



## Progression in Substantive Concepts

### Understanding Different Types of Knowledge in History: Substantive Knowledge

This is factual knowledge of the past - key events, place, people etc - and includes two types - 'generative knowledge' and 'fingertip knowledge':

- Generative knowledge is the essential, underpinning, in-depth knowledge of a topic or time period that supports further historical learning and thus supports pupils to generate more knowledge. Generative knowledge can be categorised into '**substantive concepts**' (abstract concepts such as invasion, tax, trade, monarch or empire) and chronological knowledge (knowledge relating to broader developments and the features of historical periods).
  - I. **Substantive Concepts** are concepts concerned with the subject matter of history, such as rights, peace, invasion, trade, war, empire and monarchy. They are embedded throughout the curriculum so that each one is planned to be encountered multiple times throughout the curriculum. Substantive concepts are best understood with repeated encounters in specific, meaningful contexts, rather than being taught in an abstract way. Substantive concepts are classed as generative knowledge because they support the learning of new material. For example, understanding the concept of invasion from an earlier topic supports understanding of the next topic which involves invasion.
  - II. **Chronological knowledge** is also generative knowledge. This is the specific knowledge of the broad characteristics of historical periods and supports pupils to build coherent schema for particular topics.
- **Fingertip knowledge** is the knowledge of the key facts and dates which pupils need in their minds, or at their fingertips, whilst undertaking historical enquiries, without which they would be incapable of constructing answers. Without essential fingertip knowledge, working memory is overloaded when undertaking enquiries, and it is thus useful to have this fingertip knowledge in knowledge organisers. Fingertip knowledge must be taught and pupils must retain it during their enquiry. However, gaining this type of knowledge is not the ultimate long term aim of the primary classroom, and it may not be needed beyond the current topic.

### Substantive Concepts (First Order)

Substantive knowledge is crucial in shaping how our children perceive the world around them, allowing them to construct a comprehensive understanding of the past that seamlessly integrates new historical information. This foundation of substantive knowledge not only aids in their understanding of historical events but also helps them interpret contemporary issues. Key terms such as 'conquest', 'settlement', and 'monarchy' frequently arise throughout our curriculum, providing opportunities for our children to deepen their understanding over time. As they build increasingly complex schemata around these concepts, they become better equipped to tackle more challenging material across various subjects, enhancing their overall learning and retention.

By the end of Key Stage 2, we aim for our pupils to have a solid grasp of **9 essential** substantive concepts. These are categorised into the following areas:

- **Monarchy and Power**
- **Invasion and Conflict**
- **Culture and Civilisation**
- **Economic**
- **Settlement and Community**



They will encounter these concepts repeatedly, supported by meaningful examples that evolve in depth and complexity as they progress through the years.

Substantive Concepts	KS1 Progressive Vocabulary	LKS2 Progressive Vocabulary	UKS2 Progressive Vocabulary
Monarchy and Power	King, Queen, Monarch, Crown, Rule, Coronation, Heir, Kingdom	Reign, Succession, Emperor	Pharaoh, Democracy, Nobles, Dictator, Parliament
Invasion and Conflict	Battle, War, Army, Soldier, Conflict	Empire, Voyage, Barbarian	Conquest, Colonist, Resistance, Invade
Culture and Civilisation	Church, Landmark, Discrimination	Age, Period, Reform	Philosophy, Religious Diversity, Morale
Economic	Buy, Sell, Market, Goods, Invention	Employment, Innovation, Industry, Industrialisation, Trade	Marketplace, Merchant, Workforce
Settlement and Community	Town, City, School, Castle	Archaeology, Archaeologist, Agriculture, Hunter-Gathering, Urbanisation	Territories, Architecture, Colonies, Commonwealth, Dominion

Below is an example of the progression of the substantive concept 'invasion' developed throughout the curriculum. You can see that although Year 5, Unit 1 does not have 'invasion' marked as a main substantive concept for that unit; the concept of invasion is still taught and builds upon pupils' knowledge of invasion from prior units. This is true for all the units where all the substantive concepts are taught in varying degrees of complexity alongside the main substantive concepts for that lesson and unit.

