

Key Stage 3

English Career Resources

(Career Education Guidance Objective 17)

Transitions

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

This unit asks students to use their knowledge of previous transitions by using a fictional character who has choices to make. These choices can be discussed by the teacher before ideas are written and, because the character is fictional, the pupils can discuss successes and failures they may have had both explicitly before writing their chapter, but also through the choices the character makes. The decision the character must make are in a fantasy situation, but the broader context surrounding those choices allows students to address the choices and transitions they have made whilst also considering how they will deal with ideas in the future.

The initial choice of which path to take to escape the gunshot, for example, could be pre-empted by a discussion about the choices students have made in difficult situations themselves. Alternatively, the final chapter where the students write their endings allows the teacher to consider the lessons they have learned in their own life and how they would like their life to work out. The idea of the character trying to return home means that character has refuge there and there is hope for the future (if that is what they wish). The teacher can lead a discussion on whether students would return home themselves and this can be tied in to ambitions and what students would have to do to achieve those ambitions, thus making explicit how previous successes and failures will tie into their future.

This scheme asks students to work on their writing skills by producing a 'choose your own ending book' and makes them re-evaluate their idea after each piece of writing they do. This can be done in a number of ways. Students type their work straight on to computer as then the teacher can amalgamate all options and produce a book at the end of the process (this can be printed or published on school websites). Alternatively students can handwrite their work and the teacher can still collect all ideas and produce a book, or the writing can be done as a homework assignment.

The students should be put into groups of four and each four will produce their own book. All groups will start with the same opening and each student in that group will write one option, finishing at a pre-decided end point. Each time a new start will be given and students must then write the next part, re-evaluating their work in light of the opening paragraphs.

If you would prefer to use peer help then you can get the students to write in pairs/ threes (mixed or same ability depending on what you want to achieve).

The teacher will have to fill in the page numbers to turn to once the novel is complete. When reading students then choose their own ending so they will get the pleasure of reading once

the writing is complete (further encouraging them to think about previous transitions and decisions).

WARNING this only works when students realise that they have to finish at the end point stated. They must re-evaluate with each opening and ensure they do nothing other than arrive at the next destination each time they write.

It is best to mark the students' work after each chapter to enable you to set realistic targets for improvement and allows you to advise where they have been most successful and accurate. Students often enjoy reading the work each time too as it gives them a sense of perspective of the whole novel and how it will be a different read each time.

Transitions Pack

STUDENT SHEET 1

You are going to write a novel! This is the opening of the novel. Your teacher will tell you which option you will be writing and how to complete the next part. You need to write your option in first person narration and present tense.

DECISIONS

"That's it - I'm off!"

Oh God, what made me say that? Where am I going to go now?

I walk out of the room. I want them to stop me, but they don't. Now my only option is to keep walking, to escape the situation. I really can't support what they're doing, can I?

I stumble into the sunlight, unsure of whether I'm glad to be away from their plans or petrified of what the future holds without them. But what's happened? I'm not on the street as I expected, but in a courtyard with four different exits.

I hear a gunshot behind me - it's even more important to get away. Something's obviously wrong. I look at the exits more carefully. The first appears to be covered in brambles - a bit like the bushes that grew around Sleeping Beauty's castle. The second has a heavy wrought iron gate currently ajar. The third is a dark corridor and the floor appears to be wet. The fourth exit is covered in mist and, if I'm not mistaken, has a moaning sound coming from its depths. But which should I choose?

To choose exit 1, turn to page

To choose exit 2, turn to page

To choose exit 3, turn to page

To choose exit 4, turn to page

Your chapter must end with your character arriving at a railway station.

Transitions Pack

STUDENT SHEET 2

Here is the start of your next chapter.

So I'm at the railway station. When I first ran in here it looked like any other railway station, but now I'm not so sure. Alongside the shops I'd expect to see like Pizza Hut and WHSmith is a little gloomy store with the title 'Toads and Bubbles'. It just doesn't seem like the same world I set out in the morning before the gunshot and courtyard experience. Also there is something wrong with the platforms. There are four of them, as there always has been, but the trains seem very unusual.

On platform 1 there is a steam train - a real steam train like the sort you would have seen in the Victorian era. The engine is blue and there's only one carriage which already seems pretty full of strange women.

Platform 2 has a Sprinter train - that's normal, isn't it? There are two carriages but the conductor (who's standing outside the train) might be the reason for that. He's six foot five tall and equally wide - he really scares me! I can see his muscles underneath his shirt and he obviously works out. By the look on his face his work outs could be chasing passengers away. He snarls at everyone who walks past and so far his train remains empty.

The Virgin train on platform 3 also seems 'normal'. It has 8 carriages and looks like it might be going on a long journey - maybe I should be heading that far away. Looking closely through the windows, however, there appears to be no chairs in the carriages.

The final platform holds the most unusual train. Its colour is psychedelic and there appears to be lights flashing from all of the windows. The conductor is on the platform in a garish outfit to match the train and several people are dancing their way onto the train.

