



The “How to Get Ahead During and After School” Series

Part 2 – Taking things seriously in Grade 11

Introduction

This article is the second in a series that aims to give learners information on how to make better decisions about their future. The series was in response to an article that was published in *Science Matters* by the National Research Foundation (NRF). The box below gives an excerpt from that article. Here, we provide some guidance and suggestions for you, for Grade 10 and Grade 11.

When you begin Grade 10, you have already chosen your subjects and there are fewer of them compared to Grade 9.

That might sound great, but do not be caught off guard. The volume of content in your selected subjects will probably be more than you experienced in Grade 9. That means that the workload and difficulty of the subjects you chose, will probably increase.

Try to find ways to make good use of your time by staying on top of your homework, assignments, projects, and test preparation. Grade 10 is a transition year when some learners may find the subjects difficult, and they must put in more effort than what they did during Grade 9 to maintain their marks.

From *Science Matters* Vol 4 Issue 2 (2022) - “Exploring the intractability of youth unemployment in South Africa: Why is the problem of youth unemployment in South Africa so difficult to solve?”

Micro level factors affecting this include:

Lack of information

- Schools offer little career guidance, leading to youth lacking information on matching skills and interests to their chosen school subjects.
- Information on how to apply for a job, compile a CV or access further education opportunities is in short supply.

Lack of work experience

- Lack of experience is a major reason for youth unemployment.
- Part-time employment during school or while studying impacts positively on employment prospects.

Grade 10 is also a time when you should change subjects if you realise that they are not a good fit for you. You should discuss this with your teacher and make sure that any changes in subjects you make will not affect what you want to do after school. It is also important that your school explains to you the criteria for progression in Grade 10 to 12 to make sure that you get the correct number of marks to pass your subjects and the grade.

The Grade 11 year is an important but tough year. It is the year to use to get yourself into a good routine for working 'smart' in Grade 12. Some of the content in your subjects in Grade 11 will also be part of your Grade 12 content so Grade 11 is a year to take things seriously with your schoolwork. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers for Grade 11 learners.

What if my subject choice is not working and I am really struggling?

You should talk with your teacher about changing subjects as early as possible in Grade 11. If you do change, there may be some Grade 10 work you will need to read but it is a better idea to change subjects earlier rather than later in Grade 11 to avoid having a lot of Grade 11 content to catch up.

Why are my Grade 11 exam marks important?

In Grade 11, you need to do your best at mid-year and end-of-year exams because these are the results that tertiary institutions want to see when they decide to offer you a position in the course you have chosen. Your Grade 12 results are the results that tertiary institutions use to confirm that you are a good fit and can be considered for the course.

What is the difference between a university, a university of technology and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college?

TVET college	University of Technology	University
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses vary from a few months to three years • A certificate is issued at the end of a course • Focus is on technical and vocational fields • Obtain academic knowledge and practical experience to enter the workplace as quickly and well-equipped as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer diploma and certificate courses as well as three-year degree courses • Entry requirements vary by course • Focus on innovative problem-solving and career-directed courses • Career-oriented, practical and experiential learning are key 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer degree courses that take three to four years to complete • A National Senior Certificate is required and certain degrees have entry requirements related to the number of marks and subjects • Focus on theoretical training in a specialised field

Source: <https://resourcehub.oxford.co.za/tvet/what-is-the-difference-between-a-university-a-university-of-technology-and-a-tvet-college-2/>

What is a testimonial and why should I think about it in Grade 11?

A testimonial is a letter that a teacher or the principal of your school writes to describe you, your academic abilities, your sport and extramural activities and general involvement in school life. This letter can then accompany applications for entry to tertiary institutions, for job applications and can also become part of your curriculum vitae (CV) after you finish school. Grade 11 is your last year of school to make certain that the person who writes your testimonial has something to write about you and preferably good things too.

How do I find out about tertiary institution applications and deadlines?

Most tertiary institutions have websites that explain the process of how to apply, where to find the forms and what the deadlines are for submitting the forms. It is very important that in your Grade 11 year, if you want to study further, you look at these websites to make sure you do not miss the deadline. For some courses, it will be too late to apply in Grade 12.

How do I fill in application forms for tertiary institutions? The most important point to remember when you complete application forms is to be honest. If you are stuck, ask a teacher or mentor for help. There may be a Grade 12 learner at your school who you know applied to the institution you want to go to, and you could ask them politely for their help. The second most important point is to make sure you complete the form with all the required information (and supporting documents, like a copy of your identity document, for example).

Where is the topic covered in the South African National Curriculum?**Grade 10-12:****Topic: Careers and career choices****Grade 10**

- Subjects, career fields and study choices: decision-making skills • Socio-economic factors • Diversity of jobs • Opportunities within career fields • Trends and demands in the job market • The need for lifelong learning.

Grade 11

- Requirements for admission to higher education institutions • Options for financial assistance for further studies • Competencies, abilities and ethics required for a career • Personal expectations in relation to job or career of interest • Knowledge about self in relation to the demands of the world of work and socioeconomic conditions.

Grade 12

- Commitment to a decision taken: locate appropriate work or study opportunities in various sources • Reasons for and impact of unemployment and innovative solutions to counteract unemployment • Core elements of a job contract • Refinement of portfolio of plans for life after school.

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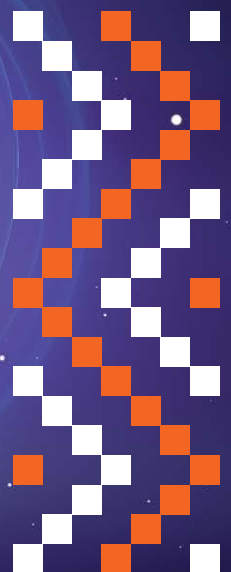
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