GROW ALLEN
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The Trades — Logan's Story

Classroom Discussion & Curriculum Plan | Grades 9–12

A Grow Allen Workforce Windows Resource · CTE, Advisory & Career Exploration Settings

To the Reader

This document is a guide, not a script. The video stands on its own in any classroom. Use all of this, part of it, or none of it — whatever serves your students best. The goal is conversation, not compliance.

Featured: Logan Mock, Carroll High School graduate, now working and learning at UA Local 166 as a Manufacturing Maintenance and HVAC installer — eight months out of high school.

Video link: https://youtu.be/3SdwbD2Oqtg

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Why This Video Works

This video is effective because it doesn't come from an adult telling students what to do. It comes from an 18-year-old who sounds exactly like the students watching it. Logan made honors. He didn't love school. He liked shop class and his friends. He stumbled into a union hall presentation his sophomore year — and eight months later he's pre-approved for a $200,000 home. That arc is the lesson.

PART 1 — BEFORE THE VIDEO

Pre-Viewing Activity

Opening Question — No Wrong Answers

Write this on the board before students walk in, or use it as a bell-ringer, entry ticket, or 'show what you know' activity:

> *"What do you think a plumber, electrician, or pipefitter earns in their first year of work?"*

Have students write a number on a sticky note and post it on the board. Don't correct anyone yet — just let the range sit there visibly. Return to it after the video and let the real numbers land on their own.

Quick Show of Hands

- How many of you have taken a shop, CTE, or trades-related class?
- How many of you have ever considered the trades as a career path?
- How many of you know someone who works in the trades?

Brief Framing — Keep It Short

"We're going to watch a 2-minute video. The person talking is 18 years old — a Carroll High School graduate named Logan. He started this path in high school. Just watch and listen — we'll talk after."

FACILITATOR NOTE
Then play the video. No worksheet, no instructions beforehand. Just watch. The less scaffolding before the video, the more genuine the reaction after.

PART 2 — IMMEDIATE REACTION
Post-Viewing Discussion

No structure yet — just open reaction. Ask one question and let it breathe:

> *"What was the first thing that stood out to you?"*

Common things students will flag — use these as natural entry points into the conversation:

- The $200,000 house at 18
- Getting paid during the internship
- Waking up at 4:00 a.m.
- The Ivy Tech degree alongside the apprenticeship
- Two pensions and health insurance
- He started this in high school — how did that even happen?

FACILITATOR NOTE
Don't rush to Part 3. Let students talk to each other, not just to you. The best conversations happen in the first unstructured minutes after a video like this.

PART 3 — STRUCTURED DISCUSSION
Text-Based — Using the Video Transcript

Give students the transcript printed out or displayed on screen. Work through it together using the discussion questions below, organized by theme. You do not need to cover every theme — choose what fits your class and your time.

Theme 1 — The Entry Point

> *"My sophomore year of high school, two guys came in. They're like, 'Hey guys, we've got this program starting up.'"*

- What would you have done if two people walked into your class with that offer?
- What do you think made Logan say yes when others might have ignored it?
- What programs exist in our school or community that you might not have taken seriously yet — or that seem similar to what Logan described?

Theme 2 — The Learning Model

> *"School like here at the union hall is to teach us why we do things a certain way and in the field is how we do things a certain way."*

- How is that different from how most school learning works? How could that model make learning better in all classes?
- Which way do you learn better — classroom instruction or hands-on experience? Why?
- Can you think of something you learned much better by doing it than by reading about it? Think about project-based learning, problem-solving activities, hands-on labs, or even giving a speech in front of classmates — how did those experiences feel different from a lecture or textbook?

Theme 3 — The Real Talk: Challenges

> *"Some of the challenges — it's not always warm and cozy, that's for sure. Driving an hour to work and driving an hour home. I start at 6:00 a.m. So I'm up at 4:00, 4:30."*

- Logan doesn't hide the hard parts. Why do you think he mentions them? Does this show a kind of pride — knowing he can do hard things and be rewarded for it?
- Does knowing about those challenges make the career less appealing to you — or does it make Logan more honest and trustworthy?
- What do you think happens to people — at any age — who consistently avoid hard things? How does that shape the opportunities available to them over time?

Theme 4 — The Financial Picture

> *"I don't have to pay for my health insurance. Two pensions — state and national. Those are retirement accounts. And then I've got an annuity."*

- Most 18-year-olds don't have health insurance, a pension, or an annuity. What does that mean for Logan's financial future compared to someone who goes straight to a 4-year college?
- What is a pension? What is an annuity? (Take a moment to define these if students aren't sure — most adults don't fully understand them either.)
- Logan was pre-approved for a $200,000 home at 18. What would need to be true about your income and financial stability for a bank to approve that?

Theme 5 — The Knowledge Transfer

> *"You have a skilled craftsman handing down his years of knowledge to the next generation."*

- What does it mean to learn from someone who has done something for 20 or 30 years?
- Where else in life do you learn this way — from someone with lived experience, not just textbook knowledge?
- Who in your life has taught you something important that didn't come from school?
- If you could apprentice with anyone in the world for one year — learning directly from them — who would it be and why?

Theme 6 — Identity & Fit

> *"It's important to be able to link where a student is right now with who they are right now because they're building towards a future that they don't know."*

- What do you think that quote means in your own words?
- Where are YOU right now — what do you know about yourself as a learner and a worker?
- What kind of future are you building toward — even if you don't fully know what it looks like yet?
- What is the difference between planning for your future and preparing for your future — and why might preparing be more powerful than planning?

