

Topic 1: Computational thinking

Subject Content	Students should:	
1.1 Decomposition and abstraction	1.1.1	understand the benefit of using decomposition and abstraction to model aspects of the real world and analyse, understand and solve problems
	1.1.2	understand the benefits of using subprograms
1.2 Algorithms	1.2.1	be able to follow and write algorithms (flowcharts, written descriptions, draft program code or assessment reference language) that use sequence, selection, repetition (count-controlled, pre-conditioned, post-conditioned) and iteration (over every item in a data structure), and input, processing and output to solve problems
	1.2.2	understand the need for and be able to follow and write algorithms that use variables and constants and one- and two-dimensional data structures (strings, records, arrays)
	1.2.3	understand the need for and be able to follow and write algorithms that use arithmetic operators (add, subtract, divide, multiply, modulus, integer division), relational operators (equal to, less than, greater than, not equal to, less than or equal to, greater than or equal to) and logical operators (AND, OR, NOT)
	1.2.4	be able to determine the correct output of an algorithm for a given set of data and use a trace table to determine what value a variable will hold at a given point in an algorithm
	1.2.5	be able to identify and correct errors (logic, runtime) in algorithms
	1.2.6	understand how standard algorithms (bubble sort, merge sort, linear search, binary search) work
	1.2.7	be able to use logical reasoning and test data to evaluate an algorithm's fitness for purpose and efficiency (number of compares, number of passes through a loop, use of memory)
1.3 Truth tables	1.3.1	be able to apply logical operators (AND, OR, NOT) in appropriate truth tables to solve problems

Topic 2: Data

Subject Content	Students should:	
2.1 Binary	2.1.1	understand that computers use binary to represent data (numbers, text, sound, graphics) and program instructions and be able to determine the maximum number of states that can be represented by a binary pattern of a given length
	2.1.2	understand how computers represent and manipulate unsigned integers and two's complement signed integers
	2.1.3	be able to convert between denary and 8-bit binary numbers (0 – 255, -127 – 128)
	2.1.4	be able to add together two positive binary patterns and apply logical and arithmetic binary shifts
	2.1.5	understand the concept of overflow in relation to the number of bits available to store a value
	2.1.6	understand why hexadecimal notation is used and be able to convert between hexadecimal and binary
2.2 Data Representation	2.2.1	2.2.1 understand how computers encode characters using 7-bit ASCII
	2.2.2	understand how bitmap images are represented in binary (pixels, resolution, colour depth)
	2.2.3	understand how analogue sound is represented in binary (amplitude, sample rate, bit depth, sample interval)
	2.2.4	understand the limitations of binary representation of data (sampling frequency, resolution) when constrained by the number of available bits
2.3 Data Storage & Compression	2.3.1	understand that data storage is measured in binary multiples (bit, nibble, byte, kibibyte, mebibyte, gibibyte, tebibyte) and be able to construct expressions to calculate file sizes and data capacity requirements
	2.3.2	understand the need for data compression and methods of compressing data (lossless, lossy)

Topic 3: Computers

Subject Content	Students should:	
3.1 Hardware	3.1.1	understand the von Neumann stored program concept and the role of main memory (RAM), CPU (control unit, arithmetic logic unit, registers), clock, address bus, data bus, control bus in the fetch-decode-execute cycle
	3.1.2	understand the role of secondary storage and the ways in which data is stored on devices (magnetic, optical, solid state)
	3.1.3	understand the concept of an embedded system and what embedded systems are used for
3.2 Software	3.2.1	understand the purpose and functionality of an operating system (file management, process management, peripheral management, user management)
	3.2.2	understand the purpose and functionality of utility software (file repair, backup, data compression, disc defragmentation, anti-malware)
	3.2.3	understand the importance of developing robust software and methods of identifying vulnerabilities (audit trails, code reviews)
3.3 Programming Languages	3.3.1	understand the characteristics and purposes of low-level and high-level programming languages
	3.3.2	understand how an interpreter differs from a compiler in the way it translates high-level code into machine code