Substantive Concept: Monarchy and Power		
Year Group	Unit	Substantive Knowledge
Year 1	Kings and Queens	Pupils are first introduced to the substantive concept 'monarchy and power' in Year 1 through the unit 'Kings and Queens'. They learn what a monarch is and begin to explore the idea of royal authority by studying significant individuals: King Charles III and Elizabeth I. This unit introduces children to the concept of leadership and the symbolic role of monarchs. Learning within this unit forms the foundation for later study of real-world monarchical power and responsibility in Year 2 (King Charles II), imperial leadership in Year 4 (Claudius), and complex political and religious leadership in Year 5 (Ancient Egypt).
Year 2	The Great Fire of London	In Year 2, pupils revisit the concept of monarchy and power through the study of the Great Fire of London. They learn about King Charles II and his role in responding to the fire through the enquiry question 'What did the King do to make London better?', developing their understanding of how monarchs had influence and responsibility in times of national crisis. This builds on their foundational understanding from Year 1 by showing monarchy in action, and it sets the stage for future exploration of rulers in times of invasion and crisis in Year 4 during the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings unit and in Year 6 whilst exploring Winston Churchill's leadership during WWII.



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Year 4	Roman Britain	Children revisit the concept of monarchy and power in Year 4 by studying the role of Claudius within the Roman Empire, particularly during the Roman occupation of Britain. They consider how power was centralised in Rome and the influence of imperial rule on conquered territories. This introduces pupils to the idea of empire and centralised authority, expanding their understanding from hereditary British monarchy in Years 1 and 2, and preparing them for similar concepts in the Year 5 unit about Ancient Egypt and their learning about pharaohs, and Year 6's learning about wartime national leadership.
Year 4	Anglo-Saxons, Vikings and the Scots	This unit further develops pupils' understanding of monarchy and power through the study of early English kings and Viking leaders. They learn about figures such as King Alfred the Great and the concept of kingdoms, succession and competing claims to power in early medieval Britain. This builds on the themes introduced in Years 1 and 2 by showing the contested and shifting nature of power, and it deepens ideas introduced in Year 4, Roman Britain, about rule and resistance, leading into comparisons with absolute rule in Year 5 and leadership in crisis in Year 6.
Year 5	Ancient Egyptians	Pupils deepen their understanding of monarchy and power by studying the role of the Pharaoh as both a political and religious leader. They explore the idea of divine kingship and the centralised control exercised by rulers in Ancient Egyptian society. This unit expands the concept of monarchy beyond the British Isles, building on pupils' understanding of imperial rule in Year 4 (Claudius) and introducing divine authority, which provides contrast with the more democratic or crisis-driven leadership they will study in Year 6.
Year 6	The Blitz and World War II	In this unit, pupils explore the concept of leadership and national authority through the figure of Winston Churchill. They consider how Churchill's speeches reflected and reinforced his leadership during a time of national crisis, drawing comparisons with earlier monarchs and developing a more complex understanding of power beyond hereditary monarchy. This unit allows pupils to reflect on their learning from Year 2 with King Charles II's response to the Great Fire of London, in Year 4 when learning about Boudicca's leadership during invasion and resistance, and Year 5 (divine monarchy), developing a mature understanding of how leadership adapts to political, social, and military challenges.

**Substantive Concept: Invasion and Conflict**

Year Group	Unit	Substantive Knowledge
Year 1	Fantastic Females	In this unit, pupils learn about significant female figures in history, focusing on Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. Both women lived during times of national and international conflict and made notable contributions during the Crimean War. While the unit does not focus on warfare itself, pupils are introduced to the impact of conflict on individuals and society. This early exposure introduces the human



