



University College Dublin
Access Classics

Transition Year micro-module
Exploring Classics

Developed by Access Classics
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Transition Year

Transition Year (TY) is a one-year optional programme available to all post-primary schools and is offered as part of the senior cycle experience. During senior cycle students develop a stronger sense of their identity, learning with and from their peers, teachers, other adults, and various media. Senior cycle educates the whole person.

Students' experiences in senior cycle should contribute to their intellectual, social and personal development and their overall wellbeing. During TY, students can develop more mature relationships with teachers and other adults and become active agents in designing their own educational experiences and their own contribution to society.

TY programmes offer a unique opportunity in senior cycle where schools and communities can collaborate to encourage young people to thrive now and into the future. TY offers time, space, and autonomy to create enjoyable and meaningful educational experiences that support students in senior cycle while facilitating their engagement with a broader range of pathways and possibilities. It equips young people with the supports and experiences to develop a greater capacity to respond to uncertainty, manage complexity, and become agents of positive, ethical change in society.

Key competencies of senior cycle

Key competencies is an umbrella term which refers to the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students develop during senior cycle, which helps them to become more engaged, enriched and competent learners.

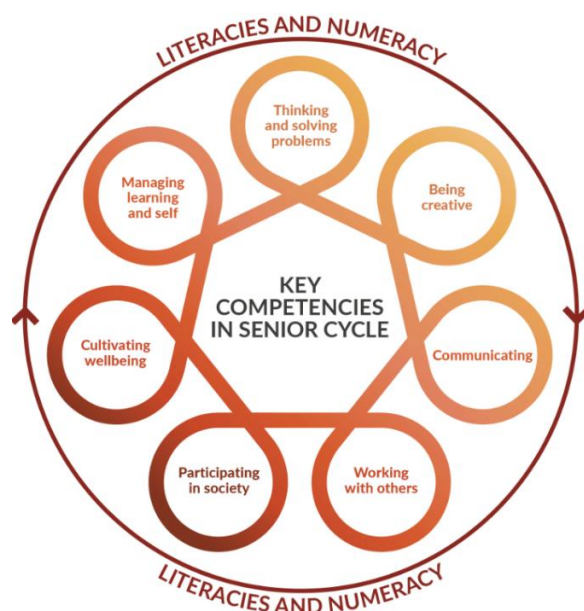


Figure 1: Key Competencies in Senior Cycle, supported by literacies and numeracy

Further information on key competencies of senior cycle can be found on ncca.ie.

Student Dimensions of Transition Year

The Student Dimensions describe how students can develop in TY and the experiences that can support this development. The four Student Dimensions are:

- Personal Growth
- Being a Learner
- Civic and Community Engagement
- Career Exploration

The four Student Dimensions are designed to interlock in such a way that together they intersect with all seven key competencies of senior cycle. Each Student Dimension contains a set of developmental indicators and related student experiences.

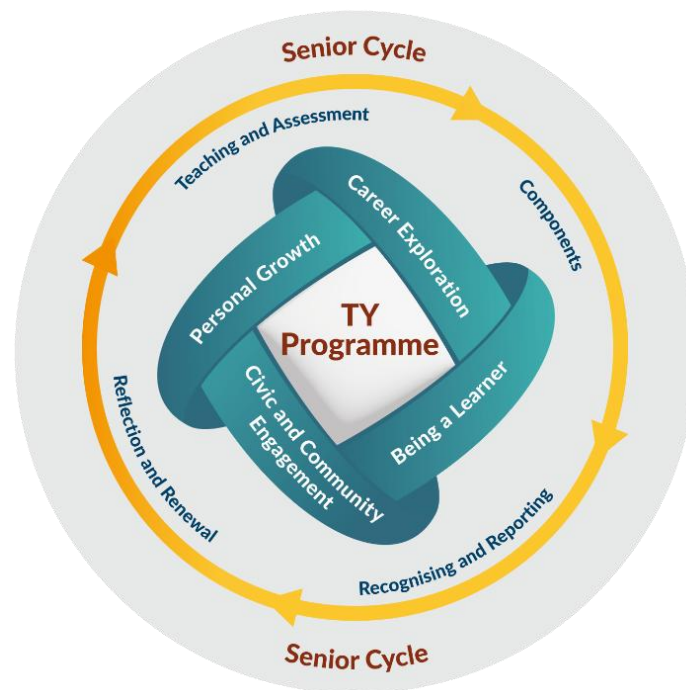


Figure 2: Overview of the Transition Year Programme Statement

Further details can be found in the [Transition Year Programme Statement](#). (p.11-15)

Table 1 lists the developmental indicators that are most likely to be supported by student participation and engagement with this micro-module.

