



Transitional English Syllabus

Course Information

Course Name	Transition English
ISBE SIS Code	01004A001
Portability Code	
Course Duration	<i>(1 year)</i>

Contact Information

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Community College Name	Parkland College

Course Description

Transitional English courses are college preparatory courses that develop student skills in reading, critical thinking and analysis, and writing to support student success across majors and career pathways while aligning with the Illinois Learning Standards. Transitional English courses address, at minimum, the following domains and competencies: reading (active reading strategies, summarization of a text, analysis and interpretation of texts), writing (identification of and writing processes based on audience, purpose and task, incorporation and documentation of relevant information), and critical thinking and analysis (credibility and reliability of evidence, engagement with evidence, information literacy skills). Additionally, the course emphasizes domains of metacognition and essential skills to develop self-awareness and overall college and career readiness. Upon completion students should be able to adapt their approaches and strategies as they engage in reading and writing tasks; analyze, evaluate, and synthesize while reading and writing; and demonstrate information literacy skills as an engaged reader and as a contributing writer. The course is delivered through an approach that integrates instruction across the competency domains and organizes the course pedagogy and selected texts around themes, critical issues, or concepts that foster critical thinking, reading, and writing skills.

Evaluation

Grading and assessment are structured such that receiving a “C” or better indicates the competencies for the course were met and the student is considered ready for college-level English courses and college-level reading expectations. In addition, approved courses shall have demonstrated:



- **Summative Writing Assessments** (70% of grade Fall Semester)
 - **Argument 1 –“Write about Relevant Issues”**(Fall Semester) (1000-1200 words) – 15%
 - **Argument 2 –“Intuition or Logic?”**(Fall Semester) (1000-1200 words) -1%
 - **Independent Research** (Fall Semester)- (1400-1600 words) -20%
 - **Ted Talk Written & Recorded Speech** (Fall Semester) (1000 words) - 10%
 - **Electronic Portfolio** (Fall Semester) (1000-1200 words) -10%

- **Summative Writing Assessments** (70% of grade Spring Semester)
 - **Leaving a Legacy Action Research Paper** (Spring Semester) (1400-1600 words) – 25%
 - **Movie Review** (Spring Semester) (1000-1200 Words) -5%
 - **Poetry Explication** (Spring Semester) (1000-1200 Words) – 5%
 - **Argument 3 – “Fate vs Freewill; Where Do You Stand?”** (Spring Semester) (1000-1200 Words) – 25%
 - **Electronic Portfolio** (Spring Semester) (1000-1200 words) -10%
 - **Final Draft Summative Assessments that pass with a “C” or higher shall exhibit the following:**
 - Tone, structure, and content appropriate for the audience and purpose
 - Appropriate introduction – body – conclusion essay structure
 - A recognizable thesis statement and/or unifying controlling idea
 - Paragraphs that focus on one main idea introduced through topic sentences
 - Smooth integration and documentation of appropriate outside sources
 - Interaction with multiple perspectives
 - Sentences that promote readability through grammar/punctuation choices
 - Word choice – including verb usage – that promotes readability
 - Transitions that unify the essay
 - Appropriate, compelling conclusions
 - Adherence to MLA formatting – including proper headers, spacing, and source documentation
 - A minimum of 1,000 words

- **Diagnostic & Formative Assessments** (30% of Both Semesters)
 - Including, but not limited to:
 - IXL (Personalized Digital Platform)
 - Article Response Essays (minimum of two for each major essay)
 - Group Projects/Presentations/Debates
 - Socratic Seminars
 - Peer Editing & Workshop
 - Conferencing & Self-Evaluation Summaries



Course Materials

The following materials will be required and provided by the district:

- *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare
- *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell
- *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell
- *They Say/ISay* by Graff & Birkenstein
- *Stamped* by Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi
- *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien
- Various student researched and teacher assigned non-fiction articles (listed with the units)
- Various Vlogs ("Determinism vs Free Will: Crash Course Philosophy #24 CrashCourse [2016]), Blogs ("The Choice is Yours: The Fate of Free Will" NPR: *Cosmos & Culture* [2014]), Podcasts ("Big Unknown: Is Free Will an Illusion?" *Science Weekly Podcast*), and other Multimedia Texts for each themed unit
- Chromebook

Course Units of Study

Semester One

Unit One: Resume/ Self-Reflection and Interviewing Skills (4 Weeks)

Students will design electronic portfolios that will display their work all year. Students will develop and hone their interview skills through the First Days Podcast Project. The major assessment during this unit will be the Resume and the First Days Podcast Project.

