

Exploring College and Careers YAG

Career and College Exploration | Grades 7–8 | 45 Minutes Daily | 36 Weeks (4 Grading Periods)

Course Information: CCE = \$127.2 Career and College Exploration. The course is recommended for Grades 7 and 8 and guides students through development of an individual college and career readiness flight plan. Students use assessments and reliable career information to understand themselves, explore Texas CTE career clusters and emerging occupations, investigate education/training pathways, analyze labor-market information, develop personal success and job-seeking skills, create employment documents, and build an individual career and academic plan. ACCESS is a primary instructional resource throughout the course for career exploration, pathway planning, regional workforce connections, financial readiness, postsecondary planning, and documented career-readiness experiences.

GP	Wks	Unit & Focus	Major Learning Tasks & Assessments	Integrated TEKS	ACCESS & Extension Activities
1	1–2	Unit 1 – Who Am I? Interests, Aptitudes & Strengths	• Complete career interest, aptitude and/or career assessments • Analyze assessment results and identify patterns in interests, strengths and preferences • Introduce the college/career readiness flight plan and personal goal-setting • Connect academic habits and transferable skills to future options • Begin a digital career exploration journal/portfolio	• CCE1(A) • CCE4(A–B,D,F)	• ACCESS: student profile and career-interest exploration • ACCESS career matches • Reflection journal and initial goals
1	3–5	Unit 2 – Texas CTE Career Clusters & Career Discovery	• Explore and describe the Texas CTE career clusters • Identify multiple occupations within clusters of personal interest • Research emerging occupations and changing career opportunities • Compare job duties, work environments and transferable skills • Create career-cluster spotlights and present findings	• CCE1(B–D) • CCE4(B–C)	• ACCESS: career and pathway exploration • ACCESS career videos/employer connections • Career cluster gallery
1	6–9	Unit 3 – Education, Training & Career Pathways	• Research academic, technical, certification and training requirements for selected careers • Compare education/training options and pathways • Explore high school programs of study, endorsements and course sequences connected to interests • Identify professional associations and extended-learning opportunities • Update the flight plan with preliminary pathway choices	• CCE2(A–B) • CCE3(A,D,F,H)	• ACCESS: pathway/course alignment • ACCESS credential and education requirements • Program-of-study exploration
2	10–12	Unit 4 – High School, College Credit & Postsecondary Options	• Describe transitions from middle school to high school and from high school to postsecondary education/careers • Explore AP, IB, dual credit and articulated-credit opportunities • Compare entry-level employment, military service, apprenticeships, technical/community colleges and universities • Investigate enrollment/participation steps for multiple pathways • Connect pathway options to the student's career interests	• CCE3(A–B,G) • CCE2(B)	• ACCESS: postsecondary pathway planning • ACCESS college/career comparison • High school course-planning activity
2	13–15	Unit 5 – Paying for the Future & College/Career Assessments	• Investigate financial aid, scholarships, savings, employee benefits and other ways to fund postsecondary education/training • Explore the purposes of PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, ACT, ASVAB and TSI and how results can affect goals • Discuss the impact of early and effective college/career planning • Connect education/training costs with career preparation decisions • Add financial-readiness actions to the flight plan	• CCE3(C–E)	• ACCESS: financial-readiness/postsecondary planning • Scholarship and financial-aid exploration • Assessment roadmap
2	16–17	Unit 6 – Personal Success, Leadership & Career Readiness	• Apply time-management and goal-setting strategies • Practice transferable skills, communication, teamwork and professional presentation • Apply core academic skills to personal, academic and career goals • Explore community service, volunteerism, CTSOs and other extended-learning experiences • Identify work ethic, integrity, dedication and perseverance in workplace scenarios	• CCE4(A–F) • CCE3(F)	• ACCESS: readiness skill development • Community/industry connection • Professional presentation