Table 1 Student Dimensions supported by the micro-module

Student Dimension	Developmental Indicators most relevant to the micro-module
Personal Growth	• Having greater capacity to negotiate ethical dilemmas and reflect on personal values • Interacting with others with more empathy, both in person and online
Being a Learner	• Broadening their communication and presentation skills • Increasing their capacity for independent and self-regulated learning
Civic and Community Engagement	• Deepening their awareness and sense of empathy, identity and belonging • Recognising and engaging with complexity and uncertainty
Career Exploration	• Increasing their awareness of personal interests, aptitudes, values and dispositions • Acquiring more vocational, organisational and communication skills

Rationale

Classics is the study of ancient Greek and Roman civilisations and languages. This includes the cultures and peoples that Greece and Rome interacted with, and were shaped by, including those as far afield as Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Middle East, Afghanistan, India and China. But Classics is so much more than the ancient past. It offers teachers and students a safe distance from which to discuss and engage with complex topics, such as war, political exclusion and slavery, helping students to live well and manage complexity in their own worlds. Classics incorporates many areas of learning, such as archaeology, architecture, art, CSPE, history, languages, literature, maths, philosophy, politics and science. And it is increasingly part of popular culture today, from movies to video games, graphic novels, cartoons and literature.

This *Exploring Classics* micro-module is designed to open the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome to the students, while drawing connections with their experience of the modern world. It is suitable both for complete beginners and for those who studied Classics for Junior Cycle.

Aim

This micro-module aims to:

- deepen students' knowledge, awareness and curiosity of the culture and languages of ancient Greece and Rome
- encourage students to think critically about the past and its relationship to their daily lives

Time allocation

This micro-module is highly adaptable. It is divided into eight sections and can be used as a 10-hour micro-module **or** a 30-hour micro-module, in the following way:

10-hour micro-module

To complete the micro-module, all students will engage with four sections:

- Two core sections:
 1. What is Classics?
 2. Accessing the Ancient world
- Two sections selected from:
 3. Language
 4. Ancient art and artefacts
 5. Mythology: gods and heroes
 6. Sport and leisure in the ancient world
 7. STEM in the ancient world
 8. Politics and persuasion in the ancient world

Students will complete a project. The project can be based on one of the studied sections, or the student can select another area, outside of the studied sections, using materials provided in the teaching manual.

30-hour micro-module

Students complete all eight sections of the micro-module. The students complete a commensurately larger project.

Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes below are designed to promote teaching and learning that develop students' knowledge, skills, values and dispositions incrementally, enabling them to apply their key competencies to different situations as they progress. The right-hand column contains learning outcomes which describe the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students should be able to demonstrate after a period of learning. The left-hand column outlines specific areas that students learn about. Taken together, these provide clarity and coherence with the other sections of the micro-module.

The learning outcomes are numbered to support teacher planning. It does not imply any hierarchy of importance across the outcomes themselves.

Table 2 Learning outcomes

Students learn about	Students should be able to
1. What is Classics?	
- the main subjects that Classics overlaps with, including history, literature, philosophy, Latin and ancient Greek - famous figures from the ancient world, both real and mythical, including Alexander the Great, Cleopatra, Homer and Zeus - famous structures from the ancient world, including the Colosseum and the Parthenon - ancient mythological creatures (harpies, Pegasus) and figures (Athena, the Cyclops Polyphemus), and their connections to the modern, natural world	1.1 Identify different subject areas that overlap with Classics 1.2 Explain the connection of famous figures and structures with the ancient Greek and Roman world 1.3 Outline how certain animals, fish and insects take their names from ancient mythical creatures and figures
2. How do we access the ancient world?	
- graffiti that survives from the ancient world, such as a name scratched on an Egyptian pyramid and graffiti of gladiators in Pompeii - how to use modern technology (the Stanford Geospatial Network Model of	2.1 Explain how evidence surviving from the ancient world can give us information about people and societies in the past 2.2 Explore the role of modern technologies in improving our understanding of the ancient world

the Roman World) to engage with the ancient Roman world

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3. Ancient languages

- ancient scripts and languages, using objects such as the Phaistos disc and Rosetta Stone
 - the Greek alphabet and ancient words still in use today, including democracy, drama, philosophy and monarchy
 - some of the Latin words we use in English today, including nephew, umbrella, mansion and mirror
 - how Roman numerals can be created by combining 7 letters (I, V, X, L, C, D, M)
- 3.1 Describe a selection of scripts and languages of the ancient world
- 3.2 Recognise Greek and Latin words still used in English today
- 3.3 Identify and create Roman numerals

