

CHOOSING HIGH SCHOOL COURSES: A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS



Imagine you wish to construct a building. If you build it as cheaply as possible, and if it's built by people who don't know what they're doing, you will be limited in what you can build on it or in it.



The solid foundation allows you to build whatever kind of structure on top of it that you wish in any configuration that you wish. You can build different rooms inside, fill it with appliances and furniture and decorate it just how you like. You can build a games room, add a hot tub, change cupboards and flooring, turn a kitchen into a living room, or move around furniture and appliances. You might also add a second storey, change your

house into a store or split it into various rooms to make some apartments.

Choosing classes in high school is similar to building a house with a solid foundation. You don't always know how things are going to change in your future. However, if you take the right subjects in high school, you will be ready for whatever changes will happen in your future. You will be ready to take any program anywhere. Limiting your choices in high school is somewhat like building a house with a shaky foundation.



Statistics show that people change jobs an average of every 3.5 years, which means that most people will have between 8 and 20 jobs in a working lifetime. Statistics also tell us that with the rapid changes in technology in most facets of society, many current high school students will end up working in jobs that do not currently exist. How are you preparing for all the possible things you might do?

To be ready for all possibilities, you need to ensure that they do not close any doors on yourself before you get out of high school. Choosing subjects is an important task, particularly for grades 11 and 12. It is crucial that you make decisions that don't limit your possibilities. Regardless of whether you think you know what you might want to do when you are finished high school or post-secondary education, it is wise to take a full complement of classes so that you have the potential to get into any program of your choosing. You need to keep all your options open for a future that will likely involve a great deal of change.





There are many questions that students in grade 9, 10 and 11 and their parents ask. Here are some to consider:

What if I know exactly what I am doing after grade 12?

If you know the specific answer, (i.e. electrical engineering at the U of S or welding at Saskatchewan Polytechnic) then carefully research exactly what the admission requirements are for that program, and ensure that you are taking the correct classes in high school. According to a survey of adults out of school for 10 years,

9% of people are actually doing what they thought they would be doing when they were in high school. How well are you prepared for a big career change?

What if I know generally what I want to do or take, but I'm not sure about the details?

Maybe you know that you are interested in engineering, but you aren't sure what specialization or location you prefer (e.g. Sask Polytechnic or university). In this case, research the admission requirements for all possibilities and choose your high school courses accordingly. For instance, Saskatchewan Polytechnic and U of R engineering don't require calculus, although it is highly recommended. However, at the U of S, calculus 30 is required.

What if I have no idea what I want to do after grade 12 or what if I'm going to work for a while to help decide what to do?

If you take a full load of science and math in high school and a healthy complement of electives, you will cover virtually all admission requirements for all courses. There can be exceptions, but taking a variety of subjects will keep nearly all possibilities open.

What if I know with 100% certainty that I am going to do something after grade 12 where the minimum number of science and math classes required to graduate is acceptable such as an apprenticeship or any job in the workforce?

This may be true, for now. The problem is that you can't predict what you will be doing in 5, 10 or 20 years. There are students who fully believe that they are going to farm or go into a trade, and take only workplace and apprenticeship math, for instance. If you limit your high school choices, you limit your opportunities to take different programs or work in different occupations later in life. If you



change your mind or if your situation changes, and you find out that you needed to take these classes in high school, it's too late to take them easily and inexpensively. You'll have to pay for them yourself and take them while you are working or going to school.

KEEPING YOUR OPTIONS OPEN WILL CREATE A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES FOR YOU TO EXPLORE.