



TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**  
DIVISION OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

## Career Exploration

<b>Primary Career Cluster:</b>	CTE Interdisciplinary
<b>Consultant:</b>	Thomas Gibney, (615) 253-3223, <a href="mailto:Thomas.Gibney@tn.gov">Thomas.Gibney@tn.gov</a>
<b>Course Code(s):</b>	TBD
<b>Prerequisite(s):</b>	None
<b>Credit:</b>	½ - 1*
<b>Grade Level:</b>	8 – 9
<b>Graduation Requirements:</b>	This course is meant to serve as an exploratory course to assist students in determining an appropriate elective focus. It does not fulfill any graduation requirements.
<b>Programs of Study and Sequence:</b>	This course is encouraged as a pre-requisite for any and all high school CTE courses and programs of study, as well as academic and fine art elective focuses.
<b>Necessary Equipment:</b>	Refer to Teacher Resources page below.
<b>Aligned Student Organization(s):</b>	None
<b>Coordinating Work-Based Learning:</b>	If a teacher has completed work-based learning training, he or she can offer appropriate placement. For more information, please visit <a href="http://tn.gov/education/cte/work_based_learning.shtml">http://tn.gov/education/cte/work_based_learning.shtml</a>
<b>Available Student Industry Certifications:</b>	None
<b>Dual Credit or Dual Enrollment Opportunities:</b>	There are no statewide dual credit/dual enrollment opportunities for this course.
<b>Teacher Endorsement(s):</b>	001, 004, 006, 007, 009, 009, 010, 011, 012, 013, 014, 015, 016, 017, 018, 019, 020, 021, 022, 023, 024, 025, 026, 027, 027, 028, 029, 030, 031, 032, 033, 034, 035, 036, 037, 038, 039, 040, 041, 042, 043, 044, 045, 046, 047, 048, 049, 050, 051, 052, 054, 055, 056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 061, 062, 063, 064, 065, 066, 067, 068, 069, 070, 071, 072, 073, 077, 078, 079, 080, 081, 082, 099, 100, 101, 102, 103, 105, 108, 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 220, 221, 230, 231, 240, 241, 250, 301, 310, 311, 400, 401, 402, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 434, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 439, 445, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 458, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 484, 485, 486, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 498, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520,

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<b>Required Teacher Certifications/Training:</b>	None
<b>Teacher Resources:</b>	<a href="http://www.tn.gov/education/cte/middle-school.shtml">http://www.tn.gov/education/cte/middle-school.shtml</a>

## Course Description

*Career Exploration* is an introductory course designed to assist students in (a) discovering their personal strengths and abilities, (b) understanding opportunities available to them in different career areas, and (c) practicing skills necessary to excel in the workforce and in postsecondary learning. A student proficient in this course will know and exhibit soft skills (e.g. teamwork, creative thinking, and problem solving), as well as more technical skills (e.g. resume building and written communications) related to career exploration and experience. Students will also learn about and be exposed to existing CTE pathways and elective focus options within a high school setting and will learn how to successfully transition into a district recognized career academy or program of study. Standards in this course are aligned with Tennessee State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in Technical Subjects.\*\*

## Program of Study Application

This course is meant to serve as a middle school or freshman orientation course to available career and technical education (CTE) courses and programs of study and elective focus options. While not required, it is encouraged to be used, where needed, to orient students to available options, while also developing important 21<sup>st</sup> century skills noted by employers and postsecondary institutions alike as important for student success after high school.

This course can serve as a prerequisite for any CTE course and program of study, however it is not a required part of any programs of study and therefore, should not be counted toward concentrator status.

## Course Standards

### Personal Assessment and Goal Development

1. Summarize the results of multiple available personal assessment tools (such as, but not limited to instruments determining: interests and aptitudes, personality traits, learning styles, career choice alignments, personal values, etc.) to develop a personal profile and reflect thoughtfully on the results. Ensure summaries cite specific textual evidence from the results and compare and contrast results with prior knowledge or opinions. Throughout the course, continue to refer back to the results of the profile to connect individual strengths and interests with goal setting, planning, and projects. (TN Reading 1, 2, 9; TN Writing 9)

2. Write, monitor, and revise long-term (over 5 years), mid-term (1 - 5 years), and short-term (a year or less) personal goals, defining desired personal, education, career, and earning milestones in each set – working to learn and define relevant key terms where appropriate. Evaluate factors that may influence the goals, including family responsibilities and personal profile results, individual values, and economic conditions. (TN Reading 4; TN Writing 4)
3. Comparing information in personal profile and desired short-, mid-, and long-term goals, identify areas where support and development may be needed and create (and continue to build throughout the course) a personal toolkit of multiple available resources (physical and digital) to assist with educational achievement, personal growth and development, and career advancement. Vet resources for the toolkit by assessing the extent to which each resource addresses a particular claim or recommendation for addressing a challenge or problem. (TN Reading 8; TN Writing 8)

