LIFE ORIENTATION
COMMON ASSESSMENT TASK
SECTION A: LEARNER WORKBOOK

LEARNING OUTCOMES

GRADE 10

LEARNING OUTCOME 1:
Achieve and maintain personal well-being.
AS 1
Apply various strategies to enhance self-awareness and self-esteem, while acknowledging and respecting the uniqueness of self and others.

GRADE 11

LEARNING OUTCOME 1:
Achieve and maintain personal well-being.
AS 1
Apply various life skills to provide evidence of an ability to plan and achieve life goals.
AS 4
Analyse gender roles and their effects on self, family and society.

LEARNING OUTCOME 2:
Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the values and rights that underpin the Constitution in order to practise responsible citizenship, and to enhance social justice and sustainable living.
AS 3
Participate in and analyse the principles, processes and procedures for democratic participation in life.

GRADE 12

LEARNING OUTCOME 1:
Achieve and maintain personal well-being.
AS 1
Apply a range of life skills, evaluate own ability to prevent and manage stress, and adapt to change as part of an ongoing healthy lifestyle choice.

LEARNING OUTCOME 2:
Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the values and rights that underpin the Constitution in order to practise responsible citizenship, and to enhance social justice and sustainable living.
AS 3
Analyse and debate the role of the media in a democratic society.

QUESTION 1

Definitions of **popular culture** on the Web:

Consider the following definitions of popular culture and discuss the questions which follow.

Popular culture (commonly known as pop culture) is the opposite of high cultural art forms, such as the opera, historic art, classical music, traditional theatre or literature; popular culture includes many forms of cultural communication including newspapers, television, advertising, comics, pop music, radio, cheap novels, movies, jazz, etc.

[<www.artsconnected.org>]

Popular culture is contemporary culture as defined by the objects, images, artefacts, literature, music and so on of 'ordinary' people.

[<arts.unitec.ac.nz>]

Popular culture is the totality of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, images and other phenomena that are deemed preferred by an informal consensus within the mainstream of a given culture.

[<en.wikipedia.org>]

1.1   These definitions above refer to a mainstream popular culture. Can you think of examples of sub-cultures in society that have their own popular culture?

Some Further Definitions:

Popular culture is the prevailing vernacular culture in any given society, including art, cooking, clothing, entertainment, films, mass media, music, sports and style.

[<en.wiktionary.org>]

Popular culture is culture and knowledge passed on through mass media, magazines, television, radio, Internet.

[<www.louisianavoices.org>]

1.2   List examples of the various forms through which popular culture manifests itself in South Africa. You may want to consider the various sub-cultures you thought of in Question 1.1.

'Pop culture' can be defined as the 'authentic' culture of the people, but this can be problematic because there are many ways of defining 'the people'.

1.3   The above quotation makes a very valid point – who in fact are 'the people' reflected in popular culture?

QUESTION 2

Look at the cartoons below and answer the questions which follow.

"We interrupt this war update for an urgent bulletin on pop culture."

<http://www.cartoonstock.com>

2.1   The cartoonist states, "We interrupt this war update for an urgent bulletin on pop culture."

         What is the cartoonist's view of popular culture in society?

2.2   To what extent do you think popular culture influences news media coverage – and to what extent does news media coverage influence pop culture?

"Guess what, kids! I've got two tickets for King Lear. Who wants to come with me?" (Children are watching *Big Brother*, doing homework and on mobile phones).

"Guess what, kids! I've got two tickets for King Lear. Who wants to come with me?"

<http://www.cartoonstock.com>

2.3   What is this cartoon suggesting about the generational nature of popular culture? Refer to the cartoon to explain your answer.

2.4   What factors do you think influence the popular culture of a particular decade?

2.5   List the factors which have contributed to and influenced the popular culture of your teenage years.

QUESTION 3

Advertising and popular culture

Advertising both directs and reflects popular culture. Thousands of products are advertised daily in many different ways. Often people will discuss the manner in which the product was advertised as frequently, if not more so than the product itself. What makes any particular advertisement memorable is the 'personality' which it is given, and the consumer's ability to relate. While some advertising has proven itself to be more effective than others, once again it all serves the same basic purpose – to inform and persuade. As long as there is a creative motivation to create new products and to allow the familiar ones to continually impact us, advertising will continue to drive and be driven by popular culture.

