

ISSUE 1 DECEMBER 2025



# Welcome to our December 2025 Newsletter

#### Dear Parent's and Guardians

Over the past few months our classrooms have been buzzing with discovery. In this Newsletter, you'll find updates on our innovative projects and highlights from our dedicated staff and pupils.

We're excited to share their progress with you!

#### Contents

Pendle Hill: The Trials	2
Class 2: Welcome	3
Science: Experiments	4
Autumn Term: First Half	5
Geography: Environments	6
Food Studies: New Launch	7
Group 1: New Classroom	8
Group 8: Reading	9
Groups 5 & 6: Reading	10
Groups 5 & 6: Maths	11
Key Stage 3 & 4: Maths	12
<b>Art:</b> Creativity & Achievements	13
<b>Events:</b> Panto, Coffee & Jumpers	14
Toby Time	15
A1, A2 & A3: Maths & Science	16
A2: History & English & IT	17
Key Stage 4: Science	18
Key Stage 4: Art	19
<b>Key Stage 4:</b> Geography	20



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### Pendle Hill: The Trials

#### **BY ALEX**

# How the Pendle Trials were used to control people.



So, as you can see from the title this will be about the Pendle Hill witch trials. As well as how these trials were used to control the population. Specifically, the poor people. In 1612, poverty was considered a moral failing.

There was a young girl named Alizon Device. Alizon was doing her daily routine which was begging for pins from peddler. As one of the passers strolled past her, she asked the man if she could have some pins, but the man refused to give her any. As the man strolled past her Alizon supposedly put a curse on the man ending up with him having a stroke just down the lane.

The towns folk immediately suspected

Alizon of causing the incident. Alizon's family were known to be worshippers of the Devil.

Alizon confessed to putting a curse on John Law. Alizon accused her own grandmother and the Chattox family of witchcraft. This is what made the trials kick off.

The accused people would usually get tortured to get them to confess. Some methods of torture used during these events included:

- Isolation
- Threats of execution
- Leading questions
- Physical coercion
- Encouragement to accuse others

Spectral evidence and superstition were used in the court as evidence. The people most targeted were the elderly and the poor. The wealthy people had an advantage.

### The advantage was their money.

Their money gave protection from being accused. Whereas the poor and the elderly had a huge disadvantage. They had no or very little money to protect themselves. Because the poor people had no money to protect themselves, they didn't have the resources to defend against the accusations.

This was a very complicated event in world history. Ten people were hung; the majority of these people were either poor or old. They were the marginalised people.

Today the marginalised people including myself are also not as protected as the wealthy. We have made much progress, but we still have a long way to go.





### Class 2: Welcome

# We have had such a busy and exciting full term!

Welcoming new students to the school and our classroom, getting to know each other and finding out what helps us to feel safe and then when we were ready, lots of fun learning. Here are a few of our proudest moments!



### **English**

We enjoy reading and listening to stories, part of our English this term was reading How to Train a Dragon and each of us made our own interpretation of a dragon, and then we used this character to write our own stories too. Claire and Megan are so proud of us all because we tried so hard and it hasn't always been easy for us to attempt our writing before.

# "I survived! I am confident to pursue my dream of writing fan fiction outside of school."

### Classroom change!

We are a group who don't always like change, but we have managed to move to a new classroom and make it feel safe and cosy ready for next term. We are considering getting a class bunny rabbit and we are looking forward to creating more fun memories together as a class group.





#### Trips and achievements

It isn't always easy to leave the sanctuary of school but with the support of our known adults and visual social stories shared before we visited places, we were able to attend Fairy Tale Farm, go Rock Climbing and attend the Christmas Pantomime. Staff have listened to what the students have been able to achieve and if they said no this was respected, which has meant that most of the students have then been able to say yes.

#### **Proud staff**

We are very proud of each of the students in our class. It takes so much courage to attend school sometimes and it is a vulnerable experience being able to accept help and trust adults. Claire and Megan

Have a gentle Christmas break and wishing you all a very peaceful beginning to the New Year.

"Growing a nail! I am proud of my writing."



## Science: Experiments

Studying forces, magnets and cells. As well as exchange surfaces in plants.



