



What is a Flipped Classroom?

In a flipped classroom, students learn foundational content at home through short, teacher-created video lessons. These lessons may include:

- How to analyze theme
- How to annotate complex texts
- How to construct a literary argument
- How to identify literary strategies

Students take guided notes and reflect on key ideas before class.

Class time is then dedicated to applying that learning through:

- Socratic seminars
- Text-based discussion
- Collaborative analysis
- Argument writing workshops
- Individual conferencing

Instead of spending class time listening, students spend class time thinking.

WHY WE FLIP

Building Independence in Thinking and Learning

English Department Update

In our 10th grade English classrooms, teachers are using a flipped classroom model to help students become independent thinkers and confident communicators.

The goal is to prepare students for the type of thinking and engagement required in college classrooms and real-world settings.



Instructional Practice: Socratic Seminars

In our English classrooms, the flipped model allows us to hold Socratic seminars during our class meeting time.

Students prepare at home by engaging with their teacher's prerecorded mini-lessons on literary analysis, argument development, or discussion strategies. They then come to class ready to apply those skills. Your child's teacher will act as a guide as students lead discussions centered on the text.

During seminars, students:

- Cite strong textual evidence
- Build on peers' ideas
- Defend claims respectfully
- Ask higher-order, interpretive questions
- Revise their thinking when presented with new perspectives



Rather than using class time for lecture, we use it for deep discussion. This structure strengthens critical thinking, communication skills, and academic confidence. This mirrors the discussion-based learning students will encounter in college classrooms and career settings.



How Families Can Support Learners at Home:

- Asking your student what strategy they learned before class.
- Encouraging note-taking during video lessons.
- Asking, “How did your thinking change during discussion?”
- Supporting consistent completion of pre-class learning.

When students reflect on their thinking, they strengthen their understanding.

Flipped learning works best when students have a dedicated time and space at home.

Thank you for helping create that space!

Knowledge Development

DECLARITIVE KNOWLEDGE (What Students Know)

This is the vocabulary, concepts, and background knowledge students must understand first.

In our class this includes:

- Literary vocabulary (theme, symbolism, rhetoric)
- Argument structures
- Key text concepts

When students build this knowledge before class, they are prepared for deeper discussion and analysis.



PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE (How Students Do It)

This is the ability to apply knowledge through skills and processes.

In class, student practice:

- Annotating texts
- Writing analytical paragraphs
- Supporting claims with evidence
- Leading discussions

Pre-class learning allows class time to focus on guided practice and feedback.



CONDITIONAL KNOWLEDGE (When & Why to Use It)

This is strategic thinking which involves knowing when and why to apply a skill.

Students learn to:

- Challenge arguments
- Recognize strong evidence
- Use different analytical lens
- Monitor understanding

This builds independence and supports the transfer of skills across subjects.



The Science Behind It: Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning

Our flipped classroom model helps to prepare students for deeper classroom discussions, and independent thinking. This approach is based on research known as the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML), developed by educational psychologist Richard Mayer (Driscoll & Burner, 2023). CTML helps explain how students learn most effectively from digital lessons, and videos.

The theory incorporates three important ideas:

1. Dual Channels

Students process information through two channels: visual (images, text) and auditory (spoken words). When teachers create pre-class mini-lessons, they intentionally combine narration with visuals. This supports a stronger understanding than text or lecture alone

2. Limited Working Memory

Working memory refers to the brain's ability to hold and work with information in the moment. This capacity is limited and can be effected by external factors such as environmental or social distractions. Traditional lecture-heavy classrooms can overload students' thinking capacity, making it harder to deeply understand new concepts. In a flipped model, instruction is broken into brief, focused videos that students can pause or replay. This reduces cognitive overload and allows students to learn at their own pace.

3. Active Processing

Learning requires active engagement. Students must think about, organize, and apply new ideas in order to truly understand them.

Socratic Seminars

The flipped model allows students to learn foundational skills (such as analyzing theme or structuring an argument) through video before class, so that we can dedicate classroom time to Socratic seminars. During these discussions, students actively apply what they learned by citing textual evidence, defending interpretations, and revising their thinking based on new perspectives. This form of active learning strengthens communication skills, and fosters critical thinking.

By aligning our instruction with how the brain processes information, our flipped classroom supports deeper learning, greater independence, and richer discussion in English class.



Supporting Our School Goals:

Developing Independent, Workforce-Ready Learners

Our school is committed to preparing students to become independent learners who are ready for college, careers, and life beyond high school.

In a flipped model, responsibility gradually shifts from teacher to student. Students learn to create meaning from lessons independently before class. Over time, this builds essential habits:

- Time management
- Self-monitoring
- Preparation skills
- Ownership of learning

These are not just academic skills; they are lifelong learning skills required in higher education and the workplace.



Creating Safe, Inclusive Learning Environments

Our school is dedicated to creating classrooms where every student feels safe to engage, contribute, and grow.

Flipped learning supports this goal by allowing students to encounter new material privately before class. This reduces the pressure of public first exposure and builds confidence. Students arrive prepared, lowering anxiety and increasing their willingness to participate.

Socratic seminars extend this sense of safety by teaching students how to listen actively, speak respectfully, and consider multiple perspectives. Clear discussion norms ensure that all voices are valued and disagreement is handled thoughtfully.



Family Connection: A Socratic Dinner Table Conversation Guide

Research shows that learning strengthens when students actively explain ideas, hear different perspectives, and revisit their thinking. To support our flipped classroom model, we invite families to try a simple Socratic-style dinner conversation.

You can use:

- A recent class lesson
- A current event in the news
- A family book you are reading together
- A movie or show you've watched
- Or even a real-life family decision or situation

Use the dinner table as a space for thoughtful dialogue.

Step 1: Ask Open-Ended Questions

- Instead of asking “Did you do your homework?” try:
 - What idea stood out to you today?
 - What was challenging at first?
 - Did your thinking change during discussion?
- What evidence supports your position?
- What might someone else argue?

Step 2: Listen Like a Seminar Partner

- Allow your child to finish their thought
- Ask follow-up questions instead of correcting
- Model respectful disagreement
- Show curiosity about their reasoning

Why This Matters

These conversations reinforce the same skills students practice in class:

Independent thinking
Evidence-based thinking
Respectful communication
Openness to multiple perspectives

When families create safe spaces for thoughtful conversation, students build confidence, deepen understanding, and strengthen the communication skills that prepare them for college, careers, and life.

Even five intentional minutes can make a lasting impact.



Thank you

Thank you for partnering with us to support your learner's growth. Your encouragement and consistency at home make a meaningful difference in their confidence and success.

If you'd like to learn more about the research behind these practices, you can explore the studies linked below. As always, we welcome any questions or concerns. Feel free to reach out to our administrative team at any time.

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