4. Ancient art and artefacts

- how paintings on pottery changed in ancient Greece, from simple geometric shapes (8th century BC) to more realistic black-figure and red-figure paintings (ca. 6th century BC onwards)
 - Trajan's Column and the Ara Pacis (Altar of Peace) in Rome that were used to send messages of victory in war and peace
 - ancient artefacts in museums around the world, such as the Parthenon Marbles in the British Museum, that originated from other countries
- 4.1 Identify different styles of ancient Greek pottery painting
- 4.2 Discuss how public monuments can be used to convey messages to the public
- 4.3 Consider the societal benefits and ethical challenges of museums sharing artefacts from other countries

5. Mythology: gods and heroes

- some of the key ancient Greek and Roman gods, including Zeus, Mars and Hermes
 - the relevance of ancient gods today, including the Greek goddess Aphrodite, her connection with Cyprus and her modern depiction
 - two stories from the beginning of the Trojan War, including how the war
- 5.1 Identify and discuss gods and heroes from ancient mythology
- 5.2 Outline the influence of ancient gods and how we relate to the ancient gods today
- 5.3 Describe stories from the Trojan War

began and how Odysseus tried to avoid the war

6. Sport and leisure in the ancient world

- some of the events in the Ancient Greek Olympics, including boxing, foot races, wrestling, pankration and chariot races
- some of the common ingredients in food and drink in ancient Rome

6.1 Outline events from the ancient Olympic Games

6.2 Use ingredients of ancient Rome to reproduce recipes

6.3 Discuss the role of sport and food in bringing people together

7. STEM in the ancient world

- key figures and achievements connected with STEM in the ancient world, including aqueducts, concrete and the mathematician Archimedes
- modern day reliance on technology
- measuring time in the ancient world
- the Antikythera Mechanism, found in a shipwreck in 1900, and its links to the world's first analogue computer

7.1 List key figures and achievements connected with STEM in the ancient world

7.2 Explore our relationship with mechanisms and technology today

7.3 Recognise and discuss the ancient origins of modern technologies

8. Politics and persuasion in the ancient world

- aspects of democracy worked in fifth-century BC Athens, including who could take part in democracy, how people were chosen for political office and how decisions were made
- how to structure speeches using rhetorical devices from politics in ancient Rome and how these devices are still useful today

8.1 Outline aspects of ancient Athenian democracy and compare them with modern democracies

8.2 Use rhetorical devices in making an argument

Teaching for student learning

Teaching for student learning in TY requires a dynamic approach that prioritises student engagement, exploration, and development. The Curriculum Dimension for Teaching and Assessment identifies collective professional practice and classroom practice that can support student learning and development. In particular, teaching approaches in TY should develop the student in being a learner and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. The aims and learning outcomes of the micro-module will strongly influence the choice of teaching pedagogies.

Table 3 suggests activities to support students in realising the learning outcomes. The activities can be adapted and are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. Resources to carry out the activities are available in the accompanying online resources. These include step-by-step instructions, quizzes, crosswords, language games and field-trip ideas.

Table 3 How learning outcomes are supported by the micro-module

Learning Outcomes	Aligned activities
What is Classics? 1.1; 1.2; 1.3	- Introductory table quiz: five rounds of four questions. The questions help students identify figures, including Alexander the Great, and structures, including the Parthenon, from the ancient world. Images of <i>Classics</i> in popular culture and literature are used to draw connections with the modern world. - Classics in the natural world: students learn about four ancient mythical creatures/figures: the Harpies, Polyphemus, Athena and Pegasus. They then match these with the animals, fish and insects which bear their names.
How do we access the ancient world? 2.1; 2.2	- Graffiti like the ancients: taking inspiration from examples of ancient graffiti of gladiators, students create graffiti for a modern sport in the same style - Ancient Tour Operators: students, in teams, devise a name for their tour company and plan a trip from Ireland to Ancient Rome in the 1st century AD using ORBIS technology (The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World)
Ancient languages 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	All necessary resources for completing the activities below, e.g. Latin crossword, Roman numeral Sudoku and Ancient Greek charts,

