

**Welcome to Transitional English
RTHS Syllabus**

Course Information	
Course Name	Transitional English
ISBE SIS Code	01004A001
Portability Code	
Course Duration	1 Year

Contact Information	
Teacher Name	Liz Dietz and Hannah Yeam
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School Phone Number	217-892-2151
School Name	Rantoul Township High School
Community College Name	Parkland Community College

Office Hours*:

Mondays-Thursdays (1:55-2:55pm). **If you are unable to meet during the designated office hours, please email me proposing a different day or time.*

Required Course Materials: One folder or binder used only for this class, notebook or loose-leaf paper, daily access to your school's Gmail account, and teacher-assigned texts on Google Classroom.

Course Description: Transitional English is a course developed through a partnership between our local school district and Parkland College. This course builds on students' personal experiences and academic knowledge to develop skills in reading, critical thinking, and writing that will enhance their success in college-level courses across majors and career pathways while aligning with Illinois Learning Standards. Transitional English is taught by RTHS faculty who receive preparation and professional development from Parkland College and is open to qualifying students their senior year. Students are evaluated and assessed by both the district and Parkland College through shared student achievement data. Transitional English is a year-long course with the goal of providing students the requisite skills for "day one" success in college-level courses. Students are considered to be college ready based on two competencies: Metacognition and Essential Skills. Metacognitive development, as defined by the State of Illinois, is "to support students to consider how, why, and when to employ various reading and writing strategies and processes". Essential skills of the course are relating to overall college readiness, employability, and life success. These skills are evaluated through activities and assignments in the course that are designed to apply real-world and relevant connections. Students are assessed through both formative and summative means to measure students' progress toward attainment of the competencies. Multiple opportunities for feedback, revision,

and student reflection are offered on all major writing assignments to support students to demonstrate skills and growth over the length of the course.

Course Objectives: Transitional English focuses on extensive writing practices through applying metacognitive skills to organizing, developing, and reflecting on various real-world issues, topics, texts, and especially on students' essays, all while developing **students' process competencies**. Students will develop critical thinking skills by engaging with peers and strengthening interpersonal communication through discussion that will then translate into the drafting stages of writing. We will also be working on reading comprehension and analysis, reviewing and applying proper writing mechanics, improving sentence structure, building vocabulary, and developing paragraph content and organization. Throughout the course, we will practice accountability, responsibility, and self-advocacy. The ultimate goal is to prepare you to meet academic and professional expectations for post-high school success through **teaching the process competencies** of reading and writing in an integrated fashion. For example, students will read, discuss, then apply critical concepts to all stages during the writing process.

Students who complete Transitional English with a "C" or higher earn guaranteed placement into college-level English at Parkland College (and all other state community colleges and participating universities if the course is approved by the State Portability Board). Keep in mind that students do not receive a Parkland grade or credit or transcript. Our district solely issues and maintains the student's grade, credit, and transcript.

Course Requirements:	% of grade
Formative: 30% of Overall Grade	
Face-to-Face (F2F)*: classroom discussions; reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities (via direct instruction and independent work); writing mechanics exercises	15%
Online*: discussion posts, multimedia assignments, writing mechanics assessments, and additional work assigned through Google Classroom.	15%
Summative: 70% of Overall Grade	
Culminating Projects (Personal Statement and Commencement Speech) *:	10%
Major Writing 1 - Defining Success Synthesis Essay*:	15%
Major Writing 2 - College Argument Essay*:	15%
Major Writing 3 - Parasocial Advice Project*:	15%
Major Writing 4 - Problem-Solution Research Essay*:	15%
Fall Semester Topics: Critical Thinking and Rhetoric Introduction, Defining Success, Considering College	
Spring Semester Topics: Parasocial Relationships, Problem-Solution via Current Events, Senior Reflection	

*Assignments will include but are not limited to exercising and applying metacognitive skills reflecting on the topics of focus and specifically students' progress and growth in their individual writing experiences.

