the small-group activities that we had missed in our previous period of remote learning.

Beyond the virtual classroom, this has been a busy term for both students and their English teachers. Students have entered a wide range of writing competitions, including the Immerse Education Essay Competition, the Telegraph's Teen Writing Competition, the Christopher Tower Poetry Competition, and the New College of the Humanities Essay Competition. We have thoroughly enjoyed reading and reviewing students' submissions, and we would like to congratulate Fleur, in Year 8, who was awarded a partial scholarship from Immerse Education for her **essay** exploring the definition of justice.

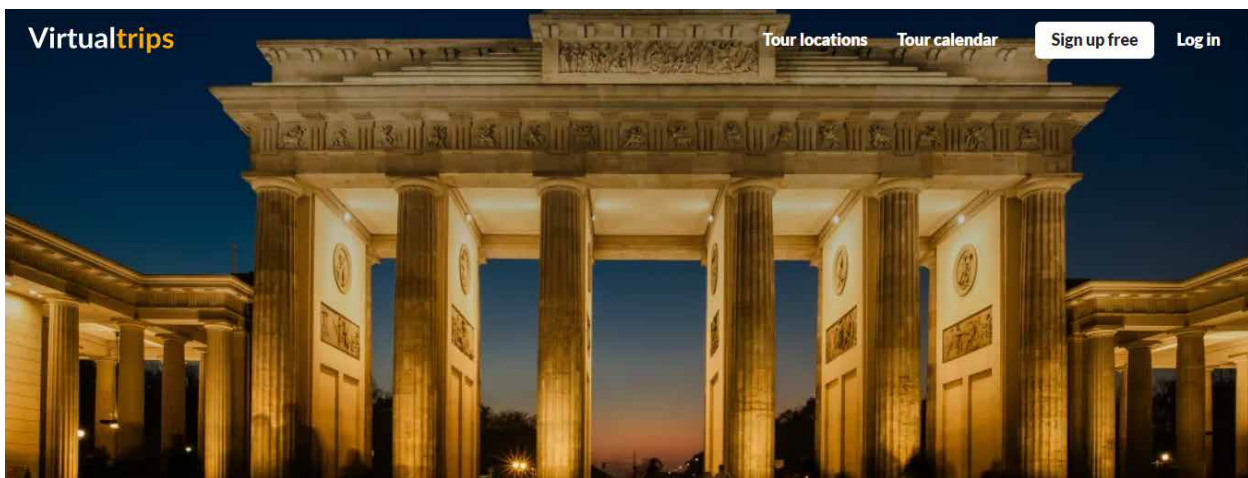
In addition to writing competitions, Lower Sixth students – Sophie, Milly and Madeleine – will soon be releasing the first issue of *The Literary Wold*, a magazine that will include book reviews, literary articles and creative pieces written by students in Years 10 to Upper Sixth.

Students are also taking a leading role in our virtual Literary Societies, in which we have explored a range of poetry and prose this term. In Mrs Alexander's GCSE Literary Society, Tilda led a discussion on Wilfred Owen's *Dulce et Decorum Est*, Imo explored Agatha Christie's *Crooked House*, and Ava presented a poem about her grandfather, entitled *The Incredible Bouncing Man*, which was written by her father, Andrew. Students have also explored Robert Frost's *The Road Not Taken*, and discussed it in the context of Joe Biden's inauguration, as Frost was the inaugural poet for JFK in 1961. Members of Ms MacLean's Sixth Form Literary Society were similarly inspired by Biden's inauguration, and explored Amanda Gorman's *The Hill We Climb*. Sophie also led a discussion of *'Hope' is the thing with feathers* by Emily Dickinson, and Milly's very topical choice of poem, *I Worried* by Mary Oliver, prompted a constructive discussion of some of the worries and anxieties that we have experienced over the course of the past year.

Finally, Mr Peachey has started creating a series of podcasts on *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. They provide an introduction to Dickens, discuss the opening pages of the novella and explore Dickens' use of characterisation. You can find them on Spotify at <https://open.spotify.com/show/3AWetXWbCDFEtHk5HbXfbf>.