	are provided in the accompanying resources. Answers are provided for all Ancient Greek and Latin activities. - Writing in code: students examine the symbols on the ancient undeciphered Phaistos disc on the provided resources, question what these might mean and, using similar symbols, create a disc of a day in their individual lives, using, e.g., clay, paper or scratch paper - English to Greek: meet the ancient Greek alphabet and, using the chart provided in the accompanying resources, change a list of names of Greek gods letter by letter from English into ancient Greek, e.g. Athēna = Αθηνά. - Ancient investigators: decode ancient Greek words still used today in English using the transliteration guide for the Greek alphabet - Latin crossword: complete the crossword provided in the accompanying resources. All the words in the crossword are commonly used words in English that come from Latin, including umbrella, mirror and nephew. - Roman numeral sudoku: using the ready-made Sudoku puzzle in the provided resources, students can test their knowledge of the Roman numerals for 1-9. - Roman numeral challenge: using the provided examples of how to create Roman numerals, figure out large Roman numerals, for example MMXXIV = 2024
Ancient art and artefacts 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	- Paint like the ancient Greeks: examine the provided examples of Geometric, black-figure and red-figure vase painting from ancient Greece, and using pieces of dried clay or orange card, recreate these painting styles - Messages in clay: taking inspiration from the Roman examples provided in the resources, using modelling clay make a small relief sculpture that includes symbols or images of peace - Be part of the debate: should the Parthenon marbles stay in the British Museum or be returned to Athens? With starting points provided for both sides of the argument, students are asked to join this current, contentious debate.
Mythology: gods and heroes 5.1, 5.2, 5.3	- 2-minute table quiz: identify gods and figures from ancient mythology. Answers and additional information are provided in the resources.

	- Using the ancient gods to discuss modern issues: a guided discussion on modern perceptions of the goddess Aphrodite and the importance of her connection with Cyprus - Movie makers: students are challenged to transform three described scenes from the story of Paris and the beauty contest that began the Trojan War into one (or more!) of the following: a five-minute recorded film, a play or a storyboard. - Reporting for the <i>Archaic Times</i>: students meet the story of how the Greek hero Odysseus tried to avoid going to the Trojan War. Pretending to be an interviewer for the <i>Archaic Times</i>, the students interview Odysseus on why he does not want to join the expedition. This can be presented in several formats, including a full interview script, a 'newspaper' article based on the interview or a recorded podcast.
Sport and leisure in the ancient world 6.1, 6.2, 6.3	- Walking debate: which events in the modern Olympics were also in the ancient Olympics? - Recreating ancient Olympic events: using armour made from cardboard, etc. recreate the Hoplitodromos, the footrace in full armour - MasterChef, Roman style: make rolls and pancakes using ancient Roman recipes
STEM in the ancient world 7.1, 7.2, 7.3	- Table quiz: four rounds of four questions to help students identify key figures and advances from the ancient world of STEM - Time challenge: accurately measure the length of a piece of music without using modern technology - The world's first computer?: watch a short video on the Antikythera mechanism and discuss whether it can be considered the "world's first computer"
Politics and persuasion in the ancient world 8.1, 8.2	- Democracy in Athens: a step-by-step re-creation of the process of democracy in Athens. Steps include role play of different social identities and who could vote, choosing roles by lottery, or lots, division into tribes and a re-enactment of an Assembly. Steps can be fully re-created or described, depending on the time and needs of the class. - Finding your persuasive voice: using various rhetorical devices, in groups create a short speech using at least three of the devices on a topic determined by the teacher. The most persuasive speech wins!

Assessment

Assessment in senior cycle involves gathering, interpreting, using and reporting information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and is used for a variety of purposes. Assessment supports and improves learning by helping students and teachers to identify next steps in the teaching and learning process.

As well as varied teaching strategies, varied assessment strategies will support student learning and provide information to teachers and students that can be used as feedback so that teaching and learning activities can be modified in ways that best suit individual learners. By setting appropriate and engaging tasks, asking questions and giving feedback that promotes learner autonomy, assessment will support learning and promote progression, support the development of student key competencies and summarise achievement.

Assessment Methods

The assessment methods listed below are those most closely aligning with the aims, rationale and learning outcomes of the micro-module and also with the Teaching and Assessment section of the TY Programme Statement (p.20-22).

- On-going assessment by teacher through participation in group discussions and completion of group/individual activities, including creation of artefacts, role play, re-creation of events, and walking debates.
- Group/individual project based on one section of the TY micro-module. This may expand upon a particular lesson or develop an independent idea. Possibilities include an art project, presentation of a myth as a play, creative writing exercise or a PowerPoint presentation, in response to an agreed brief and assessed against criteria appropriate to the task.

