



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

Part 1 – Making Good Decisions in Grade 9

Introduction

The magazine called *Science Matters*, published by the National Research Foundation of South Africa, featured an article about youth unemployment being high in South Africa. The article said that one of the possible reasons is a lack of information given to learners on how to make decisions about their future. Two points were made: there is not enough guidance at school about subject and career choices; and finding out about jobs or further education opportunities can be difficult.

In response to that article, Quest will present four parts in a series called ‘How to Get Ahead During and After School’. In 2022, one part will be included in each of the four issues of Quest.

Part 1 will focus on subject choices in Grade 9, resources available to help with making subject choices, and the need for career counselling (plus how to find it). Part 2 will look at the Grade 11 year. It will give some suggested do’s and don’ts for tertiary education applications, and explain the difference between universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, how to fill in application forms (the importance of honesty and completeness), and study techniques. Part 3 will consider the Grade 12 year, focus on study techniques, whether to take a gap year after school and how to prepare a curriculum vitae (CV). The final part will look at the first year after school. It will cover topics such as: ‘you didn’t get accepted, now what?’; should you pursue part-time work, full-time work or study; study options; and succeeding in your first year of tertiary education.

From *Science Matters* Vol 4 Issue 2 of 2022 - ‘Exploring the Intractability of Youth Unemployment in South Africa. Why is the problem of youth unemployment in South Africa so difficult to solve?’

“...the youth (15 to 34 years) unemployment rate remains high.”

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
 - Part-time employment during school or while studying impacts positively on employment prospects.

Part 1 – Making Good Decisions in Grade 9

Grade 9 is a fun but challenging year because you need to decide which subjects you will take in Grade 10. Making subject choices is important. If you decide and choose well, you will enjoy your subjects and you will have options for different careers or for studying further.

School subjects have different learning activities, such as reading, writing, practical work, laboratory work, fieldwork, etc. Some subjects, such as Accounting, Business Studies, Mathematics, and History, are mainly theoretical. Other subjects, such as Graphics and Design, Music, Visual Arts, Dance Studies, and Dramatic Arts, have a large portion of practice work. Computer Applications Technology and Information Technology require a lot of time spent on computers. Life Sciences and Physical Sciences usually have laboratory work or field trips and need good analytical, reasoning and critical thinking skills.

The subjects you choose will demand certain skills from you and will also help you to develop new skills. Good language and writing skills are important for Business Studies, Economics and History, for example. Creative and practical abilities are needed for subjects like Music, Dramatic Arts, Design and Visual Arts. Some subjects, like Geography, Religion Studies and Consumer Studies, need good memorisation skills and comprehension skills.

Do's and don'ts for making your subject choice a good one:

- Do choose subjects you enjoy.
- Don't choose a subject that does not suit your abilities.
- Do choose subjects that you need for entry into a study programme after school.
- Don't choose a subject because your teacher says so, or because your friends are taking it.
- Do try to think of possible jobs or careers you might like to do one day.
- Don't choose a subject because you like the teacher; they might leave!

What is career counselling?

Career counselling helps you choose a career by understanding who you are, your skills and interests, and using different types

Useful websites to help you make subject choices

- <https://www.abassessments.co.za/the-importance-of-grade-9-subject-choice>
- <https://www.news24.com/parent/learn/learning-difficulties/grade-9-subject-choices-why-you-should-start-considering-them-now-20210406>
- <https://www.iie.ac.za/grade-9-subject-choices-why-you-should-start-considering-them-now>
- <https://www.careerhelp.org.za/main/career-development-services>
- <https://www.advtech.co.za/grade-9-subject-choices>
- <https://self-directed-search.com/>
- <https://cozacares.co.za/>

of assessments to guide you when you make subject and career decisions. Sometimes schools have a pastoral care teacher who can give career advice; some schools may have a career advisor. There are also companies advertised on the Internet that can assist you (for a fee) with these decisions by asking you questions and using your results to suggest good career matches. Careers are fun and fulfilling when they involve work that interests you and you enjoy doing. A good way to find out about different careers is to talk to people in a career that interests you — maybe a friend's parent, for example. It is also important to remember that you can change your mind about what career you might like to do; but be sure to choose subjects wisely so you have these options later on.

Where is the topic covered in the South African National Curriculum?

Topic: World of work

Grade 7

- Importance of reading and studying • Career fields • Simulation of career-related activities
- Value and importance of work in fulfilling personal needs and potential

Grade 8

- Different learning styles • Six career categories • Relationship between performance in school subjects and interests and abilities • Decision-making process

Grade 9

- Time-management skills • Reading and writing for different purposes • Options available after completing school • Knowledge of the world of work • Career and subject choices • Study and career funding providers • Plan for own lifelong learning

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

Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)

ASSAf Research Repository

<http://research.assaf.org.za/>

A. Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) Publications

D. Quest: Science for South Africa

2022-06

Quest Volume 18 Number 2 2022

Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)

Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)

Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) (2022) Quest: Science for South Africa, 18(2).

Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11911/241>

<http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11911/241>

Downloaded from ASSAf Research Repository, Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)