Purpose and Expectations of Learning

The purpose of this unit is to start direct reading instruction routines, and contextualized comprehensive grammar routines. Students will learn how this specific class will work to help with career and life goals. They will foster metacognitive skills by planning essays according to personal timelines, group guidelines, and class deadlines; monitoring personal writing processes; developing personal annotation skills based on Beers & Probst's *Notice & Notes*; self-evaluating through the use of rubrics, checklists, conferences, and essays, in order to examine and strengthen both their personal habits and work ethics while also developing teamwork skills such as respect for others' opinions, patience, compromising, empathy, and other skills necessary for success in school, work, and society. They will also reflect on personal growth through journaling, conferencing, and completing self-reflection activities.

By the end of this unit students will be able to:

- Annotate texts thoroughly and meaningfully to ensure and enhance comprehension using a personalized method developed from Beers & Probst's *Notice & Notes*.
- Complete reading response assignments independently.
- Communicate professionally through email with other peers and professionals.
- Develop in-depth interview questions.



- Understand personal life and career goals and how this class will further those goals.
- Develop a resume and website.
- Complete a recorded interview with a partner.
- Know how to write a PIES paragraph.
- Start developing grammar skills comprehensively and contextually.

Unit Two: Convince Me!! (Argumentative Writing) (11 Weeks)

In this unit, students will learn and develop argumentative techniques through **examining Aristotle's Pillars of Persuasion**, reading **several nonfiction articles**, and utilizing the writing process. Students will develop good writing process habits and organizational techniques by writing two synthesis argumentative papers over current topics derived from **individual surveys**, class discussions, and research. They will connect reading and writing skills and develop a solid foundation of how to organize and communicate ideas clearly in writing. **They will also participate in student-lead debates over their chosen topics in order to develop skills necessary for teamwork, to recognize and learn to respect the opinions of others by gaining insight into the counter argument to their thesis, as well as convey their own personal beliefs through effective modes of communication such as personal communication, public speaking, and writing for different purposes.** The two major assessments for this unit will be the **Argument 1- "Writing About Relevant Issues"** and **Argument 2 – "Intuition or Logic?"** papers.

Argument 1- "Writing About Relevant Issues"

- Students will read selected nonfiction articles based on results of individual surveys and class discussion of what they believe to be "relevant" issues involving them today.

Argument 2- "Intuition or Logic?"

- Students will read selected, assigned chapters of Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink* and several non-fiction articles. Such articles include: "*Blink*': Hunch Power" by David Brooks [2005], "It Pays to Trust Your Gut" by Daniel Terdiman, and "Decision Makers Dilemma: Intuition vs. Logic" Blog by Kaushi Subedi [2018]

Purpose and Expectations of Learning

The purpose of this unit is to develop a strong foundation in the writing process, including writing an essay by prewriting, planning, outlining, drafting, revising, proofreading, and publishing.

By the end of this unit students will be able to:

- Go through the writing process, including: writing paragraphs with one main idea, writing introductions, tying an essay together, including counterarguments (naysayers), writing conclusions, making a Works Cited, and citing sources in MLA format.
- **Recognize, label, and utilize Aristotle's Pillars of Persuasion**
- Critically and comprehensively read and evaluate multiple sources.
- Peer edit other classmates' work to give constructive feedback.



- Receive constructive feedback and incorporate it into their writing.
- Further develop metacognitive skills to reflect on strengths and weaknesses as a writer and use that reflection for improvement.
- Continue developing grammar skills comprehensively and contextually.

Unit Three: What Do I Have to Say and Share? (4 Weeks)

For this unit, students will develop and present a TEDx Talk using the topics previously discussed and/or researched in class or through new research approved by the teacher. The main assessment for this unit will be a TEDx Talk.