### **Academic Achievement**

4. Using information about personal learning style and/or personality traits, research and select appropriate study habits, organizational strategies, stress reduction, and time management tactics to improve personal academic achievement and future career success. Test hypothesis about appropriate strategies by following steps to techniques and tools precisely and provide updates (via oral report, teacher-student check-in meetings, or personal reflection journal) about how the techniques did or did not improve achievement. (TN Reading 3, 9; TN Writing 10)
5. Conduct a research project, citing at multiple sources, to analyze and describe how skills learned in school (including academic, technical, and “soft skills”) benefit an individual in postsecondary training, career, and society. Articulate importance of specific skills that will be focus of high school, including literacy, numeracy, critical thinking and problem solving. (TN Reading 2, TN Writing 7)
6. Research and articulate, in an informative essay, the importance of honesty and integrity in academics and career by describing appropriate and non-appropriate practices in topics such as writing/plagiarism, internet security, identity theft, workplace ethics, and interpersonal relationships/bullying. Using case-studies or comparing and contrasting situational results, identify and practice (throughout the course) appropriate personal practices and strategies. (TN Writing 2)
7. Demonstrate appropriate communication at various levels. Develop and practice active listening skills and effective oral and written communications, appropriate to task and audience, to overcome communication barriers. Demonstrate effective note-taking strategies to summarize main points and speaker/author meanings from multiple sources such as lecture, journals, websites, and/or textbooks/manuals. Address the class in a public-speaking activity. (TN Reading 2, 5; TN Writing 4).

### **Qualities for Success**

8. Analyze and describe how interpersonal and leadership skills (such as respecting differences within groups, personal responsibility, and articulating a clear vision) are necessary to maintain quality relationships and success in postsecondary training and the workplace. Identify, develop, and practice specific skills through team projects in the course.
9. Research and demonstrate understanding of characteristics and tactics for handling difficult conversations, resolving conflict, and giving and receiving constructive criticism.

### **High School, Postsecondary, and Career Planning**

10. Explore available course options for high school elective focus and/or CTE program of study using available resources (such as high school catalog, academy marketing materials, interviews with teachers and/or upperclassmen students, CollegeForTN.gov planning tools etc.). Include information about potential early postsecondary (dual credit, dual enrollment, CLEP, AP, IB, Cambridge, etc.) and work-based learning (practicum course, internship, school-based enterprise, co-op, etc.) opportunities in addition to extracurricular opportunities (Career and Technical Student Organizations, sporting teams, service organizations, academy activities, fine arts organizations, etc.). Using results of personal profile and mid- and long-term personal goals, identify potential pathways to continue to explore throughout the course. (TN Writing 7)
11. Explore available occupations and career fields using a variety of available sources, such as print, online, interviews with business representatives, job shadowing, tours, guest speakers, career fairs, videos, and simulated work activities/products. Compare results of research to available career opportunities in the local community or region using local job postings, newspapers, and local occupational outlook data. Select a few specific careers to continue to explore throughout the remainder of the course. (TN Reading 9; TN Writing 7, 8, 9)
12. Develop a chart, table, or graphic to compare characteristics of a chosen careers, such as alignment to personal interest and aptitude, education requirements, available positions, salaries, potential lifetime earnings, and employer benefits. Research and report (orally, digitally, or in an explanatory text) the requirements for admission to and related costs of attending a specific postsecondary institution and how that will support education, career, and earning goals. (TN Reading 2, 3, 7; TN Writing 2, 6).
13. Using results of personal profile, high school course option research, and career exploration research, update short-, mid-, and long-term goals to create both a four-year high school plan and a long-term (i.e. 10-year) career plan, making a claim about why the chosen path is appropriate and citing evidence from previous readings and projects to develop and support that claim. Create a profile on [CollegeForTN.org](http://CollegeForTN.org) (or district-approved alternative resource) and use it to assist in developing and finding supporting resources for plan development. (TN Writing 4)

### **Experiential Learning\***

14. Using results of personal profile and career plan goals, create customized career preparation materials for a specific occupation or industry, such as:

