Topic UU Spring 2nd Term CANAL LIFE 2026 Class and Year Groups: UU Year3/4

SUCCESS CRITERIA: On the completion of this topic pupils should be able to:

Explain what life was like for those working and living on the canals.
Talk about the impact canal systems had on industry and leisure.
Describe how the lock works.
Investigate the historical features of the local canal.
Name some of the ways in which we use CANALS.
Explain the different risks and how to keep safe in and around water.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

Science: States of matter: Solids, liquids and gases.

History: Local History study: The History of the Birmingham to Worcester Canal system.

Geography:. Exploring the human and physical features of our waterways.

SYNOPSIS:

	States of Matter Separating and dissolving materials. History of the River Severn.
	How far can you squirt water? Plan and predict in science. OS map and symbols in geography. Ariel photos of the canal.
	Building the canal Who and How? Investigating water, collecting and recording results. Local canal study/walk What lives in and around our canals?
	Life on the boats/canals Work and home. Local canal study/walk What lives in and around our canals?
	Easter themed activities. Easter service. *How have we used canals in the past and how do we use them today?*

SCIENCE: Year 4 States of matter

Compare and group materials together, according to whether they are solids, liquids or gases.
Observe that some materials change state when they are heated or cooled, and measure or research the temperature at which this happens in degrees Celsius.
Identify the part played by evaporation and condensation in the water cycle and associate the rate of evaporation with temperature.

Working scientifically

asking relevant questions and using different types of scientific enquiries to answer them
setting up simple practical enquiries, comparative and fair tests
making systematic and careful observations and, where appropriate, taking accurate measurements using standard units, using a range of equipment, including thermometers and data loggers gathering, recording, classifying and presenting data in a variety of ways to help in answering questions. Recording findings using simple scientific language, drawings, labelled diagrams, keys, bar charts, and tables. Reporting on findings from enquiries, including oral and written explanations,
displays or presentations of result and conclusions, using results to draw simple conclusions, make predictions for new values, suggest improvements and raise further questions
identifying differences, similarities or changes related to simple scientific ideas and processes using straightforward scientific evidence to answer questions or to support their findings.

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Who built the canals?
2. Why are rivers/canals and coasts important?
3. How are/were rivers and canals used?
4. How can we stay safe around water?
5. What was Life on the boats/canals like?
6. What lives in and around the canal?
7. How can you use the local canal?
8. What historical features can you spot along the towpath?
9. Who looks after the canals?
10. Why do we need locks?

KEY VOCAB:

Canal
Towpath
navigation
lock
barge
human and physical features
navvies
industry
rural
urban

Opportunities for Extension

Complete their own canal study. Explore (with supervision) the Tibberton canal or local ponds or streams. Walk or cycle the towpaths. Explore the various bridge structures as you travel. Investigate canal art found on canal boats. Visit the Hive with your own family.

Vertical Drivers and Opportunities for Enrichment

Driver: Place in the World.

Places to visit: Visit a river locally and take photos or draw the river scene. Take a boat trip or visit Ironbridge the world's first iron bridge that was erected over the River Severn in 1779. Visit Worcester Museum to find the sturgeon captured in 1835. Visit the Hive to find books around the water theme.

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<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">ENGLISH: Purpose for writing: To Inform and To Entertain.
Rhythm of the rain: adventure story and explanations. The Tear thief: Letter writing. Mrs Noah's Pocket, The River Flows Beside Me. Non-Chronological reports: Life on the Canal link to topic. The Easter Story.
READING Whole class KEY TEXT(S): Nim's Island
Read and Respond: Flood, The Tear Thief. Rhythm of the Rain</td><td>MATHS:
Y3: Fractions and mass/capacity

Y4 Decimals and Fractions</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">MFL: Weather. To listen attentively to spoken language and show understanding by joining in and responding
▪ explore the patterns and sounds of language through songs and rhymes and link the spelling, sound and meaning of words
▪ engage in conversations; ask and answer questions; express opinions and respond to those of others; seek clarification and help*
▪ develop accurate pronunciation and intonation so that others understand when they are reading aloud or using familiar words and phrases*
▪ read carefully and show understanding of words, phrases and simple writing and appreciate stories, songs, poems and rhymes in the language
▪ broaden their vocabulary and develop their ability to understand new words that are introduced into familiar written material, including through using a dictionary
▪ write phrases from memory, and adapt these to create new sentences, to express ideas clearly</td></tr>
<tr><td>PE: Netball: To play competitive games, modified where appropriate and apply basic principles suitable for attacking and defending.