Features of quality

Features of quality are the statements that support teachers and/or students in making judgements about the quality of student work for the purpose of awarding achievement. The feature of quality below are the criteria that will be used to assess the student learning and achievement at one of three levels over the course of the micro-module. The three levels are: Distinction, Merit, Achieved.

Please note: The Features of Quality below apply to each section of Table 2 and are universal across all 8 sections described in Table 2.

Table 4 Features of quality

Area of Learning	Distinction	Merit	Achieved
Communication	Communicates ideas and information about the ancient world effectively, whether in discussion or different media	Communicates ideas and information about the ancient world appropriately, whether in discussion or different media	Communicates some ideas and information about the ancient world, whether in discussion or different media
Knowledge and Understanding	Demonstrates comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the topics covered	Demonstrates clear, but not always comprehensive, understanding and knowledge of the topics covered	Demonstrates some understanding and knowledge of the topics covered
Creativity	Demonstrates a high level of creativity in coming up with and exploring questions, speculating about the ancient world based on evidence and trying different things to better relate to the ancient world	Demonstrates some element of creativity in coming up with and exploring questions, speculating about the ancient world based on evidence and trying some things to better relate to the ancient world	Demonstrates limited creativity in coming up with and exploring questions, speculating about the ancient world based on evidence and trying in some way to better relate to the ancient world
Critical thinking	Has a clear and developed ability to engage critically with the ancient world, including drawing connections between different pieces of evidence and between the past and the present.	Has a very good ability to engage critically with the ancient world, including drawing connections between different pieces of evidence and between the past and the present.	Has some ability to engage critically with the ancient world, including drawing connections between different pieces of evidence and between the past and the present.

Reporting

The Transition Year Programme Statement (p.23-25) describes the three elements to reporting in TY programmes:

- The TY portfolio
- Student reflection
- School reporting.

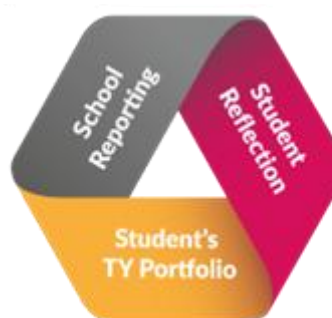


Figure 3: The three elements of reporting in TY

The TY portfolio could be used by the students to present each/a selection of the activities they undertook across the micro-module, and explain what they learned and how they developed on two levels:

- i) what they learned about the ancient world through each activity
- ii) how each activity made them reflect upon or think differently about something in the modern world

These will feed into reflections on the Student Dimensions, particularly personal growth and being a learner.

It is up to each individual school to decide what system to use for assessing and reporting, whether, for example, formative feedback or grading based on the school's descriptor levels. The features of quality in Table 4 can be adapted to suit whichever method the school chooses.

Evaluating

Reflection and Renewal is a Curriculum Dimension that speaks to the importance of ongoing evaluation of the TY programme and of the components that comprise the programme. The purpose of evaluating the micro-module is to find out, from both the students' and teacher's perspective, the success or otherwise of the module and how it can be improved for the future.

The evaluation of this micro-module may be achieved through a mix of verbal feedback, online evaluation, evaluation based on teacher feedback as part of TY programme evaluation, or other methods that may be suited to the school.

Resources

A free, downloadable version of the *Exploring Classics* micro-module is available on the UCD Access Classics website (link below). Here, you will find the following:

- (i) an extensive teaching manual, with step-by-step activities and discussion prompts
- (ii) an accompanying student-facing PowerPoint
- (iii) additional resources to expand lessons or generate assessment project ideas
- (iv) information on a Certificate of Completion for your students (available if they have used the micro-module, in whole or in part, in your TY offering)

Classics micro-module link: <https://accessclassics.ie/transition-year-unit/>

A note on additional resources: Throughout the teaching manual, you will find links to other free/open access resources. Examples of how *Classics* is used in modern culture include the Percy Jackson series of books/films (by Rick Riordan), movies such as *The Odyssey* and *Gladiator* (I and II), and video games such as Rome: Total War and Assassin's Creed: Odyssey. Retellings of ancient myths to centre marginalised groups and voices are especially popular today, such as Pat Barker's Trojan War trilogy, Madeline Miller's *Shield of Achilles*, Bernardine Evaristo's *The Emperor's Babe* and Nathalie Haynes' *Stone Blind*.