Bonding iron and sulphur to make iron sulphate

#### Groups 5, 6 and 7

In groups 5, 6 and 7 this term we have been studying Forces, the organs of The Digestive System and their function, and, more recently, Atoms and Elements.



Testing for acids and alkalis

#### Group 9

In Group 9 we have been looking at Hidden Forces; Breathing, Gas Exchange and Respiration, Acids and Bases, and Magnets.



Making copper sulphate



Testing for biological molecules

#### Groups 9 and 10

In Group 9 and 10, we have been studying cells (prokaryotic and eukaryotic), DNA and inheritance, Health and Diseases, and Biological Molecules.



Testing for reducing sugars



Investigating anaerobic respiration in yeast



Investigating light intensity and transpiration



Looking at stomata under a microscope

### Groups 11 and 12

In Group 11 and 12 we have been studying cells (prokaryotic and eukaryotic), our immune system and its defences against pathogens, biodiversity and human impacts on it, aerobic and anaerobic respiration and, more recently, transport and exchange surfaces in plants.



### Autumn Term: First Half



### Volcanoes, and other natural disasters.

In geography, we focused on rock formation, volcanoes, and other natural disasters. The class had some explosive discussions!

Did you know magma and lava are two different things? A1 certainly knows. Magma is molten rock beneath the earth's surface. Lave is molten rock that has erupted and is now above the earth's surface. They'll also be able to tell you all about how tsunamis happen.

Their knowledge is now on a whole new fault line!



### **Christian practices**

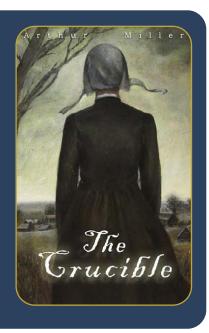
Praise be! A2 explored Christian practices from worship to charity, discovering the many ways faith comes alive. From baptisms to pilgrimages, they really sacrament-ed their learning.

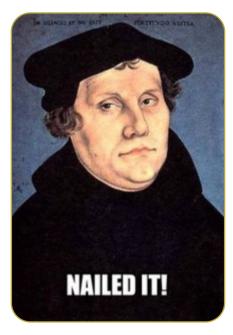
### Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible.'

During the first autumn half term, A3 worked through Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible.'

The class loved the play! We enjoyed reading through and getting to know the characters. Even (especially) the baddies! A student wrote an especially lovely opinion piece on a similar event in history. He focused on the Pendle Hill witch trials.

Scary stuff!





#### Historic rebels

Rebel rebel! A1 looked at historic rebels and asked if we should embrace authority or challenge it. A core focus was Martin Luther and how he stood up for what he believed in.

They weren't afraid to Luther-ally question everything.



Kesia Lupo's 'Let's Play Murder.'

One of the favourite books this term was Kesia Lupo's 'Let's Play Murder.' Dun dun dun! A dramatic title for a thrilling book. We most enjoyed discussing how the author created suspense using such fascinating techniques.

The students had several class projects based off the book. One particularly enjoyable one was creating your own game. The students followed a set-structured checklist to brainstorm their game. A stand-out design was an 'asymmetrical horror game.' Who knew that was a genre!



## Geography: Environments

# The Autumn term has been busy!

We've been busy with learning aimed at understanding the differences between rural and urban environments.



#### **Urban V Rural**

Students were able to identify reasons for population growth in urban areas and where they would prefer to live if they had the choice.



### **Rock Types**

The second unit of learning was based on investigating different Rock types.

Students enjoyed looking and touching the different types of rocks that exist in the world.

They were able to link some of the rock types to the technological world of Minecraft, and some had even mined for obsidian too.



It is great to see how technology can be used in a positive manner to help deepen learning.

It has been great to see how technology can be used in a positive manner to help deepen learning.



### Food Studies: New Launch

### Food Studies Launches Exciting New 'Leiths Cookery School' Programme



This year in Food Studies, we are delighted to introduce our brand-new cooking programme,

Leiths Cookery
School, created by
Michelin-starred chef
Prue Leith.

The programme explores a wide range of topics, including health and safety, healthy eating, knife skills, cooking methods, and much more.

Each lesson focuses on key practical skills while also giving students the chance to develop a variety of additional techniques. To support learning, students follow short step-by-step videos that can be replayed at any time during the lesson, ensuring everyone can work confidently and independently.