Dance: To perform dances using a range of movement patterns. To compare their performances with previous ones and demonstrate improvement to achieve their personal best.</td><td>MUSIC: Charanga unit: Lean on me
To play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression. To listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory use and understand staff and other musical notations appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians.</td><td>Geography: Place knowledge: places on large scale maps, (e.g. Find UK or India on globe) Places on larger scale maps e.g. map of Europe. Follow a route on a map with some accuracy. (e.g. whilst orienteering) Geographical skill and field work: Use junior atlases. 4 compass points to follow/give directions: Begin to identify features on aerial/oblique photographs. Recognise why a key is needed. Human and physical: Physical geography, including: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts (link to work on Rainforest)History: Local History study: The History of the River Severn and Birmingham to Worcester Canal system. Enquiry: Use evidence to build up a picture of a past event. Choose relevant material to present a picture of one aspect of life in time past. Ask a variety of questions. Use the library and internet for research

DT: Magnetic Mystery: Children will explore how magnets work and how magnetic forces can be used to make models move mysteriously. They will investigate magnetic attraction and repulsion and identify everyday uses of magnets in toys and tools. Through focused practical tasks, they will develop construction skills such as joining, reinforcing and strengthening materials using techniques like folds, tabs and flanges. Drawing inspiration from our canal topic, children will follow design criteria, plan and build a canal-themed model featuring a magnetic hidden movement, using recycled and sustainable materials wherever possible. They will apply problem-solving to refine their designs through a test–improve–evaluate process.</td></tr>
<tr><td>PSHE and RSE:
Rights and responsibilities

BRITISH VALUES: Individual Liberty.

School Value: Truthfulness</td><td colspan="2">ICT/COMPUTING: PURPLE MASH: Online safety. To design, write and debug programs that accomplish specific goals, including controlling or simulating physical systems; solve problems by decomposing them into smaller parts. to use sequence, selection, and repetition in programs; work with variables and various forms of input and output. To use logical reasoning to explain how some simple algorithms work and to detect and correct errors in algorithms and programs. To understand computer networks including the internet; how they can provide multiple services, such as the world wide web; and the opportunities they offer for communication and collaboration. To use search technologies effectively, appreciate how results are selected and ranked, and be discerning in evaluating digital content. To select, use and combine a variety of software (including internet services) on a range of digital devices to design and create a range of programs, systems and content that accomplish given goals, including collecting, analysing, evaluating and presenting data and information. To use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly; recognise acceptable/unacceptable behaviour; identify a range of ways to report concerns about content and contact.</td></tr>
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ASSESSMENT DESCRIPTORS	
Science Targets - A Year 3 Scientist	**Science Targets - A Year 4 Scientist**
• ask relevant questions and use different types of scientific enquiries to answer them • set up simple practical enquiries, comparative and fair tests • make systematic and careful observations and, where appropriate, take accurate measurements using standard units, using a range of equipment, including thermometers and data loggers • gather, record, classify and present data in a variety of ways to help in answering questions record findings using simple scientific language, drawings, labelled diagrams, keys, bar charts, and tables • report on findings from enquiries, including oral and written explanations, displays or presentations of results and conclusions • use results to draw simple conclusions, make predictions for new values, suggest improvements and raise further questions • identify differences, similarities or changes related to simple scientific ideas and processes use straightforward scientific evidence to answer questions or to support their findings.	• ask relevant questions and use different types of scientific enquiries to answer them • set up simple practical enquiries, comparative and fair tests • make systematic and careful observations and, where appropriate, take accurate measurements using standard units, using a range of equipment, including thermometers and data loggers • gather, record, classify and present data in a variety of ways to help in answering questions record findings using simple scientific language, drawings, labelled diagrams, keys, bar charts, and tables • report on findings from enquiries, including oral and written explanations, displays or presentations of results and conclusions • use results to draw simple conclusions, make predictions for new values, suggest improvements and raise further questions identify differences, similarities or changes related to simple scientific ideas and processes use straightforward scientific evidence to answer questions or to support their findings.
History Targets - A Year 3 Geographer	**History Targets - A Year 4 Geographer**
• Investigate places and themes at more than one scale • Begin to collect and record evidence • Analyse evidence and begin to draw conclusions e.g. make comparisons between two locations using photos/ pictures, temperatures in different locations. 4 compass points to follow/give directions: Use letter/no. co-ordinates to locate features on a map. Begin to use map sites on internet. • Begin to use junior atlases. Begin to identify features on aerial/oblique photographs.	Extend to satellite images, aerial photographs Investigate places and themes at more than one scale Begin to identify significant places and environments Use junior atlases. Use map sites on internet. Identify features on aerial/oblique photographs. Begin to use 8 compass points; Use letter/no. co-ordinates to locate features on a map confidently. Physical geography, including: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts.
DT Targets - A Year 3 Designer	**DT Targets - A Year 4 Designer**
• Generate ideas for an item, considering its purpose and the user/s • Identify a purpose and establish criteria for a successful product. • Plan the order of their work before starting • Explore, develop and communicate design proposals by modelling ideas • Make drawings with labels when designing • Select tools and techniques for making their product • Evaluate their product against original design criteria e.g. how well it meets its intended purpose	• Generate ideas, considering the purposes for which they are designing • Make labelled drawings from different views showing specific features • Develop a clear idea of what has to be done, planning how to use materials, equipment and processes, and suggesting alternative methods of making, if the first attempts fail • Select appropriate tools and techniques for making their product • Join and combine materials and components accurately in temporary and permanent ways • Evaluate their products carrying out appropriate tests

