

Academic Scholarships



The Thinking Studio 2026/27

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Introducing The Thinking Studio

Kimbolton School is excited to introduce The Thinking Studio: our Academic Scholarship Programme for the 2026/27 academic year.

Good thinking is not a talent you either have or lack: it is a set of tools and, like any habit, is built through deliberate practice. The Thinking Studio is where Academic Scholars are able to sharpen those tools: telling a sound and rational argument from a hollow one, giving a complicated idea a shape that someone else can actually follow, or asking a question precise enough to be worth answering. These are the same tools that separate a good essay from a great one, and a good interview answer from a brilliant one, giving our Scholars the skills needed to continue to impress in future. Rooted in the pursuit of *arête* — excellence in thought and character — the programme treats thinking itself as a craft worth practising properly, not a gift some scholars simply have.

Throughout the next two terms, Academic Scholars are expected to attend as many of the teacher-led sessions as possible. Each session hands scholars one tool and puts it to immediate use, before a personal challenge sends them off to carry it into their own subjects and their own lives. There is no expectation of getting it right first time, only of returning to the Studio and trying again. By the end of the programme, scholars will leave with a portfolio that shows what they have practised, and a toolkit they can keep reaching for whenever careful thought is required.

This will all lead towards another Academic Scholarship Showcase. Being able to share the passion and skill of our Scholars in this format last year was a real pleasure, and we are delighted to host such an event again.

How to succeed in The Thinking Studio

Be curious

Notice what genuinely puzzles you, and pursue it. The strongest thoughts start from a question you actually want to be answered.

Interrogate the question

Before you answer anything, put the question itself under pressure. What is it really asking? What would a sharper version of it look like?

Show your working

A scholar who can explain how they reached a conclusion, not just what it is, is doing the harder and more valuable thing.

Stress-test the argument

Treat every claim, including your own, as something to be tested rather than trusted. Ask what evidence it actually rests on.

Keep returning to it

A tool used once is barely learned. Come back to what a session taught you, in your own subjects, more than once.

Collaborate

Listen, question, join discussions, work with others, and build on other people's ideas. Collaboration often makes thinking stronger. The Thinking Studio is not divided by age group - we expect everyone to be one community!

Have fun!

Progress in thinking is satisfying in its own right — an argument that finally holds up, a problem that stops resisting you. That satisfaction is worth noticing, not just the grade it earns you.



WE BECOME

Problem solvers
Leaders
Independent thinkers
Confident communicators
Enterprising
Socially responsible
Digitally literate

WE PROMOTE

Knowledge and understanding
Challenge and stretch
Opportunity
Guidance and support
Adventure and exploration

Kimbolton Learning DNA

WE ARE

Engaged
Motivated
Ambitious
Reflective
Brave
Supportive

WE THINK

Critically
Creatively
Collaboratively

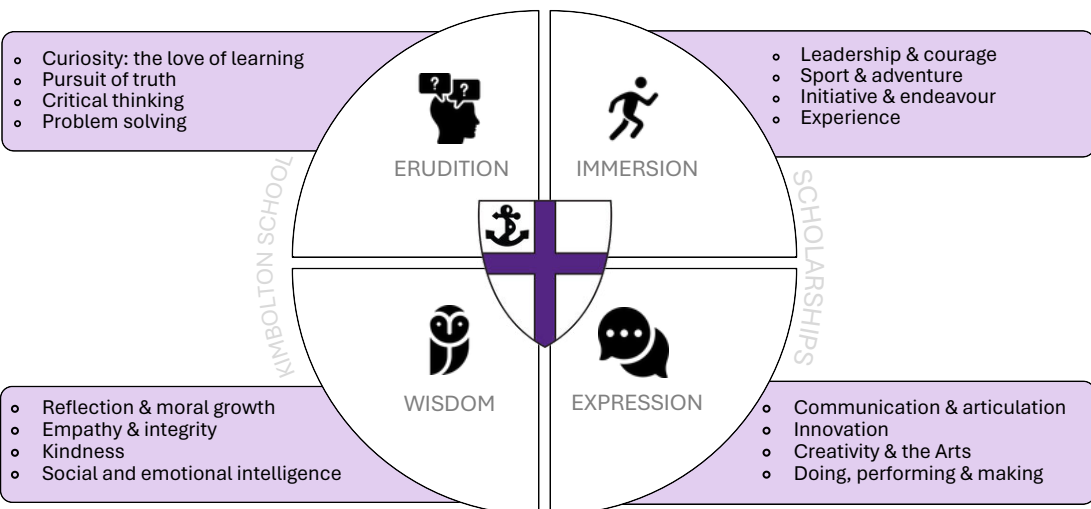
The Thinking Studio Programme

Teacher-led activity or personal challenge?	Date	Activity	Intent
Teacher-led	Wednesday 14 th October - 16.30	Launch of the Thinking Studio	To introduce scholars to The Thinking Studio as an academic community that spans year groups but is united by shared values such as collaboration, curiosity, and striving for excellence.
Teacher-led	Tuesday 3 rd November - 16.30	Session 1: Thinking in a Higher Gear	To help scholars recognise that thinking has levels, from recall to genuine evaluation, and to start noticing which level a question is actually asking for.
Personal challenge	Between Session 1 and Session 2	Rewrite the Level	To practise turning a recall-level question into a genuinely evaluative one, putting the previous session's ideas to immediate use.
Teacher-led	Tuesday 17 th November - 16.30	Session 2: Becoming a Thinker	To distinguish a thinking disposition from a thinking skill, and to show scholars that having their own view challenged is part of how the tool gets sharper, not a sign they were wrong to hold it.
Personal challenge	Between Session 2 and Session 3	The Thinking Log	To build the habit of returning to a tool rather than using it once: a fortnight of noticing curiosity, challenge and unexpected insight.

Teacher-led activity or personal challenge?	Date	Activity	Intent
Teacher-led	Wednesday 2 nd December - 16.30	Session 3: Questions Are the Real Skill	To practise interrogating a question before answering it, and to turn a task into a working set of questions worth asking.
Personal challenge	Between Session 3 and Session 4	The Five Whys	To carry the questioning tool out of the room, tracing a real current-affairs claim back to its root cause or assumption.
Teacher-led	Tuesday 12 th January - 16.30	Session 4: Structuring Chaos	To practise giving a complicated idea a shape someone else can follow, separating the big idea from the detail that supports it.
Personal challenge	Between Session 4 and Session 5	Extend the Map	To return to the mind-map created in Session 4 and grow it further, adding branches and testing whether the structure still holds as the topic grows more complex.
Teacher-led	Thursday 21 st January - 16.30	Session 5: Spotting a Bad Argument	To practise stress-testing a claim: telling an assertion apart from a properly evidenced argument, and weighing how convincing it actually is.
Personal challenge	Between Session 5 and Session 6	Assertion or Argument?	To apply the tests learned in Session 5 to a real piece of persuasive writing, with reasons for the verdict reached.

Teacher-led activity or personal challenge?	Date	Activity	Intent
Teacher-led	Wednesday 10 th February - 16.30	Session 6: Building a Real Academic Argument	To bring every tool from the programme together into a well-evidenced academic argument.
Personal challenge	After Session 6	Showcase preparation	To show the working, not just the conclusion: synthesising and presenting the strongest thinking scholars can now produce.
Both	After February Half Term	Showcase preparation	We will hold supported sessions for showcase preparation, as well as scholars continuing to work on their presentations between sessions.

Arête: Holistic Scholar Development





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