To choose train 1, turn to page

To choose train 2, turn to page

To choose train 3, turn to page

To choose train 4, turn to page

Your chapter must end with your character arriving at a football ground.

Transitions Pack

STUDENT SHEET 3

Here is the start of your next chapter. Think carefully about how your character would react in the new situation.

I love football. I cannot believe I've arrived at a football ground. I do not know which team plays here but their colours seem to be blue and yellow. Also there are signs everywhere saying 'free entry' - why would that be? There are many fans streaming into the ground and they are all wearing scarves and shirts in that colour. They do not look very happy though - maybe the team has been on a losing streak recently.

There's that sound again - another gunshot. Who is after me and why will they not leave me alone? I am going to have to get out of the way. There are four turnstiles on this side of the football ground. The first is blue and has a woman in huge glasses and afro hair sitting behind the counter. The second has nobody queuing, but the man behind the desk appears to be asleep. The third is very busy and behind the desk is a boy about my age. The final turnstile appears to have several footballers behind the desk - they appear to be taking the money as well as playing! Which should I go through?

To choose turnstile 1, turn to page

To choose turnstile 2, turn to page

To choose turnstile 3, turn to page

To choose turnstile 4, turn to page

Your chapter must end with you arriving at a supermarket.

Transitions Pack

STUDENT SHEET 4

This is the start of Chapter 4. How will your character react now?

From a football ground to a supermarket? This journey is so weird, but at least I seem to have lost the gunmen. I walk into the supermarket and am immediately encased in a dark corridor. Since when have supermarkets been like this? I warily walk on, hugging the wall as I go. There is a funny smell in this corridor and I do not know what I will find.

Suddenly four corridors appear off the one I am walking down. There are big arrows and signs pointing down each one. The first says it leads to 'Fresh Fruit and Veg', a normal sign I think. The second says 'Clothing' and that seems OK too - my parents often take me clothes shopping at the supermarket. The third sign is slightly more worrying as it says 'Snake Venom and Eye of Newt' - I've never seen that before. The final sign makes me wonder what on earth is happening. It is bright green and says 'Golf Course This Way' - perhaps they have put a crazy golf course in for children? Why on earth would they do that?

I think I should maybe turn and go back, but where would I go? I can only go forward, but which way should I go?

To choose aisle 1, turn to page

To choose aisle 2, turn to page

To choose aisle 3, turn to page

To choose aisle 4, turn to page

Your chapter must end with you arriving at a block of flats.

Transitions Pack

STUDENT SHEET 5

Here is the start of your next chapter. Think carefully about how your character would react now.

A block of flats lies in front of me. It's run-down and there are several stray dogs running around. They seem friendly enough, but I do not know whether they could turn into snarling beasts any minute. I have never been scared of dogs - that is something I should be grateful of, I suppose. A grey and white whippet moves towards me and whimpers slightly. It looks like it wants me to follow it.

I walk behind it and it leads me in to the entrance hall of the flats. There are four flats on the ground floor and each of them is different from the last. The first has a bright red door with a picture of a fire engine on the front. Number 2's door is only 50 cm high - who could live there? The door to number 3 is gold and appears to have the number 3 in diamonds on the front. Finally door 4 is on upside down - how weird!

As I'm looking around at these doors the dog turns nasty. It starts barking and nips my ankle quite sharply. I am going to have to go through one of the doors, but which should I go through?

To choose door 1, turn to page

To choose door 2, turn to page

To choose door 3, turn to page

To choose door 4, turn to page

Your chapter must end with you arriving at a ship.

Transitions Pack

STUDENT SHEET 6

Here it is - the final chapter. In each of the previous chapters you have had to think about how your character would react in each situation. Now you have to finish your story. Whether it is a happy or sad ending is up to you, but now you must find a way for your character's journey to end. Ensure it's exciting – and don't end with 'then I woke up'!

A ship - how exciting! I've never been on a proper ship before and it's huge. Nobody's around so I run up the gang plank and onto the deck. It is wet and I fall over, banging my head sharply. There is no blood but I can feel a big bump there already. I need to sit down quietly for a while.

As I drop into a deckchair to catch my breath, passengers start boarding and soon there are many people surrounding me. They all seem to be old and wearing posh clothes and I look so out of place. They are starting to notice me and I know I must get out of the way before I arouse suspicion.

I head through a nearby door and wait for my eyes to adjust to the gloom. I know I need to get back home. It's late and my parents will be worried. I must make the right choice. To my left is a ballroom decked out with fairy lights. There are lifeboats straight in front of me, each with helium balloons tied to them. To my right is a shop selling duty free. The only other place I can look is upwards - a round window is in the ceiling. Which way am I going to go to get back home?

To choose the ballroom, turn to page

To choose the lifeboats, turn to page

To choose the shop, turn to page

To choose the ceiling window, turn to page

Remember this is the end of the story now. You have to have a conclusion. Think carefully of how your character would react in this final situation.