



Dear all

Thank you all for another great week! Some of my favourite hours have been those in the classroom with some of you in Years 8 and 9 teaching you English, and then watching the lads who go out and play rugby on the field each lunchtime – the enthusiasm and positive spirit that I have seen I know matches what soooo many of you are managing, hour by hour, day by day. I don't know if you realise how incredibly brilliant that is? If you don't, I'm telling you – it is. And the same goes for the adults – they're managing the usual demands of their roles along with all the additional arrangements we've got in place right now. It's a huge team effort.

It really has been an overwhelmingly positive start, but let me still do what any Headteacher must do and give some reminders:

- When you're in your outdoor zones, let's 100% of us treat the environment with complete respect. I've heard about one or two of you pulling leaves off trees and leaping about in our Memorial Garden. Now I get that you need to let off steam at breaks and lunches, but that never needs to involve anything thoughtless. We need your best selves 100% and not nearly 100% of the time. I'll be keeping my ear out for this next week, and having a word!
- At the ends of your lessons, if you're someone comfortable to and able to wear a face covering, as you move around the school corridors and anywhere where there are a lot of people about, please put that face covering on. If you're not comfortable or able to do this, we understand that, and the guidance stipulates that is fine, too. But at the moment, lots of us who'd be content to do so aren't doing so without a heap of reminders, so can you guys all pull together on that please?
- Can we trust all of you to stick to your own year groups' zones? I think the answer is: pretty much, but we need to nudge that to ALL of you. We had a few people strolling through another year group's corridor on Friday afternoon, and one or two people in Y8 going into the Y7 outdoor zone. I don't expect you to understand all the ins and outs of the guidance, but can you just trust me that we really need to commit to our zones at all times of the day? When soooo many people are doing without any second thought, don't be the person who is careless about this.
- Thank you for going straight to your tutor bases when you arrive at school, and for waiting for people in your own year group or your siblings in the right places around the school site, and never out on the pavement. We've had some really appreciative emails from parents at Orchard and from within our own Noadswood family about this, so please keep that up, it's been a huge help.

OK, enough with the reminders for this week's letter, and on to the brilliant work. First, it's a big shout out from me to the two Year 9 groups I taught – we discussed the ideas around the terror and distress of living in a dictatorship, and began to consider poetry written in that type of context. Big ideas for any thinkers, but you were equal to it.



There was more great thinking from Mrs Blowers' 7H RS class: They listened carefully and created some beautiful spider diagrams showing what the subject means to them.

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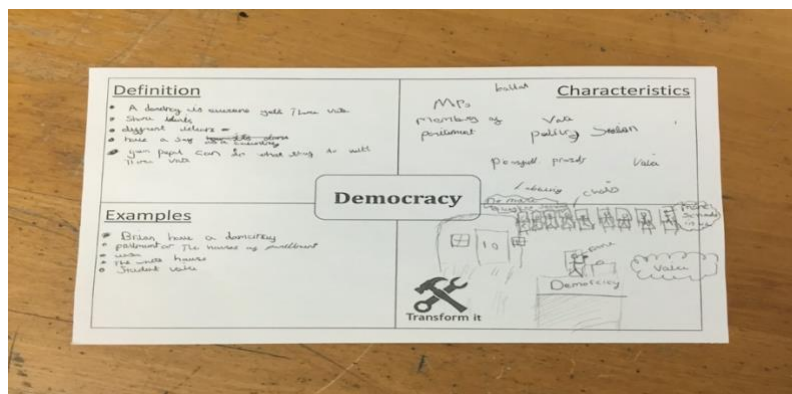
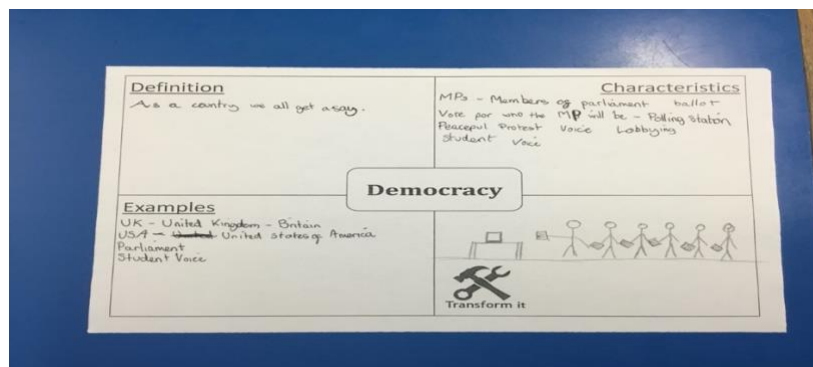


Ellie L gets a special mention from Mrs Slater, for her excellent attempt at solving a really challenging algebraic fraction equation – top effort, Ellie!

