



Inspiring Tomorrow's Teachers



PRE-COURSE TASKS

2026-27

2026-27 Cohort

Dear Trainee Teacher,

We are delighted that you have chosen to begin your career in teaching with Colchester Teacher Training Consortium and we are very much looking forward to working with you. It is our aim to provide you with the high-quality training and education you will need to become an inspirational teacher. Working in close partnership with a range of schools and practitioners, you will be offered a wide range of experiences and expertise from which to learn.

The CTTC curriculum is designed to allow you to spend the majority of your year in schools, observing teaching professionals, and applying the knowledge and skills learned during central training in your own classroom. This will set you on your path to become a confident, skilled and highly reflective practitioner.

Teaching is one of the best jobs in the world, but you will inevitably be presented with a range of challenges on a regular basis, and you may question at times how you are ever going to get everything done. However, through collaboration with your mentor and the training team, who will provide you with support, developmental feedback and practical strategies, you will also celebrate when you experience that 'light bulb' moment in one of your lessons, or when that pupil who rarely speaks chooses to share their news with you. These moments are priceless!

To fully prepare you for the exciting and challenging year ahead, you will find in this booklet some preliminary information and some pre-course reading and tasks for you to complete before September. These are designed to ensure that you start to build your subject knowledge and to feel confident with your understanding of how to impact on pupils' learning. Key topics for you to consider are how to challenge and support pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND), effective assessment strategies, and the importance of engaging pupils and applying effective behaviour management techniques.

Please keep evidence of your reading and tasks and bring these with you on the first day of training on **Friday 4th September 2026**, ready to share your insights and findings during the induction period. The official start date of the course is **Tuesday 1st September**, when you will spend the first three days in your first placement school. This will give you the opportunity to meet your mentor and the rest of the team, to attend the safeguarding briefings and whole-staff training, and to observe teachers setting their expectations with their new classes. You will then spend five days with us at the training centre, attending a number of sessions preparing you for your time in school.

The journey towards joining a fantastic and rewarding profession, where you never stop learning, has begun and we hope you enjoy every step of the way!

We look forward to working with you and very best wishes for a successful and happy start to your teaching career.



Helen Baker
Assistant Consortium Director
Colchester Teacher Training Consortium

Pre-Course Tasks and Induction

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Pre-Course Tasks 2026-27

Your training year is a very busy and intense year, so we really want you to start with strong foundations and feeling fully confident. This takes preparation to achieve, so we'd like you to complete the following tasks prior to commencing the course and ask that you bring them with you for the induction sessions during the first week, commencing **Tuesday 1st September 2026**:

1. An introduction to the PGCE and academic literature
2. Developing an understanding of metacognition and how pupils learn
3. Developing reading and promoting reading for pleasure
4. Developing a love of Maths
5. Developing an understanding of how to support and challenge pupils with special educational needs
6. Subject Knowledge Audit
7. Source your copy of the National Curriculum and join the Chartered College of Teaching and a Teaching Union
8. Recommended Reading

1. An Introduction to the PGCE and Academic Literature

As part of your PGCE course, you will be required to complete two assignments during the academic year. Completion of these assignments requires engagement with a wide range of academic literature.

These assignments offer you the opportunity to think critically and to develop your own classroom practice. In preparation for these assignments, we would like you to undertake some reading on a topic of your choice before participating in some reflective discussions during the induction sessions.

Pre-Course Task:

- Please select 3-4 articles on an educational topic of your choice. There are some suggestions in **Appendix 1** that you are welcome to use, or you can select a topic and text(s) of your own.
- Complete your reading and make sufficient notes to be able to recall your thoughts. A Professional Development Reading Log can be found in **Appendix 4**, it is not essential to use this form so if you have a preferred format please continue to use this approach.
- Be prepared to participate in a reflective group discussion arising from your reading during a session in the induction week on **Monday 7th September**.

Suggested Texts:

In **Appendix 1**, you will find a list of books and articles organised by topics:

- Praise and Rewards
- Assessment for Learning
- Group Work and Collaborative Learning
- Reading for Pleasure

2. Developing an Understanding of Metacognition and How Pupils Learn

When you start planning and teaching lessons, you will need to have an understanding of how pupils learn and how this can be affected by cognitive load on the working memory. This is underpinned by Rosenshine's 'Principles of Instruction'.

