What are the differences between Comprehensive and Transactional ELA courses?

There are two Grade 11 and Grade 12 English Language Arts courses: Comprehensive Focus and Transactional Focus. Each course has a distinct focus, equally challenging, and engages the student in a variety of learning experiences that aim to satisfy all the English Language Arts General/Specific learning outcomes.

The **Comprehensive Focus** course places equal emphasis on working with texts for pragmatic (50%) and for aesthetic (50%) purposes.

The **Transactional Focus** course places more emphasis on working with texts for pragmatic purposes (70%) than for aesthetic (30%) purposes.

What are aesthetic and pragmatic purposes?

The differences between aesthetic and pragmatic purposes can be illustrated by looking at taking a walk for fun versus walking to get somewhere:

- Walking for **aesthetic purposes** could include listening to the birds sing, checking out your neighbour’s yard work, smelling the lilacs, and so on. Generally, you take your time and appreciate various aspects of the experience. You are fully conscious of how good it feels to stretch your muscles and breathe in the fresh air.

- On the other hand, if you are walking for **pragmatic purposes**, for example, in order to get to school or work, you probably walk more quickly and pay more attention to obstacles such as puddles to walk around than to whether the trees are budding yet. You probably would walk more automatically, thinking of things such as your plans for the day, rather than revelling in how good it feels to stretch your muscles. Of course, there is nothing to stop you from enjoying your walk, that is, from combining aesthetic and pragmatic purposes.

When engaging with text for aesthetic and pragmatic purposes the differences are:

- When you engage with a text for **aesthetic purposes** you expect to take pleasure in being in the world of that text, and will take time to appreciate various aspects of the craft and overall experience. You may, view a film, read a novel, or listen to a song in order to understand peoples’ feelings, vision, and/or experiences.

- When you engage with a text for **pragmatic purposes**, you expect to take some knowledge and information from the text, and so you value clarity—that is, you want to express ideas clearly and directly and to be organized and formatted in such a way that you can easily find what you need. You may read a newspaper and view television commercials to become more informed about current events, products, or issues so that you can make decisions.