Year: 8
Subject: History
Topic/Unit: How and why did ideas change?
When: Autumn half term 1

Huntington School
Learn and succeed

Overview: This unit explores the transition from the Medieval period to the Early Modern era, specifically focusing on the development of scientific thinking. Students will investigate whether the 1600s represented a genuine "new era" of science or if superstitious beliefs still influenced society.

Why this? Why now? Understanding this shift is essential, as scientific thinking was a primary cause of the Industrial Revolution which students will encounter later this year.

Building on...building to: The unit picks up threads from **Medieval religious beliefs**, the limitations of earlier technology, and the vital connections between Europe and the **Islamic World**. It builds towards a study of the **Industrial Revolution** and the influence of these new ideas on individuals such as Josiah Wedgwood.

Sequence summary:

1. **Barriers to Knowledge:** Students examine why knowledge was limited before 1600, focusing on the loss of ancient learning, the dominance of the **Catholic Church**, and poor communication.
2. **Medieval Medicine:** A comparison of European medicine, which relied on Galen and prayer, with the advanced "Golden Age" of the Islamic world.
3. **Anatomical understanding:** Exploring how our knowledge of anatomy developed under Vesalius.
4. **The Astronomical Revolution:** Investigating the shift from a **geocentric** (Earth-centred) to a **heliocentric** (sun-centred) universe through the work of Copernicus and Galileo.
5. **The Invisible World:** Exploring Robert Hooke's use of the **microscope** to discover "cells" and the publication of *Micrographia*.
6. **Newton and the Persistence of Magic:** Analysing Sir Isaac Newton's dual identity as a physicist and a researcher of the occult, alongside the rise of witch-hunts led by Matthew Hopkins.
7. **Writing Practice:** Answering our question: Can we describe the Early Modern period as a new era of science?

Key Vocabulary: Heliocentric, Geocentric, Scientific, Superstition, Anatomy, Microscope, Printing Press, Cell, and Causation.

Assessments: Whiteboard tasks to define key terms and concepts. Practice formal explanation paragraphs using factual evidence to argue whether the 1600s was a new era of science. This knowledge will be used and assessed in History Assessment 1.

Able and interested: Higher-attaining students will explore **complex causation**, evaluating the different levels of influence and the links between long-term and short-term causes of the Scientific Revolution. They will also critique the contradictory nature of Newton's scientific and "sorcerer" beliefs.

Inclusion, Personal Development and Wider Skills: Inclusion is supported through the use of visual summaries (spider diagrams) and scaffolded writing tasks. Students reflect on how technology, like the telescope and microscope, forced a re-evaluation of established "truths".

Homework and Independent Learning: Students will conduct independent research on the belief in witchcraft, specifically focusing on the cases of Mary Sutton and the "Witchfinder General," Matthew Hopkins, to understand the cultural context of the 17th century.