2	18	Semester 1 Exam – Exploring College and Careers	• Cumulative assessment of self-awareness, career clusters, education/training pathways, postsecondary options and personal-success skills • Semester flight-plan review and reflection • ACCESS portfolio evidence review	• Cumulative: CCE1–4	• ACCESS: semester plan review • Targeted review/remediation
3	19–22	Unit 7 – Labor Market, High-Demand Careers & Lifestyle	• Analyze labor-market trends for careers of interest • Identify evidence of high-skill, high-wage and/or high-demand occupations • Analyze effects of changing employment trends, societal needs and economic conditions • Compare salaries for at least three careers in an interest area • Use local/regional career information to connect workforce demand to student interests	• CCE5(A–C,E)	• ACCESS: regional labor-market and career information • ACCESS employer/workforce connections • Career demand comparison
3	23–25	Unit 8 – Lifestyle, Budgeting & Career Choice	• Develop a personal budget reflecting a desired future lifestyle • Compare career earnings with education/training needs and lifestyle expectations • Analyze the relationship among wages, career demand, financial independence and personal priorities • Revise career options based on evidence rather than salary alone • Communicate a supported career/lifestyle comparison	• CCE5(A–E) • CCE4(C–D)	• ACCESS: wages and financial-readiness tools • Lifestyle/career budget • Career choice reflection
3	26–27	Unit 9 – Entrepreneurship & Career Connections	• Define entrepreneurship and identify entrepreneurial opportunities in a field of personal interest • Explore professional associations and networking opportunities • Connect entrepreneurship to career clusters and regional workforce needs • Research a local entrepreneur, business or industry partner • Present an entrepreneurial career idea	• CCE3(H–I) • CCE4(C)	• ACCESS: employer/industry ecosystem • Entrepreneurship exploration • Career professional connection
4	28–30	Unit 10 – Job Search, Interviewing & Digital Professionalism	• Identify the steps of an effective job search • Discuss appropriate interview appearance and professional behavior • Practice interview preparation and participate in a mock interview • Connect professional communication, references and digital presence to employability • Use feedback to improve interview performance	• CCE6(A–C) • CCE4(B,F)	• ACCESS: work-based learning/employment exploration • Mock interviews • Industry professional feedback
4	31–33	Unit 11 – Résumé, Cover Letter, Applications & References	• Write a student résumé aligned to a career of interest • Write business correspondence including a cover letter and thank-you letter • Complete sample job applications accurately • Explain protocols for selecting and using references • Compile professional documents in the student's career portfolio	• CCE7(A–D)	• ACCESS: career-readiness portfolio • Résumé and application development • Peer/professional document review
4	34–35	Unit 12 – My Flight Plan: High School to Career	• Select a career pathway in a desired field, including industry, entrepreneurship or military service as appropriate • Document high school courses and postsecondary education/training requirements for the pathway • Write a plan for beginning the career after high school and required postsecondary preparation • Integrate assessment results, career research, labor-market evidence, budget information and professional documents • Present the final college and career readiness flight plan	• CCE8(A–C) • CCE1–7 reinforcement	• ACCESS: individualized pathway/flight plan • ACCESS postsecondary and career planning • Student/family flight-plan presentation

4	36	Semester 2 Exam & College/Career Readiness Showcase	• Cumulative assessment of labor-market analysis, financial readiness, entrepreneurship, job-seeking skills, professional documents and career/academic planning • Final flight plan and career portfolio presentation • Reflection on next steps for high school course selection and future exploration	• Cumulative: CCE1–8	• ACCESS: final pathway review • Family/community showcase
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Career and College Exploration TEKS Coverage Checklist

Coverage verification: All 39 student expectations in §127.2 are intentionally addressed. ACCESS is embedded as a primary instructional resource throughout the year, particularly for personalized career exploration, pathway planning, labor-market and employer connections, financial readiness, work-based learning awareness, and postsecondary planning.

Strand	SEs	Knowledge & Skills Focus	YAG Placement	Coverage
CCE1	A–D	Assessments, career clusters, occupations, emerging careers	Units 1–2; Unit 12 reinforcement	100%
CCE2	A–B	Education, training, certification and pathway requirements	Units 3–4; Unit 12 reinforcement	100%
CCE3	A–I	Transitions, college credit, paying for college, assessments, extended learning, enrollment options, associations, entrepreneurship	Units 3–6 and 9; Unit 12 reinforcement	100%
CCE4	A–F	Time management, transferable skills, presentations, academics, service, professional-success traits	Units 1–2, 6, 8, 10	100%
CCE5	A–E	Labor market, high-skill/high-wage/high-demand careers, trends, budget and salaries	Units 7–8	100%
CCE6	A–C	Job search, interview appearance and mock interview	Unit 10	100%
CCE7	A–D	Résumé, business correspondence, applications and references	Unit 11	100%
CCE8	A–C	Individual career pathway, high school/postsecondary requirements and career-start plan	Unit 12	100%

ACCESS Integration Priorities

- Use ACCESS as the recurring student-facing platform rather than a one-time career survey. Students should return to their profiles and plans throughout the year as new information changes or confirms their thinking.
- Use ACCESS career and pathway information to connect interests to real occupations, education/training requirements, credentials, regional workforce opportunities, wages, employers, and future work-based learning opportunities.
- Use ACCESS planning features to support the college and career readiness flight plan, including high school pathway decisions, postsecondary options, financial readiness, and career-entry planning.
- Use ACCESS community and employer connections whenever possible to make career exploration authentic through career professionals, industry partners, higher education partners, workplace examples, and regional opportunities.
- Maintain an individual digital career portfolio/flight plan across the course. Students should leave the course with assessment reflections, career research, pathway/course planning, labor-market evidence, a lifestyle budget, résumé and correspondence, interview reflection, and a written career/academic plan.

Implementation Notes

- Career and College Exploration is recommended for students in Grades 7 and 8. The course should emphasize exploration and informed decision making rather than requiring students to make a permanent career choice.
- Flight-plan work should be iterative. Students should revise their plans as they learn more about themselves, high school programs of study, postsecondary options, labor-market conditions, costs, and career requirements.
- Oral presentations, research, technology use, core academics, financial literacy, professional communication, teamwork, service, and employability skills should be integrated into authentic college/career exploration tasks.
- Weeks 18 and 36 are reserved for cumulative semester exams. No instructional unit crosses the semester boundary, and the YAG contains no calendar-specific dates.