



HOW TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF TIME OFF IN GRADE 11 AND 12

These days are challenging, but time away from regularly scheduled academics and activities provides you with an opportunity as well. It's an chance to take initiative and prepare properly for the opportunities that lie ahead, namely university admission and scholarships. Many students never get a break from their regular routine to really focus on these important activities. Although it's unfortunate you've had a "break" forced upon you, try to use the time to be productive and come out of it with a few of your most important goals achieved. I hope this information helps you to do so.

Work in progress & disclaimer

The information in this document is a work in progress. Some of the information may change, and I may add to it as I discover more resources. It is also not meant to replace guidance or advice from your school or school board, etc. Therefore I must state my usual disclaimer: although I endeavour to ensure the accuracy of the information, the content of this document should not be relied upon as academic, career, or financial advice.

Grade 11

Do online research on the universities you may apply to in Grade 12

Some universities are/may be doing **online open houses, tours, and information sessions** this month. Check the “prospective student” section of the universities you’re considering applying for next year.

Check the **admission requirements** for the programs you’re interested in. Make sure you’re meeting them. If you’re not, you could make a plan to do an online course (see Blyth Academy information below).

Some universities have information on the **admission average “cut off”** for admission to certain programs the year before, for example, [Waterloo Engineering](#). If your average is not currently competitive for the cut-off, plan to get help (see Khan Academy information, below).

Some universities require a **personal statement for admission**. Find out if the ones you’re interested require one and, if so, what do they entail? Here’s a [great video from UBC](#) to explain what a personal profile is, why it’s important, and how to write it. Although the video is produced by UBC, the information applies generally to most personal statements for admission.

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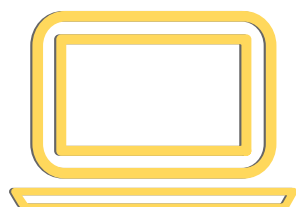
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Compare similar programs at different universities. What are the differences or unique features of each one? For example, many universities offer a Bachelor of Science in Physics. These programs are similar, but they're not the same. What are the benefits of one versus the other? Which one is the best for you? Read my [blog on this topic](#) for more information.



Prepare now for scholarships in Grade 12

Some students have never seen what a scholarship application looks like. Now is the time to read a few and make note of what they ask so you can **prepare in advance to meet requirements**.



Go to the **scholarship search engine** [ScholarshipsCanada.com](https://www.scholarshipsCanada.com). Tour the site and get familiar with the platform. Then, make a profile as if you were in Grade 12 (you can change it later). You will start to get matched with scholarships. Read the scholarship applications to see what kinds of requirements are necessary. Is there a grade requirement? If so, what is it? Is an essay required? If so, what is the essay about?

Do the same thing with **university websites** – go to their scholarship pages and see what scholarships are available, when the deadlines are, and what is required. The information will likely be the same, or similar, next year when you're applying.

You can glean some useful information about what scholarship committees are looking for by reading several applications. Then, use that information to **make informed decisions about how best to spend your time now**. Many scholarship applications use activities and some use marks from Grade 11, so what you do now may determine if you are eligible for some scholarships when you apply in Grade 12.

Start to develop your **activities list for admission and scholarships**.

The activities list is a list of your activities outside of your regular school-based academics, for example clubs, sports, employment, etc.

Many scholarships require an activities list, and some universities require it for admission. You can start your list now, and add to it as you participate in new activities. You'll thank yourself later when you're busy and need the information! I've written [a blog about the activities list](#), with a handy form you can download and use to develop your list.



Grade 12

If you haven't yet decided on a university and program, please see the information above.



Likewise, if you haven't started searching for/applying to scholarships, see the information above. Grade 12 is your best opportunity for a scholarship. Now is a perfect time to put some energy into this process.

Follow the advice of your school in regards to courses. For online learning opportunities, see below.

Online learning for all

Blyth Academy in Ontario offers a great selection of [online Ontario high school credits](#). If you wish to take one of these courses for high school credit, please discuss it with your school.

There are many options for [free online learning](#) right now.

Khan Academy provides excellent [free academic online learning](#).

Other ideas

Take the initiative to **learn something new**. I've provided a few ideas, below.

Your chances of completing these activities increases if you set a [SMART goal](#).

- Start a blog about a topic you're interested in
- Learn how to cook 3 full meals, solo
- Learn how to sew
- Learn how to use an Excel spreadsheet to make your budget for university
- Learn about investing and compound interest
- Learn how to play an instrument

Best wishes!