At the end of the school year, every student will be awarded an official Leiths Cookery School certificate to proudly add to their portfolio. We're excited to see our young chefs grow in confidence and skill throughout the programme!



**LEITHS** EDUCATION



### Group 1: New Classroom

## A new group of students learning the routines of life at Park School.



What a busy half term for Group 1, we have settled in to our new classroom as a new group of students learning the routines of life at Park School.

We've enjoyed weekly PDP trips to Hill End Forest School, learning how to make fires, construct tools, build dens, all out of natural resources. We really enjoy sitting around the camp fire to have our picnic lunches and to warm up — Forest School in December is a chilly



place to be! We have built resilience and determination. In History, we were learning about Stone Age to Iron Age Britain and were thrilled to find a life sized replica Round House at Hill End for us to role play in. Later, we moved on to learn about Ancient Egypt. Our Geography units have been food based, learning about how food is produced and transported around the world.

We learnt about Fair Trade and how this can support poor communities around the world.

Our Science topics have lent themselves to lots of practical learning. We explored pushes and pulls in the first term, enjoying experiments to measure forces. In the second half term we have been exploring changes in materials, conducting experiments on solubility and reversible/irreversible changes to materials.

#### 'There's a Werewolf in My Tent'.

Our English text was 'There's a Werewolf in My Tent', about a group of students on a school camping trip with some unusual happenings — is one of their Tutors a werewolf? We created our own stories and diary entries based on this text. In Maths, we have covered place value, addition and subtraction, multiplication and division, using practical equipment and online games to embed basic number facts which will help us throughout our time at school. We finished the term with an introduction to measurement and angles.

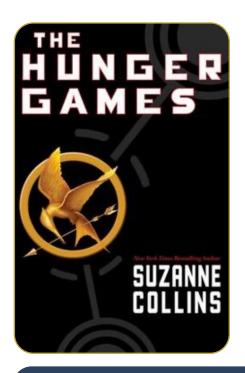
On top of all this, we've learnt French, Music, Art – all these important creative subjects to stimulate our senses – and life skills in our PE and Cooking lessons. We've loved having school dinners in our new school hall and Naomi our Chef has made herself very popular with her yummy desserts.





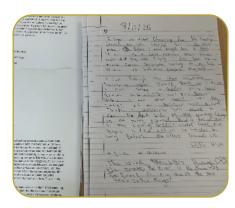
### Group 8: Reading

# The Hunger Games, by Suzanne Collins. Let's Play Murder, Kesia Lupo.



We particularly focused on sensory writing to create powerful pieces of creative writing.

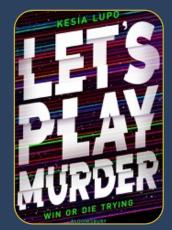
For the first half of the term, we have studied The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins. We particularly focused on sensory writing to create powerful pieces of creative writing. The students created their own Hunger Games arenas and wrote about their tributes being trapped there.



They created a success criteria that they needed to use to make their own writing more powerful, including similes and metaphors, sensory language and personification. The class produced some excellent pieces of work.

For the second term, we started to read

Let's Play Murder by Kesia Lupo. The class liked the change of book, and they felt that the story was aimed more at their age range. We started by role-playing our own murder mystery. They were all given their own clues and had to solve the crime. The class enjoyed putting all the pieces together, although they were quick to turn on each other!



The murderer did an excellent job of making the other classmates suspicious of each other.

As we started to read through the book, the class enjoyed making predictions about who the murderer was and guessing what each player's motives would be. We have also looked at using punctuation for emotion and then implemented these into monologues from the points of view of characters from the story.

Each student picked a different character to write as, and we had some interesting and often dark points of view.

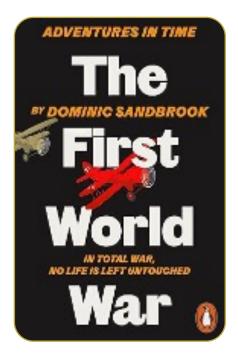
One student has enjoyed the story so much that he has been writing his own version in his spare time!





### Groups 5 & 6: Reading

# The First World War, part of the Adventures in Time series, by Dominic Sandbrook



Over the autumn term, both groups 5 & 6 have been reading and studying The First World War, part of the Adventures in Time series, by Dominic Sandbrook.