Pre-Course Reading:

Please read and make notes on the article '*Principles of Instruction*' by Barak Rosenshine (2012). See link below:

[Principles of Instruction: Research-Based Strategies That All Teachers Should Know, by Barak Rosenshine; American Educator Vol. 36, No. 1, Spring 2012, AFT](#)

3. Developing Reading and Promoting Reading for Pleasure

In 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) issued *The Reading Framework*. Please read **the Introduction and Section 1 (pages 4-20) and Section 8 (pages 91-101)** using the link below. You do not need to complete the audits in Section 8:

[The Reading Framework](#)

Select one appropriate high-quality text from the key stage you will be studying (EYFS / KS1 and KS1 / KS2) and apply your **creativity** to create an imaginative book review (see examples in **Appendix 2**). The review should persuade others as to why they should read the book and can be presented in any form; written, videoed, created, Amazon style review. You will have the opportunity to share these with your fellow trainees during the induction week. Good sources for recommended books for each age group are:

<https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/>

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/our-recommendations/100-best-books/>

<https://coffeebookshelves.com/2018/08/08/21-british-childrens-authors-of-colour-you-should-know/>

4. Developing a Love of Maths

Please prepare an imaginative maths game or investigation aimed at the year group you will be teaching. You are going to share the activity with your peers and ask them to have a go at the training centre during your induction week. Please make sure your learning intention for the game or investigation are absolutely clear and we will then have a chance to share and build some great ideas ready for the children. Two recommended websites for ideas are:

<https://nrich.maths.org/>

<https://www.ncetm.org.uk/>

5. Developing an understanding of how to support and challenge children with specific needs

When you start teaching, you will need to have a good understanding of the full range of needs within your class. Therefore, we'd like you to research how children with SEND are supported and challenged in schools and specifically in your host placement school.

- a) Please read and make notes on **Chapter 1 (pages 19-29) and Chapter 6 (pages 91-110)** of the **SEND Code of Practice**.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

- b) Look up the **local** offer made by your placement school for SEND on the school's website school (once allocated in June).
- c) Record a brief summary of the key points from your reading ready for discussion during the first **SEND session**.

6. Subject Knowledge Audits

In order to support you to identify your baseline knowledge and for us to provide you with **targeted intervention** to fully develop your functional skills and subject knowledge, please complete the following **Key Stage 2 English and Maths Assessment Tasks**. As this is a tool to develop your knowledge and not to "test" you, once completed, please use the marking scheme to check your answers (this will also be good practice for you to familiarise yourself with statutory assessment procedures). Please ensure you keep a record of your scores and any reflections and submit these by completing [this form](#) by **Tuesday 1st September**.

1. **Maths Paper 1 Arithmetic (no calculators)**
[2025 key stage 2 mathematics Paper 1: arithmetic](#)
2. **Maths Paper 2 Reasoning 1 (no calculators)**
[2025 key stage 2 mathematics Paper 2: reasoning](#)
3. **Maths Paper 3 Reasoning 2 (no calculators)**
[2025 key stage 2 mathematics Paper 3: reasoning](#)

Marking Scheme:

[2025 key stage 2 mathematics test mark schemes Paper 1, Paper 2 and Paper 3](#) (pages 17-38)

4. English Reading

Text: [2025 KS2 English reading booklet](#)

Questions: [2025 key stage 2 English reading Reading answer booklet](#)

Marking Scheme:

[2025 key stage 2 English reading Mark schemes](#) (pages 8-40)

5. English Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling

[2025 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 1: questions](#)

Marking Scheme:

[2025 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Mark schemes](#) (pages 9-16)

7. Source your copy of the National Curriculum and join the Chartered College of Teaching

Critical to any teacher is to have a copy of the statutory **National Curriculum**. You can view and download an online version here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum> but if you would prefer a hardcopy they are also available to purchase. However you decide to access it, we would highly recommend you start to familiarise yourself with the content and expectations as soon as possible. This important document outlines your statutory obligation for the content of your teaching in schools.

The [Chartered College of Teaching](#) is the professional body for teachers. They are dedicated to bridging the gap between practice and research and equipping teachers from the second they enter the classroom with the knowledge and confidence to make the best decisions for their pupils. Membership provides teachers

with access to a wealth of research, resources and insight to enable excellent teaching. Membership is **free** whilst you are a trainee so we highly recommend joining up.

Finally, it is crucial that you join an appropriate teaching union before embarking on working in schools. Unions provide critical legal advice and support should the unthinkable ever happen and an allegation is made against you. Whilst we will train you and demonstrate how to minimise your risk of allegation, it is a potential threat that any of us could face when working with children and young people. Therefore, for full support, please ensure you join a union ready for September. Again, membership is **free** during your training year and whilst you are an ECT (Early Career Teacher). The two most popular Unions are the NASUWT and NEU:

<https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/>

<https://neu.org.uk/>

8. Recommended Reading

Every year, trainees ask us for recommended reading before embarking on the course. With so many books on education out there on a wide range of subjects, this is an impossible question to answer. However, if you do wish to purchase a single book which will stand you in good stead in, we recommend the *'Learning to Teach in the Primary School'*, published by Routledge. You can often pick these up second hand, however, try to get hold of the most up-to-date edition if you can.