Grading Scale: A = 90-100% | B = 80-89% | C = 70-79% | D = 60-69% | F = 59% or lower

FALL SEMESTER:

Title of the Unit	Purpose and Expectations of learning
Critical Thinking and Rhetoric Introduction (2.5 Weeks)	<p>Unit Essential Question: How do our experiences shape our own narrative?</p> <p>Unit Overview: Critical Thinking and Rhetoric Introduction provides an overview to and understanding of rhetoric and rhetorical analysis. Students will discuss excerpts from <i>How to Read Nonfiction Like A Professor</i> and will analyze reading strategies in genres such as social media and digital texts. Class readings will emphasize understanding writers' biases, interrogating claims, analyzing arguments, remaining wary of broad assertions and easy answers, and thinking critically about the written and spoken materials readers encounter.</p> <p>Through understanding the various arguments and strategies of persuasion that surrounds society and us as individuals, students will construct a personal statement that showcases how their own experiences shape their narrative.</p> <p>Key Texts: Thomas Foster's <i>How to Read Nonfiction Like A Professor</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Introduction (Pages 1-9) "Why Critical Reading Matters"● Emerging Media (Pages 243-258) "Reading Internet Sources" <p>Steve Jobs 2015 Commencement Speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Powerful Life Lessons through Storytelling <p>Culminating Assignment and/or Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● College Personal Statement - Assignment uses the prompt and requirements from a college that you are interested in attending <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Personal Statement for Career and/or Military - Assignment adapts the requirements of a personal statement for a career/military introduction needed for an interview
Defining Success (5 weeks)	<p>Unit Essential Questions: What is success? What does it look like when someone is successful? What role does failure play in success? What role do random opportunities play in determining success?</p> <p>Unit Overview: Throughout the Defining Success unit, students will read excerpts of <i>Outliers</i> together and will read a nonfiction book with a success topic independently in order to analyze what determines success.</p> <p>With texts and discussions as support, students will construct a thematic synthesis essay that asks students to investigate the concept of success; collect, generate, and evaluate evidence, and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner. In this essay, students will consider at least two different perspectives, outside of their own.</p>

	<p>Key Texts: Malcolm Gladwell's <i>Outliers: Part 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and Epilogue <p>Angela Duckworth's "Grit: The power of passion and perseverance" TEDTalk</p> <p>Culminating Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outliers Reading Journal • Chapter 1: Fate vs Freewill Argumentative Paragraph • Chapter 3/4: IQ and Theory of Grit Paragraph • Success Synthesis Essay
<p>College vs Career (1.5 Weeks)</p>	<p>Unit Essential Questions: Should all high school students go directly into college? What should you be considering before graduation? What are both the benefits/drawbacks of pursuing a college education versus a career?</p> <p>Unit Overview: The final weeks of Semester 1 will be spent setting goals for beyond high school by examining college vs career options. Students will develop metacognitive skills such as decision making, goal setting, and real world application. By exploring the benefits and drawbacks to college, career, and military options, students will have a mid-year checkpoint of goals moving towards graduation.</p> <p>Key Texts: What Kind of Student Are You? Self-Assessment "A Detour Before College" "How Necessary is a College Education?" "The Benefits of College Life"</p> <p>Culminating Assignment: Argumentative Writing - Should all high school students go directly into college?</p>

SPRING SEMESTER:

Title of the Unit	Purpose and Expectations of learning
<p>Parasocial Relationships: Advice Project (2.5 weeks)</p>	<p>Unit Essential Questions: How would you define <u>parasocial relationships</u>? What are the benefits and drawbacks of parasocial relationships? What is your advice on the mindset/actions one should take when approaching parasocial relationships?</p> <p>Unit Overview: You are a writer for an online publication whose audience is people just like yourself (if you are an avid YouTube/TikTok/Instagram consumer, assume you are writing to other avid consumers; if you are a YouTube/TikTok/Instagram creator, assume you are writing to other creators). The editor of your publication tells you, "We want you to write a piece about parasocial relationships focusing on a YouTube/TikTok/Instagram influencer. We want you to define what they are, what might be good/attractive about them, what might be harmful, and then give advice to your readers on how to stay healthy when engaging in them." You are expected to quote and cite at least THREE of the sources from class, to provide illustrative examples in each paragraph, and (most of all) to help your particular audience understand what you are</p>

