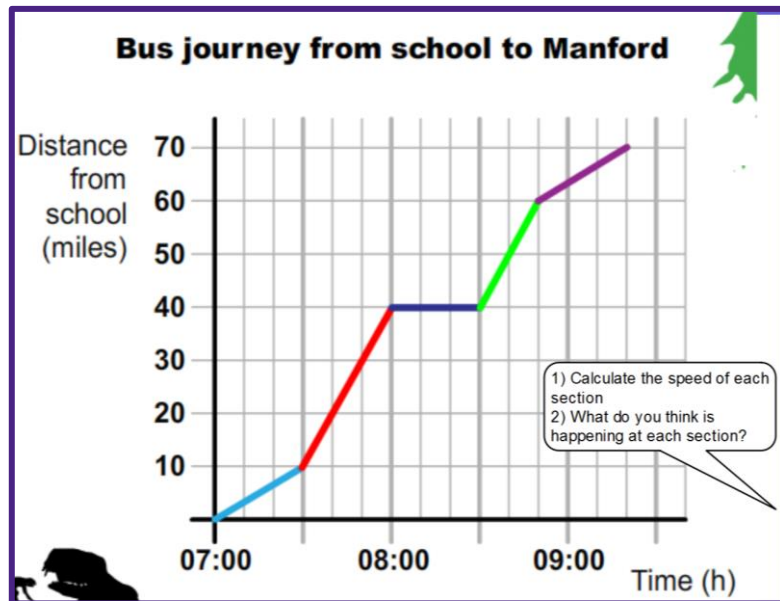


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Maths: Relating mathematics to real-life situations using modal verbs and modifiers

Above is a task from a unit of work for Key Stage 3 Mathematics - 'Alien Invasion' - in which students are given a chance to improve various mathematical skills while imagining a real life situation – a school trip that is jeopardised by extra-terrestrial visitors to the trip destination.

Students were asked to interpret the data presented in the above graph in two ways (see the speech bubble above). On one level, students were asked to calculate the speed of the bus travelling from one city to another at various stages (using the formula: $\text{speed} = \text{distance}/\text{time}$) and, at another level, were asked to speculate about what was happening at each stage of the journey. Students were reminded of the following words that they had already been using in English, Humanities and Design and Technology:

Modal verbs: **could, may, might**

Modifiers: **clearly, perhaps, possibly, probably**

The task enabled students to make connections between the language they had been using in other subjects - language that helps them interpret, analyse, speculate and hypothesise. This language was then used to connect mathematical data represented by a graph to the real life situation it was describing. Some of the students' oral responses are captured below:

"The bus **might** have been moving slowly at first because it was moving through traffic when leaving the city."

"[The increased speed] is **probably** because the bus was travelling on a motorway."

"The bus **may** have broken down from 8.00 to 8.30."

"**Perhaps** the bus stopped at a service station and that's why it didn't move for half an hour."

"The bus slowed down again – this **might** be because the traffic was bad going into Manford."