[Learning to Teach in the Primary School : Cremin, Teresa, Hendry, Helen, Harrison, Anna: Amazon.co.uk: Books](#)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Sample Topics and Texts for Task 1: An Introduction to the PGCE and Academic Literature

Appendix 2

Examples of pre-course book review for task 3

Appendix 3:

Essex and Suffolk County Council Term Dates

Appendix 4:

Professional Development Reading Log

Appendix 1: Sample Topics and Texts for Task 1: An Introduction to the PGCE and Academic Literature

Please note all articles are saved in zipped folders attached to the email.

Praise and Rewards

Bear et al (2017) *Rewards, praise, and punitive consequences: Relations with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation*

Markelz, Riden & Floress (2021) *Teachers' Use of Specific, Contingent, and Varied Praise*

Partin et al (2010) *Using Teacher Praise and Opportunities to Respond to Promote Appropriate Student Behaviour*

Payne (2015) *Using rewards and sanctions in the classroom: pupils' perceptions of their own responses to current behaviour management strategies*

Rila, Wilkinson & Floress (2025) *High School Students' Preferences for Praise and Reprimand: A Pilot Study*

Royer & Ennis (2024) *Student-delivered behavior-specific praise: a systematic literature review and meta-analysis*

Assessment for Learning

Baird et al (2017) *Assessment and Learning: fields apart?*

Black & Wiliam (2010) *Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment*

Black & Wiliam (2018) *Classroom assessment and pedagogy*

Clark (2015) *Formative assessment: translating high-level curriculum principles into classroom practice*

Dixon & Worrell (2016) *Formative and Summative Assessment in the Classroom*

Wisniewski, Zierer & Hattie (2020) *The Power of Feedback Revisited: A Meta-Analysis of Educational Feedback Research*

Group Work and Collaborative Learning

Ambreen (2020) *Children's Perspectives Toward Ability-Based Group Work in a Primary Classroom*

Baines et al (2009) *Improving pupil group work interaction and dialogue in primary classrooms: results from a year-long intervention study*

Chandra (2015) *Collaborative Learning for Educational Achievement*

Gillies (2019) *Promoting academically productive student dialogue during collaborative learning*

Le, Janssen & Wubbels (2019) *Collaborative learning practices: teacher and student perceived obstacles to effective student collaboration*

Nokes-Malach, Richey & Gadgil (2015) *When Is It Better to Learn Together? Insights from Research on Collaborative Learning*

Reading for Pleasure

Appleman & Hinchman (2016) *The Power of Fostering Pleasure in Reading*

Cremin & Scholes (2024) *Reading for pleasure: scrutinising the evidence base – benefits, tensions and recommendations*

Hempel-Jorgensen et al (2017) *Understanding boys (dis)engagement with reading for pleasure: Project findings*

Lockwood (2012) *Attitudes to Reading in English Primary Schools*

Teravainen-Goff, Clark & Brown (2023) *Young Readers Programme: Developing a love of reading in primary schools*

Vogrincič Čepič, Mascia & Aerila (2024) *Reading for Pleasure: A Review of Current Research*

Appendix 2: EXAMPLES OF PRE-COURSE BOOK REVIEW TASK



Kensuke's Kingdom
Michael Morpurgo



Rooftoppers
Katherine Rundell



Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book?
Lauren Child



The Last Wild
Piers Torday



The BFG
Roald Dahl



Where's My Teddy?
Jez Alborough

Appendix 3 – Essex and Suffolk County Council Term Dates 2026-27

September 2026							October 2026							November 2026							December 2026						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
										1	2	3	4							1		1	2	3	4	5	6
	1	2	3	4	5	6	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31			
28	29	30												30													

January 2027							February 2027							March 2027							April 2027						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
25	26	27	28	29	30	31								29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30		

May 2027							June 2027							July 2027							August 2027						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6				1	2	3	4							1
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
31																					30	31					



= Schooldays



= School holidays



= Bank holidays



= Weekends

In addition, schools allocate five non-pupil days out of the school days indicated, or the equivalent in disaggregated twilight sessions.

Autumn Term:	Tuesday 1 September 2026 – Friday 18 December 2026 <i>Half Term 26 October – 30 October</i>	74 days
Spring Term:	Monday 4 January 2027 – Thursday 25 March 2027 <i>Half Term 15 February - 19 February</i>	54 days
Summer Term:	Monday 12 April 2027 – Wednesday 21 July 2027 <i>Half Term 31 May – 4 June, and May Bank Holiday - 3 May</i>	67 days
		<u>195 days</u>

Please note:

The above dates may vary for individual schools, especially Foundation, Voluntary Aided schools and Academies.

You are strongly advised to check with your child's school before making any holiday or other commitments.

Appendix 4

Professional Development Reading Log

Complete this log to record your wider reading of latest research to further your subject knowledge and professional learning.
An electronic copy can be found attached to this email.

Title, Author & Date	What did you learn? Main ideas/strategies from the article	How could you use this in your practice?