		experience of conflict, which pupils will later build on through more detailed studies of causes and consequences of warfare.
Year 2	The History of Stafford	In Year 2, pupils learn about the history of Stafford with the incorporation of local landmarks such as Stafford Castle. They explore how the castle was built following the Norman invasion and later played a role in the English Civil War, introducing them to the concept of conflict in both local and national contexts. This develops their understanding of conflict introduced in Year 1 by placing it in a real-world, local setting, which prepares them for exploring broader and more complex invasions in Year 3 (Stone Age to Iron Age) and Year 4 (Romans and Vikings).
Year 3	Stone Age to Iron Age	Building on their prior understanding of conflict and invasion, pupils explore early conflict between tribes over land and resources, and how tools and weapons changed warfare. They also learn about Julius Caesar's attempted invasions of Iron Age Britain, introducing the idea of external threats and the resistance of native communities. This unit deepens the concept of conflict first introduced in Year 2 through the Norman invasion by exploring prehistoric tribal disputes and Roman invasions, setting the stage for continued learning in Year 4's Roman Britain unit and its examination of conquest and rebellion.
Year 4	Roman Britain	Pupils deepen their understanding of invasion and conflict by exploring the question 'When did the Romans invade and why?' They use their prior learning about Julius Caesar's expeditions and are introduced to Claudius' successful conquest of Britain. Pupils examine how the Romans managed resistance and rebellion, including Boudicca's uprising, gaining insight into the nature of empire, power, and opposition. This builds directly on the Roman context introduced in Year 3 and connects to future learning in Year 4's Vikings unit and Year 6's Ancient Greece, where themes of resistance, governance, and the consequences of conflict are explored further.
Year 4	Anglo Saxons, Vikings and Scots Settlement in Britain	Pupils continue their study of invasion and conflict by learning about repeated invasions by the Anglo-Saxons and later the Vikings. They examine causes of invasion, resistance from groups such as the Scots and the eventual merging of cultures and power structures. This unit extends understanding of resistance and conquest from the Roman Britain unit and builds towards comparative analysis in Year 6, when pupils explore global conflict during World War II and inter-city warfare in Ancient Greece.
Year 6	The Blitz and World War II	This substantive concept is revisited in their final year of primary school, where pupils explore modern global conflict through the study of World War II. They learn about the causes of the war, the threat posed to Britain, and how Britain responded to this danger during the Blitz. Pupils also explore the global scale of the conflict and its impact on different groups, including the roles of men in armed and civilian defence. This unit brings together themes from Year 1 (individual responses to war), Year 2 (national conflict), Year 4 (invasion and resistance), and Year 6 during the Ancient Greece unit by providing a modern, global example of conflict, power, resistance, and collective action



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Year 6	Ancient Greece	Lastly, pupils build on their understanding of conflict by studying the rivalry between Ancient Greek city-states, particularly Athens and Sparta. They learn about the Peloponnesian War, the reasons for inter-city conflict, and how different political systems and alliances shaped military action in the ancient world. This unit allows pupils to draw comparisons with previous learning about tribal and national conflict in Year 3 (tribal warfare), Year 4 (Boudicca and Roman rule), and Year 6 (World War II), encouraging a broader understanding of how leadership, ideology, and governance influence the nature of conflict.
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**Substantive Concept: Culture and Civilisation**

Year Group	Unit	Substantive Knowledge
Year 1	Fantastic Females	Children are first introduced to the concept of culture through the lives of significant women: Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. They learn how cultural values shaped their actions and how their contributions influenced society, laying a foundation for understanding how individuals shape and reflect civilisation. This early focus on personal impact and societal roles prepares pupils to revisit changing roles and expectations, especially during times of cultural transformation such as in WWII.
Year 3	Stone Age to Iron Age	Pupils study how early communities developed from hunter-gatherers to settled societies, focusing on the rise of farming, technological advancements, and social organisation. They explore how tools, art, and religion reflected early culture and how these laid the groundwork for later civilisations. This foundational unit introduces the idea that civilisation is shaped by environment, belief, and innovation—ideas pupils later revisit in studies of the Romans, Maya, Egyptians, and Greeks.
Year 4	Roman Britain	Building on their prior learning in Year 3, children learn how Roman culture influenced Britain through the enquiry question ‘How did the Romans influence the culture of the people already here?’. They consider how the Romans brought aspects of their civilisation to Britain and how these interacted with or replaced native traditions. This deepens pupils’ understanding of cultural transmission and sets the stage for comparing later cultural shifts under the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings.
Year 4	Anglo Saxons, Vikings and Scots Settlement in Britain	Following the Roman invasion of Britain and the impact of Roman culture, pupils explore the cultural contributions and beliefs of the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings, such as storytelling, art, religion, and daily life. They learn how the blending of cultures shaped early medieval Britain. This continues the narrative of cultural evolution and identity that began with early settlers and Romans and prepares pupils for later comparisons with non-European civilisations.
Year 5	The Maya	Pupils build on earlier studies of cultural development (Stone Age to Iron Age) and Roman influence by exploring how the Maya constructed a distinct civilisation in a different geographical and historical context, inviting comparison with Egyptian and Greek cultures. Pupils gain an understanding of Mayan