	<p>trying to say. So, constantly think about their needs: What they do/don't need defined, explained, etc.</p> <p>Key Texts: Thomas Foster's <i>How to Read Nonfiction Like A Professor</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging Media (Pages 259-276) "Social (Media) Disease" • "What are parasocial relationships?" • "How We Can Feel Deeply Connected to Someone We Don't Even Know" • "The Parasocial Phenomenon" <p>Culminating Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice column for text publication (i.e. newspaper, magazine, etc.).
<p>Problem-Solution via Current Events (5 Weeks)</p>	<p>Unit Essential Questions: What is a current issue (i.e. social, political, environmental, etc.) that interests you? What is a primary problem (or problems) that need(s) to be addressed in that current issue? What do you believe could be possible solutions to that issue?</p> <p>Unit Overview: Whether we realize it or not, we all have a stake in local, national, and even global problems. Oftentimes, we fall into believing there is nothing we can do to be active participants in helping to solve these issues. Throughout this unit, you will reflect on what current problems in our society have been affecting you: What really causes you genuine concern? What do you find yourself reading and/or watching online? What do you find yourself debating about with your friends/classmates/family members/coworkers? It can be anything from the dress code policy in RTHS, the social justice movements happening in the US, or all the way to the global energy crisis. Your goal is to use the texts covered in class and your own findings to research solutions and present ways we can take action to help solve these current issues.</p> <p>Key Texts: Thomas Foster's <i>How to Read Nonfiction Like A Professor</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's Going on Around Here? (Pages 63-78) "Source Code" <p>Malcolm Gladwell's <i>The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Three Rules of Epidemics" (Pages 15-29) • "Case Study: Suicide, Smoking, and the Search for the Unsticky Cigarette" (Pages 216-252) <p>The 25 Most Influential Works of American Protest Art Since World War II</p> <p>Culminating Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McConaughey Press Speech on Gun Control Rhetorical Analysis • Problem/Solution Research Essay
<p>Senior Reflection: Developing a Sense of Community (2 Weeks)</p>	<p>Unit Essential Questions: What improvements have I made and how can I continue to build positive habits? How have I grown this year? How do my high school experiences and understanding of my community shape the next phase of my life?</p> <p>Unit Overview: At the conclusion of the year, students will reflect on their growth and evaluate their progress. Discussion will place emphasis on defining "community" and evaluating how</p>

community influences growth and/or perspective.

Key Texts:

- Amy Poehler Commencement Speech: Harvard University, 2011

Culminating Assignments:

- I Am Poem Writing
- Commencement Speech

Method of Evaluation: You will compose a minimum of three revised graded essays no less than 1,000 words. Each essay will have a specific focus and word/page requirement and be included in the “Summative” category of Skyward. Other writing assignments will be in the form of Paragraph Reflections, Discussion Posts, and other activities completed on Google Classroom and are included in the “Formative” category on Skyward.

Revision Policy: Revision is a crucial element in becoming a successful writer. We will spend time in class developing revision and editing skills. Expect to provide and receive constructive feedback from your fellow classmates and me through individual conferences.

Classroom Discussions and Activities: Everyone is expected to actively, thoughtfully, and respectfully contribute to discussions and classroom activities (i.e. small group, whole group, and online). Keep in mind that the more you contribute the more you will gain out of time together. This will be included in the “Formative” category.

Attendance: I understand that illnesses and absences are a part of life, so make sure to check Google Classroom every day for announcements and assignments. It is your responsibility to make sure that you review everything you may have missed and submit assignments on time, even if you are absent. Again, communication is key!

Online Participation: This includes completing Flipgrid responses, Discussion Posts, and other activities by the designated due dates. Make sure to check your emails and Google Classroom. A “Weekly Outlook” will be provided every Monday. Take advantage of it!

Late Work: I am not a fan, and it is not a good habit to form. However, I understand that emergencies happen; therefore, I will allow you to submit one formal essay past the original due date. However, the grade will be lowered one letter grade for each day after that. All other assignments must be turned in on the posted due dates, or you will receive a “0” for them. Do not attempt to be “tech savvy” and give me the digital runaround. I consider that disrespectful and would rather you use your energy completing the assignments instead.

Classroom Behavior: Please be respectful, follow all school policies/procedures, and use common sense. This absolutely includes the online classroom environment as well. If you are asked to leave my class, it will count as an unexcused absence. You will lose all credit for that day which cannot be made up. If you post or respond with anything that does not adhere to the above expectations, it will be removed, and you will receive disciplinary consequences.

Chromebooks and Cell Phones: Non-academic use of digital devices interfere with your focus AND the focus of those around you. PLEASE USE COMMON SENSE. I really, really do NOT like using class time to address these issues. I may or may not give you a verbal warning, but this does not mean I do not see it happening. If you are regularly off-task, you will be asked to leave and referred to the RTHS administration.

Important Reminders:

- I will follow and enforce all other policies explained in the RTHS Handbook. Use common sense.
- I will run this class as a college-level course. Learn to take responsibility. Avoid blame-shifting.
- I will do my best to help each of you improve in your writing skills this year. Meet me halfway.

“The worst thing you write is better than the best thing you did not write.” -Unknown