Purpose and Expectations of Learning

The purpose of this unit is to develop voice by writing their own TEDx Talk script, showcasing their own voice and beliefs through recording their TEDx Talk, and publishing it for class viewing through Google Classroom. This unit will wrap up their thinking and working for the course and demonstrate their ability to be independent and a source of knowledge for others

By the end of this unit students will be able to:

- Critically read, watch, and analyze examples of TED Talks
- "Grade" TEDx Talks by using the class rubric for TEDx Talks.
 - Defend the assigned grade through group circle presentations
- Transfer the learned information by completing the writing process independently and ultimately developing a well-thought out, independent, and creative TEDx Talk.
- Deliver a formal speech for a wider audience than just the class.
- Use metacognitive skills to reflect growth and development.
- Continue developing grammar skills comprehensively and contextually.

The final for the semester will be the **Electronic Portfolio**. This will be a website for students to revise, display, and reflect on the work they've done and the growth they've shown. The purpose of this final will be to showcase the growth of each student in all the areas of development, including: reading comprehension, personal/career/life goals, the writing process, textual connections, grammar, and metacognitive skills. Included in the portfolio will be a self-reflection essay which will include an in-depth reflection of their personal reading, writing, and critical thinking processes over the semester.

Semester Two

Unit Four: Fate vs Freewill: Where Do You Stand? (7 Weeks) (30%)

In this unit, students will study the theme of Fate vs Freewill and examine the effects of each on human behavior, and their consequences. They will read several non-fiction articles and essays, including but not limited to: "There's No Such Thing as Free Will" by Stephen Cave (from *The Atlantic Magazine* [2016]), "Freewill: Now You Have It, Now You Don't" by Dennis Overbye (from *The New York Times* [2007]), and "Is Free Will an Illusion? Scientists, Philosophers Forced to Differ" by Natalie Wolchover (from the website *LIVESCIENCE* [2012]) that explore the human mind and how it is or is not controlled by Freewill. They will also read seminal fiction works and through critical



thinking, develop a controlling idea around which they will use the gathered evidence from the literature and discussions to create a final argumentative essay. The major assessments for this unit will be a **poetry explication** (5%) **movie review** (5%) and an **Argumentative paper 3** about Fate vs Freewill (examining Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers* in comparison to the student's personal perspective) (20%).

Purpose and Expectations of Learning

The purpose of this unit is to continue developing reading skills. Direct reading instruction will be used throughout this unit to explore how Fate or Freewill affect human behavior. Students will explore this theme through **several of the aforementioned nonfiction articles**, *Macbeth*, the poem "Fate or Freewill" by A. Thomas Hawkins, *Outliers* and **previously studied works by Malcolm Gladwell**, and the movie *The Matrix*.

By the end of this unit students will be able to:

- Identify and understand the theme of Fate or Freewill.
- Critically read and analyze examples of literature with the theme of Fate or Freewill.
- Interact respectfully with multiple perspectives of a variety of genres.
- Write a poetry explication and a movie review.
- **Write an Argumentative essay about Fate vs Freewill, examining the 4 perspectives as they are presented by Gladwell, analyzing how those perspectives differ with the student's personal perspective, and arguing whether the student personally agrees or disagrees both with Gladwell and the concepts presented..**
- Go through the writing process, and peer edit and evaluate fellow classmates' papers.
- Continue developing grammar skills comprehensively and contextually.

The final for the semester will be the **Electronic Portfolio**. This will be a website for students to revise, display, and reflect on the work they've done and the growth they've shown. The purpose of this final will be to showcase the growth of each student in all the areas of development we've been focusing on: reading comprehension, personal/career/life goals, the writing process, textual connections, grammar, and metacognitive skills.