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PE Targets - A Year 3 Dancer and Games Player	PE Targets - A Year 4 Dancer and Games Player
• improvise freely, translating ideas from a stimulus into movement • create dance phrases that communicate ideas • share and create dance phrases with a partner and in a small group • repeat, remember and perform these phrases in a dance • use dynamic, rhythmic and expressive qualities clearly and with control • throw and catch with control to keep possession and advance up the pitch/court • be aware of space and use it to support team-mates and cause problems for the opposition • choose and use a range of simple tactics for sending the ball in different ways to make it difficult for their opponent • know and use rules fairly to keep games going • use a range of skills, e.g. throwing, striking, intercepting and stopping a ball, with some control and accuracy • choose and vary skills and tactics to suit the situation in a game • set up small games through knowing the rules, using them fairly to keep games going;	• respond imaginatively to a range of stimuli related to character and narrative • use simple motifs and movement patterns to structure dance phrases on their own, with a partner and in a group • refine, repeat and remember dance phrases and dances • perform dances clearly and fluently • show sensitivity to the dance idea and the accompaniment • throw and catch with control, accuracy and speed to keep possession and advance up the pitch/court • be aware of space and use it to support team-mates and cause problems for the opposition – make the right decisions • choose and use a range of tactics for sending the ball in different ways to make it difficult for their opponent to intercept • use a range of skills, e.g. throwing, striking, intercepting and stopping a ball, with control and accuracy; • choose and vary skills and tactics to suit the situation in a game – increasingly complex situations • set up games through knowing the rules, using them fairly to keep games going
MFL Targets - A Year 3 Linguist	**MFL Targets - A Year 4 Linguist**
Understand a few familiar spoken words and phrases – e.g. Say and/or repeat a few words and short simple phrases – e.g. Recognises and reads out a few familiar words or phrases – e.g. from stories and rhymes, labels on familiar objects, the date. Use visual clues to help with reading. Understand and respect that there are people and places in the world around me that are different to where I live and play. Understand that some people speak a different language to my own.	Understand a range of familiar spoken phrases. Answer simple questions and give basic information. Understands some familiar written phrases. Begin to spell some commonly used words correctly. Identify similarities and differences in my culture to that of another. Talk about celebrations in other cultures and know about aspects of daily life in other countries that are different to my own.

Music Targets - A Year 3/4 Musician

- Sing with awareness of pulse and control of rhythm. Recognise simple structures. (Phrases).
- Demonstrate the ability to recognise the use of structure and expressive elements through dance.
- Identify phrases that could be used as an introduction, interlude and ending.
- Recognise rhythmic patterns.
- Perform a repeated pattern to a steady pulse.
- Explore and select different melodic patterns.
- Recognise and explore different combinations of pitch sounds. Choose instruments on the basis of internalised sounds.
- Compose music in pairs and make improvements to their own work. Create an accompaniment to a known song.
- Create descriptive music in pairs or small groups.