This is a non-fiction story, but it uses language techniques to make it feel like a fictional one. Both classes have enjoyed this book, and we have had lots of volunteers to read aloud. The classes also enjoy setting each other quiz questions from the book, trying to make them harder

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and harder for each other.

We have been studying various language techniques over the term, including imagery, personification, alliteration, metaphors and similes. Both classes were tasked with including as many figurative language techniques as they could into their own war poems. We then collated these and created class War Poem Anthologies.

Students also studied diary writing and compiled a list of criteria that would make a diary successful. They then wrote their own diaries, some from the point of view of soldiers

fighting in the trenches, some as pilots, and some as civilians affected by the war. Students focused on sensory language as

a way to make the reader also feel like they were experiencing the same events and to create vivid imagery.

Throughout the term, we have also been developing our analytical skills by writing PEE

paragraphs. This has meant the need to find and retrieve relevant information from the book to use as quotations to back up the points we are making. PEE Paragraphs are an extremely useful skill that students will continue to use throughout their English careers, and learning how to use them in Year 8 puts them at an advantage for KS4.



### Groups 5 & 6: Maths

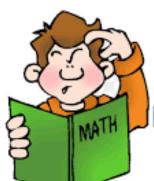
# Using apparatus and problem solving!

This term Group 5 have been using apparatus to deepen understanding of mathematical concepts.

Group 5 have used counting blocks to demonstrate place value and develop addition and subtraction written methods.

The group have also been able to read and plot coordinates using the four quadrants. They can now plot the coordinates when making polygons.





### **Problem Solving**

Group 8 have been developing their written methods for the 4 operations and learning why problem-solving aspects of maths are vital skills they will need in the future.

The group respond positively to understanding how the learning they undertake will benefit them in the future, whether that is for a career or in general life and budgeting.













### Key Stage 3 & 4: Maths

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ROLL DAY



This term in KS3 Mathematics, students focused on key areas within Algebra and the Number System.

Their Algebra work introduced them to number sequences, algebraic notation, substitution, and the formation of expressions and equations.

Within the Number System, students strengthened their understanding of place value, ordering and decimals, explored positive and negative powers with an introduction to indices, and practised applying the four operations accurately using BIDMAS.

This term in KS4 Mathematics, students have covered a wide range of topics linked to both the Functional Skills Level qualifications and the Higher GCSE curriculum.

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Their work in Number has included rounding to decimals and significant figures, applying the order of operations in multi-step problems, and strengthening skills with fractions, percentages, ratio, and proportion. In Algebra, students have developed confidence in simplifying expressions, solving linear equations, finding unknowns, and have been introduced to quadratic expressions and equations, as well as beginning to change the subject of a formula. They have also explored graphs and key geometric skills such as finding missing angles. In addition, students have studied Transformations—Translation, Rotation, Reflection, and Enlargement—applying these to solve increasingly complex problems. Throughout the term, they have been preparing for their Functional Skills exams by applying their learning in practical contexts and completing practice papers to build fluency and confidence.



### **Art:** Creativity & Achievements

# I'm delighted by the creativity, dedication, and amazing outcomes from every student!

This term has been full of creativity and achievement! KS2 students explored different art processes and went on to create stunning mosaics, while KS3 designed clocks and sculpted expressive human figures. Year 10 GCSE students have launched their first independent projects with flair, and Year 11 are applying all their skills to final pieces as they gear up for exam prep in January.





















### **Events:** Panto, Coffee & Jumpers

# Chipping Norton Theatre Save the Children, and Macmillan Coffee Morning



#### **Pantomime Trip**

Groups 1 – 4 were very fortunate to be able to visit the Chipping Norton Theatre pantomime in December, enjoying their production of Beauty of Beast. Students joined in cheering and booing, and singing along with the performance. We enjoyed a picnic lunch at the interval and of course loved catching the sweets thrown to the audience!

"My favourite Filip Filop, his name was silly. And I liked it when the snails found love!" – **William** 

"I liked when the Beast and Lily got married at the end" – **Enna** 

### **Macmillan Coffee Morning**

In September Park School joined in with the Macmillan Coffee Morning, with staff and students baking and buying cakes to support the important work of the Macmillan Cancer Charity. Together we raised nearly £150!