Unit Five: Leaving a Legacy - (Action Research/Persuasive Writing)? (8 Weeks) (30%)

While students are researching **nonfiction articles even** more independently during this unit, they will also read *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien and *Stamped* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi together and do a series of activities to hone their reading skills as they research elements of the Vietnam War and elements of the diversity, POC, and BLM in modern society. **Students will use the skills they've developed and transfer the information that they acquire from the nonfiction articles that are selected by the teacher, the class and the individual students based on what they derive from fictional readings to be societal issues, in order to write their own action research paper. They will showcase their improved reading comprehension skills, writing process habits, and communication skills. The major assessment for this unit will be the Independent Research Argument in their Leaving a Legacy Paper.**

Purpose and Expectations of Learning

By the end of this unit students will be able to:

- Be entirely confident in their ability to go through the writing process independently.
- Be able to formulate a key research question based on the issues that are raised in reading the assigned literature and how those issues affect modern society.
- Be able to submit a research proposal.
- Be able to choose a research methodology based upon the class readings and topics raised in class.
- Be able to develop both (if both are applicable) quantitative and qualitative methods.
- Be able to find and evaluate sources of information to find the most credible sources.
- Be able to comprehend and analyze college-level nonfiction texts using effective annotating, summarizing, comparing, and contrasting, self-questioning, and inferencing skills while improving fluency, vocabulary, sentence construction, proper grammar, and rhetorical techniques.
- Be able to organize a longer essay in an introduction-body-conclusion format.
- Be able to tie together a variety of thoughts and sources using transition strategies.
- Be able to integrate sources into own words seamlessly and work fluently with MLA format.
- Continue developing grammar skills comprehensively and contextually.

The final for the semester will be the **Leaving a Legacy Final Paper** and a presentation of the Leaving a Legacy Project.

Process Competencies

Transitional courses are intended to help students develop conceptual understanding and problem-solving ability as well as college and career readiness. To that end, the courses include process competencies related to metacognition and essential skills. While these competencies are not assessed directly, they should be a part of instruction and assessed indirectly. See pages 9-10 in the *Competencies and Policies Document* for more information.

- Using both assigned texts and acquired texts, students will filter material to develop, plan, control, and monitor several different papers for the course's themed units. They will implement and practice the writing process while continuing to develop and enhance their reading skills through read-alouds with partners and small groups, completing a dialectical journal, and annotating using a personalized system based on Beers and Probst's *Notice & Notes*. They will continue to strengthen their writing skills through several procedural assignments including but not limited to thesis writing exercises, graphic organizers, PIE exercises, outlining activities, peer editing, etc. They will also write smaller essays within each themed unit before completing the final assessment essays. For example, they will write a minimum of two article responses (300-500 words each) for each of the four major assessments using articles they found through their own research.



- Throughout both semesters, students will use their electronic portfolio to revise, display, transfer, and reflect through completion of a self-reflection rubric and essay examining what they have learned and how they have progressed. Self-reflection will be both required through graded assessments such as the personal self-reflection essay and encouraged through discussion posts and journaling in order to strengthen their reading, writing, and critical thinking processes. They will showcase their growth in the areas of development, including but not limited to the following: reading comprehension, personal/career/life goals, the writing process, textual connections, grammar, and metacognitive skills.

Integration of Content Competencies

Transitional English courses cover content competencies in the areas of reading, critical thinking and analysis, and writing. The course and instructional delivery methods must fully integrate across these three competency areas and avoid teaching the reading and writing competencies in an isolated, subskills fashion. The course pedagogy and related text selections must be organized around themes, critical issues, or concepts directing student focus to larger ideas that foster critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. Contexts used should be authentic whenever possible and apply to the student's college or career path.

- The pedagogy for this course is developed through specific thematic units in which the areas of reading, critical thinking, and writing are integrated through instruction, practice, and performance and not taught as isolated skills within simplistic units. For example, in the Leaving a Legacy action Research/Persuasive writing unit, students will use the materials we read in class to think about their community and any concerns they may have, or a change in practice or policy they would like to see implemented as they relate to the topics raised when reading the assigned literature and transfer a topic of choice into a well-developed thesis around which they will plan, monitor, and construct a key research question. They will research a specific topic of choice, and use outside sources to develop and support a thesis statement. They will collect evidence by developing their own data analysis, collate their findings, and use the results as support for their action. In addition to data collection, they will also research, read, and annotate articles and information to be used as background information and support within their action research paper. Their research will be incorporated seamlessly in their writing and properly cited using MLA formatting guidelines. Their paper will be outlined, drafted, peer-edited, revised, and finalized using the writing process. As a final act of publishing, they will illustrate their communication skills and present their results through a Google Presentation & speech in front of the class.