PART 4 — ACTIVITY OPTIONS

Choose One Based on Your Class and Time

A — The Real Numbers Comparison

20–30 minutes | Math + Career Literacy

> **Important:** This exercise is NOT intended to steer students away from college, a four-year degree, or advanced degrees. The goal is to help students **think carefully about all of the possibilities in front of them.**

Give students this scenario in pairs:

Person A

Graduates high school and enters a 4-year union apprenticeship in plumbing or pipefitting. Earns while learning, receives health insurance, and accrues pension benefits from day one.

Person B

Graduates high school and enrolls in a 4-year university. Takes out $40,000 in student loans and begins repayment 6 months after graduation.

Ask pairs to research and calculate:

- What does Person A earn in years 1–4 combined? (Indiana apprentice wage scales typically run $18–$28/hr depending on year)
- What does Person B owe after 4 years? What is their estimated monthly loan payment?
- At what point does Person B's college degree "pay off" compared to Person A's head start?
- Which path carries more risk? Which has a higher ceiling?

> **A note for the class:** graduating with substantial debt does not have to be common, and it is not the norm for many students. Scholarships abound — and working summers, part-time jobs on campus, and work-study programs can drastically reduce debt. Encourage all students to work with their school counselor to find ways to fund their education without amassing large debt.
>
> ***Debrief as a class — there is no right answer. The goal is to think clearly about trade-offs, not to declare a winner.***

B Interview a Tradesperson

One-Week Project | Research + Communication

Students identify one person in their life — family, neighbor, community member — who works in the trades. They conduct a structured interview using these questions:

- How did you get into your trade?
- What does a typical workday look like?
- What do you earn, and how has that changed over time?
- What do you wish you'd known before starting?
- What's the hardest part of the work?
- What's the most satisfying part?
- Did anyone come talk to you when you were in high school about this career? If not — what would have helped?
- If you could talk to a high school student right now, what would you tell them?

Students write a 1-page reflection or present to the class. The goal: hear the story from someone real, in their own community, in their own words.

C Career Pathway Mapping

20–25 minutes | Individual + Pair Share

Each student maps their own version of the pathway shown in the video — and then takes it one step further by identifying how they will actively prepare at each stage:

STEP	LOGAN IN THE VIDEO	MY POSSIBLE PATH	HOW I AM PREPARING RIGHT NOW
High School	Shop classes, union hall presentation	?	*What classes, experiences, or activities am I choosing right now that point toward this path? What am I doing — or what should I start doing?*
Entry Point	Junior year apprenticeship program	?	*What applications, conversations, visits, or sign-ups do I need to make before I graduate? Who do I need to talk to?*
First Job	Project Design & Piping / Waldinger Corp	?	*What skills, certifications, or work habits will an employer expect from me on day one? Am I building those now?*
Education	Ivy Tech degree earned alongside work	?	*What program, school, or credential am I targeting? Have I looked it up? Do I know what it costs, how long it takes, and what it leads to?*
Financial Milestone	Pre-approved for $200K home at 18	?	*What does financial readiness actually look like? Am I building credit, saving money, or understanding what banks look for?*

> **The fourth column is intentionally uncomfortable.** Its purpose is to push students past *"here's my dream"* and into *"here's what I'm actually doing about it."* For many students, that column will be mostly blank at first. That's the point. The blank space is the conversation.

D The Debate

20–25 minutes | Critical Thinking

Divide the class into three groups. Each group prepares and argues one position:

- **Group 1 argues:** *"The trades are the smartest career choice for most students right now."*
- **Group 2 argues:** *"A four-year college degree is still the better long-term investment."*
- **Group 3 — playing themselves:** *"I'm not sure yet, and that's okay. Here's how I'm keeping my options open."*

Give each group 10 minutes to prepare, then hold a structured 10-minute discussion. Afterward, drop all assigned positions and ask the room:

> *"What's the real answer? Is this even an either/or question?"*

FACILITATOR NOTE

Group 3 often produces the most honest and useful conversation of the three. Validating students who don't yet know what they want — while still pushing them to think about how they're preparing — is frequently where the breakthrough happens.

PART 5 CLOSING REFLECTION

Individual Writing — Exit Ticket

Students write responses to any two of the following three prompts:

- ☐ *"Before this video, I thought the trades were _____. Now I think _____."*
- ☐ *"The part of this video that most applies to my own life is _____ because _____."*
- ☐ *"One question this video left me with is _____."*

FACILITATOR NOTE

Collect and read before the next class. Student responses will tell you exactly where to take the conversation — and which students might benefit from a one-on-one follow-up.

GOING FURTHER

Extension Ideas

Multi-Day Unit

- Day 1: Video + discussion (Parts 1–3)
- Day 2: Activity — Option A or B
- Day 3: Guest speaker — a local union rep, active apprentice, or journeyman
- Day 4: Site visit or virtual tour of a job site or union training facility
- Day 5: Reflection presentations and pathway mapping (Option C)

Guest Speaker Connections — Fort Wayne & Allen County

- UA Local 166 — Plumbers, Pipefitters & HVAC (Logan's union — direct connection to the video)
- Local IBEW, Carpenters, or Ironworkers union halls
- Waldinger Corporation — mentioned directly in the video as Logan's employer
- Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) Indiana chapter
- Grow Allen Workforce Windows network — trades employers across Allen County

> **Connect to Grow Allen**
>
> Workforce Windows Tours can bring students directly into trades environments — job sites, union training facilities, and mechanical contractors — giving them the same ***"I can see myself here"*** moment Logan describes in the video, in a real Allen County workplace. Visit **GrowAllen.com** to connect your class to upcoming Workforce Windows opportunities.