#### **Christmas Jumper Day**

On Friday 12 December students and staff came together to fund-raise for Save the Children, donating money to wear Christmas jumpers to school for the day. This is an annual event for Park School and we are proud to support this charity. The timing coincided this year with our first open afternoon for parents where parents and carers were invited into school for mince pies and to meet with the SLT team.









### A1, A2 & A3: Maths & Science

It has been a pleasure to teach Maths and Science this term and as we draw to a close of the year to reflect on the learning that has taken place across A1, A2 and A3.

Students have engaged thoughtfully with new ideas, developed practical skills, and grown in confidence as learners, supported by clear instruction and meaningful real-world connections.

#### Science

In Autumn term in Science, A1 explored the respiratory system with great curiosity and enthusiasm. We learned to identify and name the key parts of the respiratory system, building a clear understanding of how the body works to support breathing and keep us healthy.

In lessons, we constructed simple lung models, allowing us to see how air moves in and out of the lungs. Practical activities brought learning to life and helped us connect theory with real-world understanding.

In this unit, we also learned about respiratory diseases and substances that can harm our breathing.



Thoughtful discussions encouraged students to consider the importance of caring for their bodies and making healthy choices.

#### **Physics**

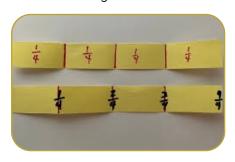
In Physics, the focus shifted to hidden forces, including gravity and elastic forces. We investigated how springs and rubber materials stretch when forces are applied, developing an understanding of how forces act and can be measured. Through handson investigations, we carried out fair tests, recorded results, and used force meters to measure force in Newtons.



#### **Maths**

Maths learning this term placed a strong emphasis on practical application. In A1 and A2 we developed skills in rounding and estimating. Group A3 used rounding and estimating to plan a monthly budget based on chosen jobs and salaries, considering outgoings and exploring income tax and tax brackets. This work supported financial awareness and helped students understand the importance

of accurate calculations in everyday decision-making.



Students also built confidence in working with fractions, percentages, and decimals. They applied this learning to calculating discounts and price increases, reinforcing the relevance of Maths beyond the classroom. Group A2 explored fractions in greater depth using fraction walls, a visual and handson resource that supported understanding of equivalent fractions and number relationships. These activities were both engaging and effective, helping students make clear connections between concepts.

A further highlight in Maths was learning about coordinates and the four quadrants. We enjoyed creating our own designs using coordinates and taking part in coordinate-based games. We also used the four quadrants to explore reflections and translations, developing a clearer understanding of movement and symmetry. This topic proved both enjoyable and challenging, with students showing creativity and enthusiasm throughout.

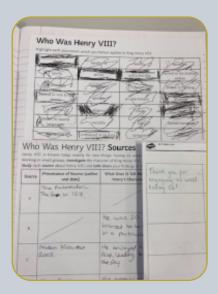
Overall, students have shown enthusiasm, perseverance, and pride in their learning.



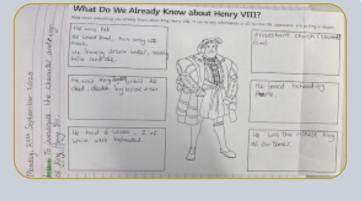
### A2: History, English & IT

#### History

In History this term, group A2 have been investigating and researching the history of their local area.



Highlights have been trips to the war memorials



in Shipton-Under-Wychwood and Chipping Norton and becoming historical detectives, scouring the internet for more information about local soldiers who died in WW1 and 2.

Class A1 have enjoyed learning about the ruthlessness of the Tudor Kings and Queens.

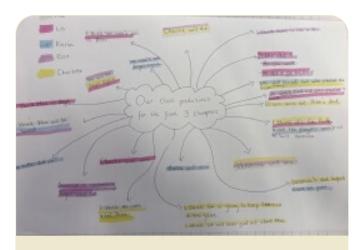
We particularly enjoyed learning about how vain Elizabeth I was and the lengths she went to to maintain her beauty and the number of be-headings committed by each Tudor monarch.

#### **English**

In English this term, A2 have found themselves immersed in the book Let's Play Murder by Kesia Lupo. We have been constantly entertained by the twists and turns in the story and have enjoyed



trying to work out who, how and why the character of Orson was killed. The class have engaged imaginatively with their creative writing pieces of writing a newspaper article and a blurb for a horror novel.