Aiden has made a great start back this term according to Mrs French, and according to me, too – it's lovely to see you every morning, Aiden, with your sister, and we don't take for granted the way you, and so many of you, are coming in, cheerful and up for making the best of things right now. A similar shout out goes to Mason from Miss Fitzgerald and me.

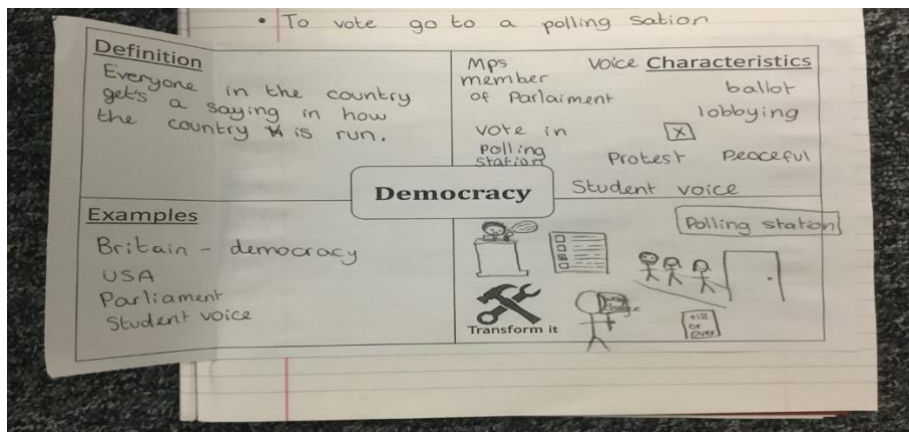
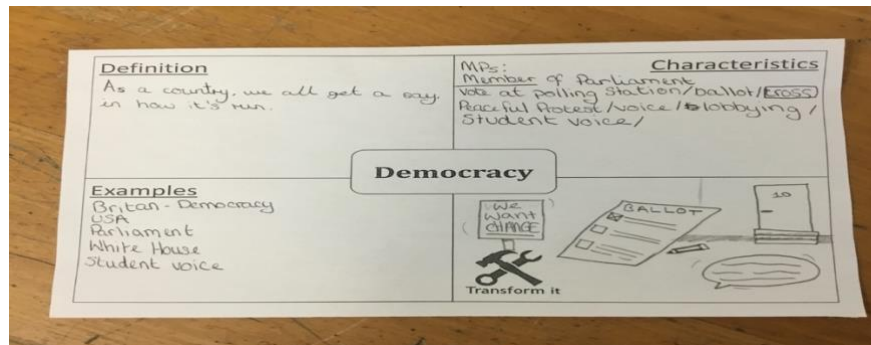
Mrs Woodhouse wants to thank all the classes in T27 who have taken on board the cleaning of their computers and work stations in a very positive way! EVERY student has done this really well without any fuss and in a very mature way respecting the need for keeping each other safe. I definitely echo those thanks and respect to you all.

Next I want to showcase some excellent work that Miss Rawlinson sent me, by 7N's Eren, Finley, Katie and Freya who have been thinking hard about the etymology of Democracy – etymology is the origin of a word, how it came in to the language, and then how its meaning has developed over time. Miss R was in a virtual conference about teaching through looking at word origins in this way, and you guys were the first class to work on it with her, so well done!





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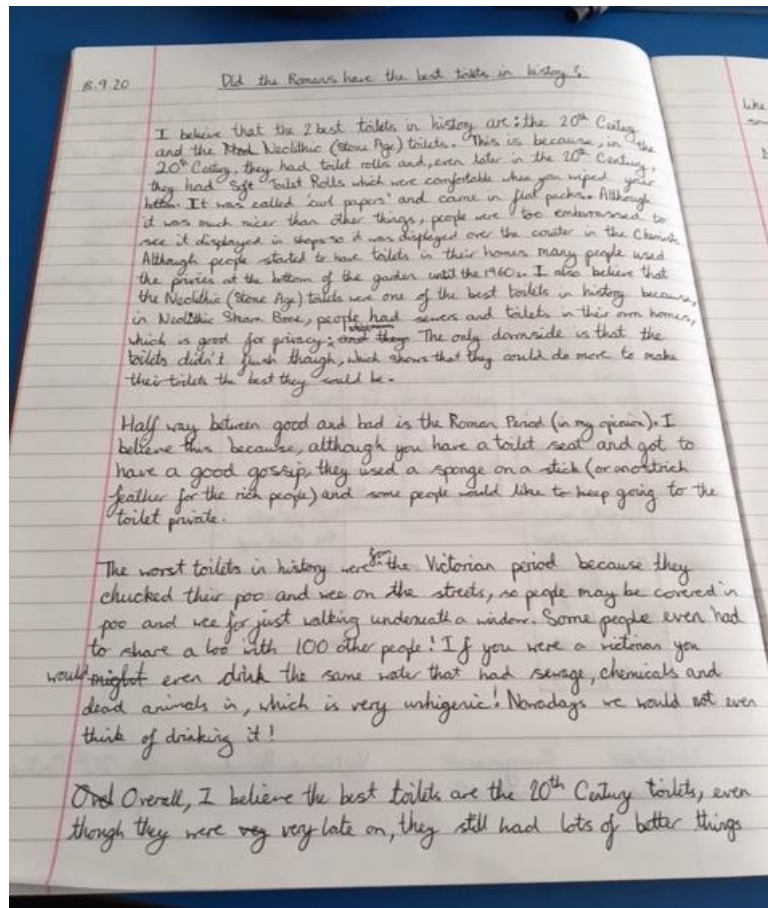