Topic 4: Networks

Subject Content	Students should:	
4.1 Networks	4.1.1	understand why computers are connected in a network
	4.1.2	understand different types of networks (LAN, WAN)
	4.1.3	understand how the internet is structured (IP addressing, routers)
	4.1.4	understand how the characteristics of wired and wireless connectivity impact on performance (speed, range, throughput, bandwidth)
	4.1.5	understand that network speeds are measured in bits per second (kilobit, megabit, gigabit) and be able to construct expressions involving file size, transmission rate and time
	4.1.6	understand the role of and need for protocols (Ethernet, Wi-Fi, TCP/IP, HTTP, HTTPS, FTP and email (POP3, SMTP, IMAP))
	4.1.7	understand how the 4-layer (application, transport, network, data link) TCP/IP model handles data transmission over a network
	4.1.8	understand characteristics of network topologies (bus, star, mesh)
4.2 Network Security	4.2.1	understand the importance of network security, ways of identifying network vulnerabilities (penetration testing, ethical hacking) and methods of protecting networks (access control, physical security, firewalls)

Topic 5: Issues and Impacts

Subject Content	Students should:	
5.1 Environmental	5.1.1	understand environmental issues associated with the use of digital devices (energy consumption, manufacture, replacement cycle, disposal)
5.2 Ethical and legal	5.2.1	understand ethical and legal issues associated with the collection and use of personal data (privacy, ownership, consent, misuse, data protection)
	5.2.2	understand ethical and legal issues associated with the use of artificial intelligence, machine learning and robotics (accountability, safety, algorithmic bias, legal liability)
	5.2.3	understand methods of intellectual property protection for computer systems and software (copyright, patents, trademarks, licencing)
5.3 Cybersecurity	5.3.1	understand the threat to digital systems posed by malware (viruses, worms, Trojans, ransomware, key loggers) and how hackers exploit technical vulnerabilities (unpatched software, out-of-date anti-malware) and use social engineering to carry out cyberattacks
	5.3.2	understand methods of protecting digital systems and data (anti-malware, encryption, acceptable use policies, backup and recovery procedures)

Topic 6: Problem Solving with Programming

Subject Content	Students should:	
6.1 Develop code	6.1.1	be able to use decomposition and abstraction to analyse, understand and solve problems
	6.1.2	be able to read, write, analyse and refine programs written in a high-level programming language
	6.1.3	be able to convert algorithms (flowcharts, written descriptions) into programs and convert programs into algorithms
	6.1.4	be able to use techniques (layout, comments, meaningful identifiers, white space) to make programs easier to read, understand and maintain
	6.1.5	be able to identify, locate and correct program errors (logic, syntax, runtime)
	6.1.6	be able to use logical reasoning and test data to evaluate a program's fitness for purpose and efficiency (number of compares, number of passes through a loop, use of memory)
6.2 Constructs	6.2.1	understand the function of and be able to identify the structural components of programs (constants, variables, type declarations and initialisations, assignment statements, command sequences, selection, repetition, iteration, data structures, subprograms, parameters, input/output)
	6.2.2	be able to write programs that make appropriate use of sequencing, selection, repetition (count-controlled, pre-conditioned, post-conditioned), iteration (over every item in a data structure) and single entry/exit points from code blocks and subprograms
6.3 Data types and structures	6.3.1	be able to write programs that make appropriate use of primitive data types (integer, real, Boolean, char) and one- and two-dimensional structured data types (string, array, record)
	6.3.2	be able to write programs that make appropriate use of variables and constants
	6.3.3	be able to write programs that manipulate strings (length, position, substrings, case conversion)

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6.4 Inputs and outputs	6.4.1	be able to write programs that accept and respond appropriately to user input
	6.4.2	be able to write programs that read from and write to comma separated value text files
	6.4.3	understand the need for and be able to write programs that implement validation (length check, presence check, range check, pattern check)
	6.4.4	understand the need for and be able to write programs that implement authentication (ID and password, lookup)
6.5 Operators	6.5.1	be able to write programs that use arithmetic operators (add, subtract, divide, multiply, modulus, integer division)
	6.5.2	be able to write programs that use relational operators (equal to, less than, greater than, not equal to, less than or equal to, greater than or equal to)
	6.5.3	be able to write programs that use logical operators (AND, OR, NOT)
6.6 Subprograms	6.6.1	be able to write programs that use pre-existing and user-devised subprograms (procedures, functions)
	6.6.2	be able to write subprograms (procedures, functions) using parameters to pass data from a calling program into a subprogram
	6.6.3	understand the difference between and be able to write programs that make appropriate use of global and local variables