Modern foreign languages - Mrs Haythorne

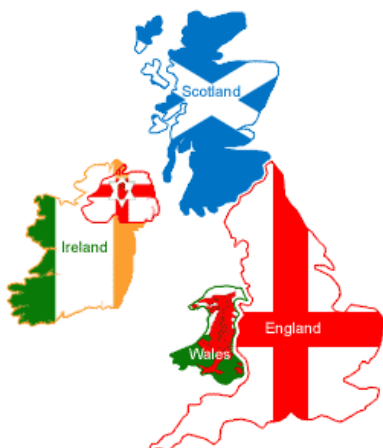
In modern languages this week, Lower Sixth German and French classes have had a surprising opportunity to go on school trips to Berlin and Paris. On Tuesday, Lower Sixth Former Kim and I attended a virtual live tour of Berlin's memorials to groups persecuted before and during WW2. The tour guide, Martin, is a history specialist, and spoke movingly about the installations dedicated to murdered Roma, politicians, Jews, and gays and lesbians. We were able to interact with Martin via the live chat to ask questions, and it was great to see the streets of Berlin live as he moved around. Martin was incredibly knowledgeable and we both learnt more about this period of history in Germany, as well as having an opportunity to reflect on the importance of architecture to a nation (which just happens to be our next topic). It was an unforgettable experience and a breath of fresh air in a lockdown lesson. The Lower Sixth French group will be following suit with a virtual visit to Paris on a tour to discover influential Parisian women. If you would like to take a virtual tour, do check out www.virtualtrips.io



Politics Department - Mrs Payne

Woldingham politicians have been debating an array of questions during the latest lockdown. As a society we have really seen the power of government over every area of our lives in the last 12 months and with the latest government briefing and news headlines a focus for everyone there has never been a better time to be studying politics.

Lower Sixth students have been focusing on Westminster Parliament and devolution. With crucial questions such as: 'Do the differing responses to COVID across the UK herald the breakup of the Union? Does Parliament adequately fulfil its functions? What is the balance of power between government and Parliament?' With plenty of discussion, debate, news clips, independent enquiry and wider reading to keep these questioning minds thinking. Due to the contemporary, fast moving nature of the course pre lockdown we were already using an online video-based textbook (Pre-chewed Politics). This has proved a brilliant resource to use remotely for flipped lessons or to imbed learning.



Meanwhile it has been a delight to be exploring feminism with Upper Sixth students. They have responded to every challenge set with enthusiasm and considered questions such as the difference between biological sex and gender identity, if the personal is political, where the balance lies between accepting difference and creating equality, intersectionality and the differences within and between liberal, socialist and radical feminists. There has been frank and open debate leading to a real depth of understanding. Every student has confidently shared ideas and completed extensive wider, independent research. Refrains such as, 'I was just reading X which had something interesting to say on Y' are heard regularly. OneNote's online workspaces have proved a really useful tool for students and teachers to provide lots of feedback on written work.



In the USA politics part of their course, students have been debating pressure group activity including philosophical questions such as, 'Why are pressure groups important?', which raises issues of pluralism and elitism. At the time of writing students are completing individual research projects on a pressure group method and case study to present to the group. These include the recent Black Lives

Matter protests to financial backing by EMILY's list (Early Money Is like Yeast), which supports female candidates early in the election process. These students have really taken their passion for politics outside of the (virtual) classroom and actively campaign for a variety of pressure groups to make a real difference in the world. The breakout room function on Teams has proved really useful for proposition and opposition to plan their lines of argument prior to a debate.

Current Affairs Club gives every member of the school community the opportunity to discuss the issues of the day. Run by Nicole and Milan in the Upper Sixth, topics this term have ranged from climate change to the appropriate role of government in COVID-19 restrictions, democracy in Myanmar, Hong Kong and Russia, USA election, protests and inauguration. Students are encouraged to share their views, ask questions and develop their understanding. Teams has proved a useful platform for the student leaders to share a summary of the topic in advance and everyone to follow up with sharing their wider reading (podcasts, articles and opinion pieces).



The Politics Department continues to try to keep everyone informed and thinking about big questions facing our society with regular political update emails.