Miss R would also like to pay tribute to 11t2 for their amazing efforts in coming back to GCSE History, looking at the environmental site for Elizabeth I, and to 8r0 History for thinking outside the box, using guided reading to understand about the history of tea and the British Empire, and as they start to investigate the British Empire history with India.

Staying with History, Mrs Groom sent me Mia's terrific discussion of whether the Romans had the best toilets in any historical period – she didn't think they did, in case you're wondering... But I read it wasn't good times in the toilet department for the Victorians, because you sometimes finished up drinking the same water as had had sewerage, chemicals and even dead animals in it. Let's move on but not until you've checked out her super writing on this topic:



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Something for you to get involved with next, sent my way by one of our legend Science technicians, Mrs Farrant. Her daughter is involved with an inquiry for the national charity Mind into mental health in secondary schools called "educating mental health"

As a part of this research, Mind has released a survey for young people aged 13-25 and your parents/carers about opinions into this matter. If you'd like to take part, the links are below:

https://wwindex.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0jr9kRS2g5yvsB7

<https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/campaigns/educating-mental-health-minds-inquiry-into-mental-health-in-schools/>



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If it triggers something in you, make sure you reach out and let someone know, whether that's a feeling or an idea. You can speak to your tutor or House Leader, or you can see Miss Harwood, our ELSA, at the year group wellbeing drop ins:

Wednesdays: Y7 lunchtime

Y9 lunchtime

Thursdays: Y8 lunchtime

Y10 lunchtime

Fridays: Y11 lunchtime

You don't have to be having ELSA sessions to stop by to the drop in for some wellbeing or emotional support, but make sure you don't head down at the wrong time, or we'll be breaking bubbles. If you don't feel like heading down on your own, chat to your House Leader or tutor first.

You can also talk to me or to Mrs Loveday about things like this – drop us an ePraise message and we will make a slot to see you, we promise, even if you have to wait a few days around our diaries.

On the subject of wellbeing, hopefully you all saw my assembly over the past week, and that you're going to work on finding the message in the mess of this crazy year, by focusing on what you enjoy and taking forwards the knowledge you've got about what's important to you and what scares you. That self-awareness helps everyone to make time for enjoyment and to reach out for the help you need, two key ingredients to help you thrive in life, not just survive.

As I told you, Mr Stone and Miss Harwood have also put together the short mindfulness activity I shared with you during the assembly.

We're just going to take a couple of minutes at the end of tutor time and at the start of as many Period 5 lessons as possible to centre ourselves, listen to sounds from nature and work on our calm, gentle breathing. If you find the stillness tough, just keep quiet and think about something positive, but don't be the person who starts talking or being daft.

It's really important for everyone's wellness that there are a few minutes per day where we pause and calm our minds together. Give it your best go. The link on the slide is here:

<https://youtu.be/c2NmyoXBxmE>

You can put it on to calm your breathing and your day even when you're not in school – you'd be surprised how well it works to soothe a busy, tired or anxious mind.

I'm going to end by an unashamed plug for an act that was on Britain's Got Talent last week, Class Dynamix, that you can watch at: <https://youtu.be/txGh4S8hu8I>



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Now, you can say this show is a load of cheese and nonsense, and I won't care – I'll still love it but other opinions are fine! However, the song by Class Dynamix has some important words in it that really are not nonsense:

'I am strong, I am powerful, I am enough, I am beautiful, I'm original, I'm unique, I'm incredible, I'm me....

I am all the things that I believe I am'

I wish you a week during which you give yourselves only these sorts of messages – when you feel the negative thoughts come in, say to them I hear you, but I am inviting you to leave (you may need to say this inside your head!!) and then put the positives back in. You are all more than good enough. We got this.

Keep doing all the brilliant things you're doing that make us so proud to be in the Noadswood family.

See you all in school,

Miss M 😊