		civilisation by studying key aspects of culture, including the ancient Maya ball game and its cultural significance, the Maya Long Count Calendar System, and the Maya writing system and its uses. Through this learning, pupils gain insight into how the Maya expressed identity, belief, and societal organisation through complex cultural practices.
Year 5	Ancient Egyptians	Pupils study Ancient Egyptian civilisation by exploring the Egyptian creation story and key gods, the symbolic role of animals, and the design and purpose of temples, tombs, and pyramids. They also examine Egyptian beliefs about death and the afterlife. This unit builds pupils' understanding of how culture and belief were deeply embedded in the structures and practices of ancient life, reinforcing earlier learning about religion and symbolism in early societies, and introducing ideas they will compare with Greek beliefs in Year 6.
Year 6	The Blitz and World War II	In modern history, pupils study how societal roles and cultural expectations changed during World War II, particularly for women. They explore the roles of women in the services, in factories, as land girls, and in other forms of paid and voluntary work. Through this, pupils gain an understanding of how war reshaped everyday life, values, and contributions on the home front, and how culture evolves in response to major events. This unit revisits the concept of personal impact first encountered in Year 1 and invites pupils to reflect on how cultural values shift in response to national challenges, contrasting ancient and modern views on societal roles.
Year 6	Ancient Greece	Pupils study the cultural achievements of Ancient Greece, including key aspects of geography and religion that influenced unity and division across the Greek city-states. They learn about the construction and significance of The Parthenon and explore how Ancient Greek civilisation has had a lasting influence on modern life. This unit enables pupils to evaluate how ancient civilisations shaped both their own societies and future cultures. Pupils build directly on prior learning of ancient cultures (Egypt, Maya, Rome) and are encouraged to draw comparisons in areas such as architecture, religion, writing, and legacy.

**Substantive Concept: Economic**

Year Group	Unit	Substantive Knowledge
Year 2	George Stephenson	Pupils learn about the development of the railway and how it transformed travel, trade, and job opportunities in Britain. They begin to understand how new inventions can impact people's lives and local economies. This introduces pupils to the idea that technological innovation drives economic change, which they build upon in Year 3 when learning about the Industrial Revolution in the Black Country and at Cadbury.



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Year 2	The History of Stafford	Pupils explore how Stafford grew as a market town, looking at trade, industry, and local businesses over time. They begin to understand how towns develop economically and how work has changed for people living there. This early understanding of local economic development prepares pupils to study regional economic growth through industry in Year 3 and compare it to ancient trade systems in Year 5.
Year 3	History of the Black Country and Cadburys	Building on their understanding of economic development from Year 2, pupils study the growth of industry during the Industrial Revolution, focusing on the Black Country and the Cadbury company. They explore the impact of mass production, working conditions, and the rise of industrial towns. This deepens their knowledge of how economies evolve due to innovation and labour systems, which they will contrast with non-modern economic models in Year 5 when studying the Maya.
Year 5	The Maya	Pupils investigate the economic aspects of the ancient Maya civilisation by exploring what the Maya valued most, where resources came from, and how goods were traded or paid for. They learn about early economic systems and how beliefs and geography shaped what was produced and exchanged. This enables pupils to compare ancient economic structures with modern ones introduced in earlier units and prepares them to understand the complex demands of a war economy in Year 6.
Year 6	The Blitz and World War II	Pupils consider how the war economy transformed daily life in Britain, including rationing, evacuation, and changes to industry and employment. They explore how economic roles shifted during wartime, especially with the introduction of women to roles in factories and national services. This final unit consolidates pupils' understanding of how economies are shaped by invention, culture, and crisis, building on earlier work on local, industrial, and ancient economies.