#### IT

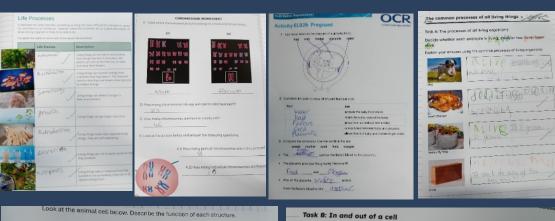
In IT, A2 and A1 have been developing and perfecting their basic computer skills, following the OCR Functional Skills Qualification. We have learnt about the importance of digital organisation and have cleared up our areas, have made our internet searches more efficient and have learnt about the creation of the internet and the WWW.

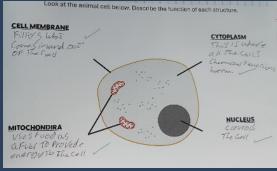


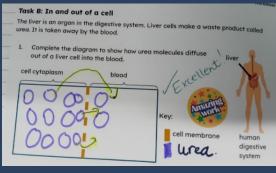
## Key Stage 4: Science

### This term in Science, we focused on the topics of Cells and Reproduction.

We explored the structure and function of cells, the process of cell division, and the different ways substances are transported across the cell membrane. We also examined specialised cells and how their structures are adapted to suit their specific functions. In addition, we briefly introduced stem cells and discussed their potential benefits. We discussed the structure and function of the male and female reproductive organs. We also explored the process of fertilisation, the role of chromosomes, and the hormonal changes that occur during puberty.

















### Key Stage 4: Art

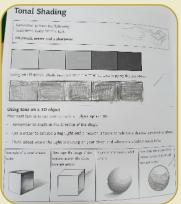


### This term in Art, we explored the theme of clocks.

We investigated how and why clocks are made and studied the history of timekeeping. We examined a range of clock designs, identified our favourite examples, and researched the work of different clock makers, choosing one to study in more detail. Using this research, we designed and created our own original clock.

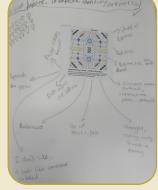
We then moved on to the theme of Identity, where we explored what identity means and reflected on the elements that make up our own identities. We studied and analysed famous artworks that focus on identity before planning and creating our own identity-based piece.

Throughout both themes, we developed our art skills and techniques, strengthening our understanding of colour, line, pattern, shading, and shape.









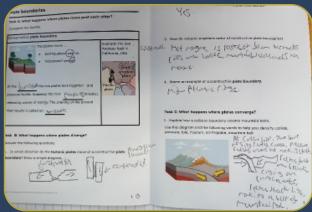


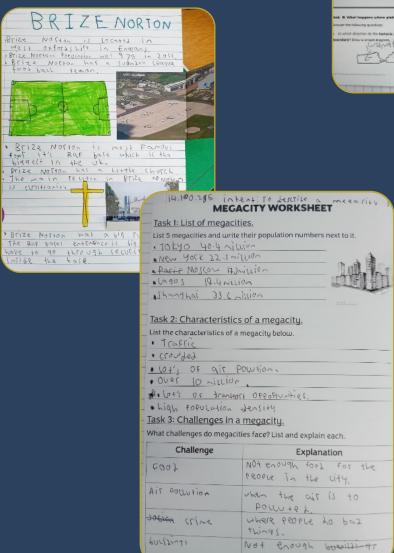


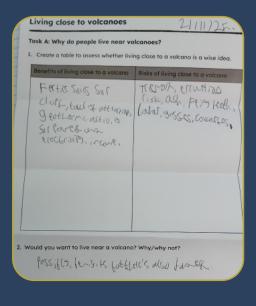
### Key Stage 4: Geography

In Geography this term, we explored how the UK has changed over time, including research into our local area and an investigation of how the UK population has evolved.

We also studied megacities, learning what defines a megacity and examining a range of global examples, before researching a megacity of our own choice. We then moved on to natural disasters, exploring what earthquakes and volcanoes are and examining their impacts on both the Earth and people. We also learned how communities can best prepare for these events. Finally, we studied flooding by investigating its causes and impacts and researching a real-life flooding event.







space to built more hous