- a. Resume
  - b. Cover letter(s)
  - c. Thank you note(s) (after interviews) to potential employers
  - d. List of transferable skills
  - e. Job application(s)
  - f. Mock interview or role-play exercise  
(TN Writing 4)
15. Research, identify, and apply the steps of the problem solving process (problem identification, brainstorming, evaluating, solution selection, monitoring and revising). Apply the process in a contextualized situation to determine a solution to a work-related problem presented from a specific career cluster area. Write a proposal outlining and justifying your team's decision or solution. (TN Reading 3, TN Writing 1)
16. Work in a team, with identified roles and responsibilities, to develop a content-area specific work product. Create a flowchart or some type of graphic organizer to illustrate processes taken to accomplish the task. Execute the plan of the product by designing, organizing, creating, reflecting, maintaining, and updating processes and team member responsibilities as needed. (TN Reading 7; TN Writing 5, 6)
- a. Note: If subject-specific project includes need to have safety instruction prior, demonstrate the ability to follow safety and operational procedures proficiently as determined by the project. (TN Reading 3)
17. Apply specific mathematics and numeracy concepts to real-world workplace scenarios and projects to demonstrate understanding and transferability of appropriate grade-level mathematics skills. For example:
- a. Comparing and contrasting pay earned by different workers using algebraic thinking.
  - b. Ordering, measuring, and storing job supplies and materials using functions.
  - c. Determining interest on a loan by exploring a graph of the repayment terms.
  - d. Determining an appropriate quantity or cost of a project or set of items by comparing different functions and calculating accurately.
18. Apply communications and literacy skills to real-world workplace scenarios and projects to demonstrate understanding and transferability of appropriate grade-level communications skills. For example:
- a. Research a particular historical figure important to a given field or occupation and craft an informative essay outlining their contribution. (TN Writing 2)
  - b. Research a controversial topic (or project from a hypothetical manager with different solutions) and craft an argumentative essay that develops and supports a claim. (TN Writing 1)
  - c. Evaluate a piece of marketing material and analyze the publisher's purpose in using the language, structure, and symbols therein. (TN Reading 6)
  - d. Select and apply the correct communications tool/technology for a given workplace or academic situation (such as writing a memo). (TN Writing 6)

- e. Develop and present a speech to a public audience on a topic specific to a desired occupation or industry.
19. Participate in, and document, a service project that will be presented to school and community. Investigate a need in the community, conduct interviews, ask clarifying questions to determine a community need, create an innovative way to solve the need, document in service project and present using effective oral and written communications skills. (TN Reading 2, , 7, 8; TN Writing 7, 8)

*\* Experiential Learning should be customized to the needs of the students in a particular district and school. Mastery of all Experiential Learning standards are not required for the successful completion of the course. For example, 9<sup>th</sup> grade students may create and participate in job-search activities (standard 14), though it may not be appropriate for 8<sup>th</sup> graders. If this course is being used as a 9<sup>th</sup> grade career academy or freshman orientation course, specific academy or career cluster projects, in a project-based learning format, may be used to meet the objectives of orienting students to available CTE pathways (standards 15-19). If this course is being offered as a ½ credit course, the Experiential Learning standards are optional.*

## Standards Alignment Notes

\*\*References to other standards include:

- TN Reading: [Tennessee State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects](#); Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects 6-12.
  - Note: While not directly aligned to one specific standard, students who are engaging in activities outlined above should be able to also demonstrate fluency in Standards 5 and 10 at the conclusion of the course.
- TN Writing: [Tennessee State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects](#); Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6-12.
  - Note: While not directly aligned to one specific standard, teachers who are encouraging consistent writing and revising of work products should have students who are able to also demonstrate fluency in Standards 5, 6, and 10 at the conclusion of the course.
- P21: Partnership for 21st Century Skills [Framework for 21st Century Learning](#)
  - Note: While not all standards are specifically aligned, teachers will find the framework helpful for setting expectations for student behavior in their classroom and practicing specific career readiness skills.

## Materials and References

- CollegeForTN.org: <https://secure.collegefortn.org/>
- ACT College Readiness Guides: <http://www.act.org/standard/guides/act/>
- Tennessee *Drive to 55* Reports and Jobs Forecast Tools: <http://www.driveto55.org/reports/>

- Junior Achievement: Role of Common Core Standards in College and Career Readiness Education  
<https://www.juniorachievement.org/documents/20009/35541/The+Roll+of+Common+Core+Standards.pdf/274c78bd-2dd4-407f-9050-78243ef836e9>
- National Association of State Directors of CTE  
[http://www.doe.k12.de.us/commoncore/careerteched/files/CCTC\\_Standards\\_Formatted\\_7\\_13.pdf](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/commoncore/careerteched/files/CCTC_Standards_Formatted_7_13.pdf)

For additional free resources and texts suggestions, please visit the “Resource List” found on the CTE Website.