**Substantive Concept: Settlement and Community**

Year Group	Unit	Substantive Knowledge
Year 1	The History of Barnfields	Pupils begin their understanding of settlement and community by exploring the history of their own school. They learn how Barnfields has changed over time and how people in the local area have contributed to the school's development. This gives pupils a personal connection to the concept of community and introduces them to how places are shaped by the people who live and work there. This foundation of local community knowledge is built on in Year 2, when pupils explore how London communities lived before the Great Fire of London and how they responded the disaster.
Year 2	The Great Fire of London	Building on their sense of local community, pupils explore how the fire affected the settlement of London and how its people rebuilt their city. They consider the changes made to buildings and infrastructure in



		response to the disaster, helping them understand how communities respond to crisis and reshape their environments. This learning prepares pupils to investigate a local settlement in Year 2's Stafford unit.
Year 2	The History of Stafford	Pupils deepen their knowledge of settlement by learning about Stafford's origins, growth, and role as a market town. They investigate how its location and trade links influenced its development and how the community has changed over time. This supports their understanding of how settlements grow and evolve in response to economic and social factors. This knowledge supports pupils' exploration in Year 3 of how industry and geography shape regional communities, such as those in the Black Country.
Year 3	History of the Black County and Cadburys	Pupils continue their exploration of community by examining how industrialisation shaped settlement patterns in the Black Country. They learn how communities were built around factories and how industry influenced housing, working life, and social organisation. This builds on pupils' understanding of trade and local development from Year 2 and prepares them to consider how early human settlements formed in prehistoric Britain later in the year.
Year 3	Stone Age to Iron Age	Pupils study the formation of early human settlements in Britain, exploring the shift from nomadic life to permanent communities through farming. They learn how access to resources, the development of tools, and the need for protection led to the growth of stable settlements. This unit introduces the foundations of permanent settlement, which are revisited and expanded in Year 4 through the study of Roman and Anglo-Saxon settlements.
Year 4	Roman Britain	Pupils learn how Roman invasion introduced new settlement patterns to Britain, including the building of towns, forts, and roads. They examine how these settlements supported trade, military control, and cultural exchange, showing how imposed systems can reshape local communities. This builds on their knowledge of early settlements in prehistoric Britain and prepares them to explore further cultural shifts through later migrations in Year 4's Anglo-Saxon and Viking unit.
Year 4	Anglo Saxons, Vikings and Scots Settlement in Britain	Pupils study how the withdrawal of the Romans led to new waves of settlement by the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. They explore how these groups established communities, including place-naming, governance, and daily life. This continues the chronological development of settlement in Britain and sets the foundation for comparisons with non-European civilisations in Year 5, such as the Maya and Egyptians.
Year 5	The Maya	Pupils examine how the Maya established complex cities within challenging rainforest environments. They consider how geography influenced settlement patterns and how religious, economic, and social needs shaped community structure. This builds on their understanding of settlement in Britain by introducing new geographical contexts and prepares pupils to explore how natural features influenced the development of another ancient civilisation—the Egyptians.
Year 5	Ancient Egyptians	Pupils explore how settlement developed along the Nile and how the river shaped the life and organisation of Ancient Egyptian communities. They learn how religion, agriculture, and trade all played a role in



		shaping settlements and maintaining a unified civilisation. This reinforces pupils' understanding of the relationship between geography and settlement, which is developed further in Year 6 when pupils explore the disruption and reshaping of communities during WWII.
Year 6	The Blitz and World War II	Pupils investigate how conflict impacted British communities, particularly through evacuation and bombing. They explore how communities responded to adversity, how evacuees experienced new places, and how refugee children, such as those on the Kindertransport, became part of new communities. This contrasts with earlier studies of how settlements are built and maintained, helping pupils understand how communities adapt and survive during disruption and displacement.
Year 6	Ancient Greece	Pupils learn how Greek civilisation spread through the foundation of city-states and colonies across the Mediterranean and Black Sea. They also study how Alexander the Great's conquests led to the formation of new settlements and the blending of cultures. This unit consolidates pupils' understanding of how and why settlements grow, change, and interact across regions, drawing on prior learning from both ancient and modern contexts.