

# Researching Careers

When it comes to knowing where and how to start researching career options, learners often feel daunted and don't know how to get the process going. This is natural due to the endless amount of information available! From detailed university brochures to a plethora of online information, where do you start?

According to Jurgen Kietzmann, former Head of the Career Centre for Rhodes University, the process is similar to that of solving a puzzle. When you start assembling a puzzle, you begin by putting the corner and edge pieces in place, then you group similar colours and soon themes and patterns start emerging. His point is simply that you need a structure and sense of direction - and that you need to **START** and not just sit there, paralysed with fear.

## Some tips and tools

### Set the direction

Just like Jurgen's puzzle analogy, learners need a sense of structure to avoid wasting hours on the Internet and investing energy into the wrong areas.

**To do in class:** Create a simple model for career research that establishes a sense of direction, and stick up a picture or diagram of the model in class to serve as a visual reminder. Elements of the Achieve Careers' model include: self-awareness; identify careers to research; media research; informational interviews; and a value check.

#### a) Self-awareness

Before starting to research career options, it's important that learners have developed a sense of self-understanding. Information regarding their strengths, interests, values, motivators and skills will be key in helping them to make an informed career decision.

#### b) Identify careers to research

Learners need to identify between three and five potential careers to research. These may evolve as the research commences, but serve as a starting point. If a learner is completely stuck with what careers to start with, they can complete the PACE Careers questionnaire (a free online resource, found at [www.pacecareers.com](http://www.pacecareers.com)), which will provide them with some ideas.

#### c) Media research

Give the class a list of tried and tested recommended Internet sites to assist them with their online career research. In that way, they won't get distracted by sites that lack credibility. Part of their media research exercises includes ascertaining the university admission requirements for careers that require specific qualifications.

#### d) Informational interviews

Once they have done some initial research, learners can start to narrow down their research to the careers that still appeal to them. It's then useful to speak to professionals working within their field of interest. One of the most efficient and effective ways to do this is in the form of an informational interview, in other words, a structured conversation with prepared questions.

#### e) Value check

The career research model is cyclical in that this last point refers back to the learner's self-awareness exercises. At this point the learner should assess the career options against his or her values, motivators, interests, funding options, strengths etc. If the career is aligned to these factors, it can be considered as being a viable option. ■

## TO SUMMARISE

The above information illustrates part of the Achieve Careers' model for researching careers. It's advisable that you create a model that consists of tried and tested tools, information and exercises to assist in the process. Often scholars do not know how and where to start the career research process and as a Life Orientation educator, it's important to provide a sense of structure and direction.



To find out about Achieve Careers' CV Workshops for LO educators or LO career manuals for Grade 8 – 12 learners, please contact Joanne on [joanne@achievecareers.co.za](mailto:joanne@achievecareers.co.za) or visit [www.achievecareers.co.za](http://www.achievecareers.co.za)



# Lesson Plan

## DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

### Grade 9

## Decision-making

You'll make decisions every day of your life. Some decisions are easy while others are difficult. Here are a few examples of decisions you might make today:

- What should I eat for breakfast?
- Will I attend the social Friday night?
- Will I break-up with my boy/girlfriend?
- Am I a thief if I steal the money I need to pay for my school trip?

Decision-making is the process by which you weigh the pros and cons of different alternatives in order to make a choice (Weiten 1996: 269).

## The process of decision-making

### Steps to follow:

- Make decisions when facing a choice or problem
- Most decisions must be made within a certain time
- Before making a decision, gather as much information as possible
- Investigate all possible alternatives
- Select the most appropriate choice
- Ask yourself if your decision complies with your values and norms
- Apply your decision

Sometimes we have to make moral decisions. This type of decision-making is also influenced by your values, principles and virtues. For decision-making to be successful you must apply reasoning and problem-solving skills.



Download full lesson plans from [www.sacareerfocus.co.za](http://www.sacareerfocus.co.za)

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# Activity page

## DECISION-MAKING Grade 9

### Activity

Answer the following questions:

1. Which subjects would complement your interests and talents the most?

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2. How do your values influence your subject choices? Explain why you think they do.

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3. What advice have your parents given you about your future career choice?

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4. Do you experience any pressure to take the same subjects as your friends?

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5. With your choice of subjects would you work for someone else or be an entrepreneur?

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6. How would your future career choice relate to the needs of South Africa?

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**To do:** Draw a mind map of your chosen career. Use talents, skills, career choices, values, training and aspirations as your headings.



### For the Educator

Values imply a choice – the choice a person makes when making a decision. For example, you pick up a wallet someone has dropped and it contains a large sum of money as well as the owner's address and name. Your values will determine whether or not you will return the wallet to the rightful owner.

A person uses his/her values as criteria for making judgment calls. Values are personal and unique, as they act as internal guides for judgements and choices as well as for the way in which you behave. Examples of values are honesty, integrity, truthfulness, sympathy, empathy, respect and self-control.

You may wonder how to acquire a value system. A personal value system "involves making judgements about that which is important to you, that which you care about" (Craig, Griesel and Witz 1994:202). For example, your value system might judge abortion as sinful and in such a situation a woman's rights are of no concern but only the embryo/foetus' rights are of importance.