[<http://www.associatedcontent.com>]

Adapted from *Does Advertising Effect or Affect Popular Culture*? by Lucinda Watrous

3.1   What effect do you think popular culture has on the advertising industry?

3.2

Adbusters are a group who describe themselves in the following manner, "We are a global network of culture jammers and creatives working to change the way information flows, the way corporations wield power, and the way meaning is produced in our society."

[<https://www.adbusters.org>]

Adbusters aim to identify the message suggested in advertisements and highlight and expose the effect these adverts may have on society. They aim to reinvent outdated paradigms and seek compelling ideas that provide critical perspective. The adverts they create are called 'subvertisements' as they subvert the original intention of the advertiser and more often than not, mock popular culture.

Examine the advertisements below and answer the questions which follow:

Advert A
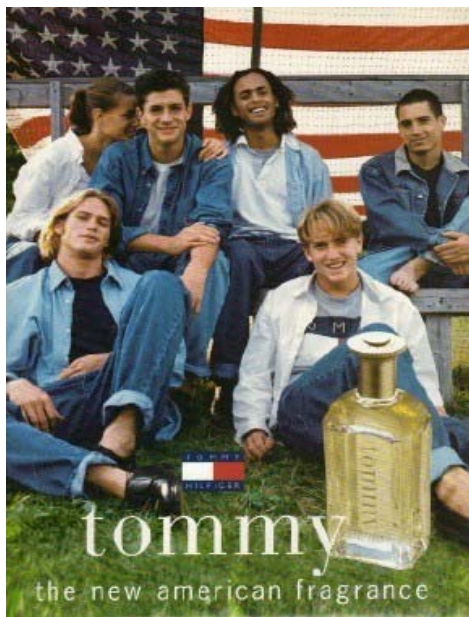
Tommy Hilfiger's fragrance *Tommy*

Advert B

Tommy: 'follow the flock'

3.2.1   What is the suggestion of Advert A?

3.2.2   Explain which advert aims to subvert the image of Tommy Hilfiger.

3.2.3   Do you agree with the suggestion in the Adbuster's version (Advert B) of the advertisement? Explain your response.

3.2.4   What is the suggested pitfall of allowing yourself to be influenced by the implicit message in Advert A?

Group task

3.3   In groups, select an advertisement which speaks to youth culture and design and create a 'subvertisement' which aims to provide a critical perspective and expose the folly of popular culture.

3.4   Adbusters are of the opinion that what we see has a significant influence on how we view the world. Explain in your own words, what is meant in the quotation below and whether you agree with this statement:

> "I suspect that many of the great cultural shifts that prepare the way for ... change are largely aesthetic."
> J. G. Ballard

[<https://www.adbusters.org>]

QUESTION 4

The effect of popular culture on society

Scholars often debate the effect of popular culture on society. Read the extracts below and answer the questions in your groups. Ensure that your group is prepared for rigorous class feedback and debate!

> Critics of television and film have argued that the quality of TV output has been diluted as stations relentlessly pursue 'populism and ratings' by focusing on the 'glitzy, the superficial and the popular'. In film, 'Hollywood culture and values' are increasingly dominating film production in other countries. Hollywood films have changed from creating formulaic films which emphasise '... shock-value and superficial thrill[s]' and special effects, with themes that focus on the '... basic instincts of aggression, revenge, violence [and] greed'.

[<http://en.wikipedia.org>]

4.1.1   What are these 'Hollywood values' referred to in the extract?

4.1.2   Do you agree that 'Hollywood culture and values' are pervasive (seen all over) in most mainstream movies? Provide examples and explain your response.

4.1.3   Do you, personally, share any of these values? Reflect on which of these values you share and which you reject.

> Hannah Arendt's 1961 essay *The Crisis in Culture* suggested that a 'market-driven media would lead to the displacement of culture by the dictates of entertainment'. Susan Sontag argues that in our culture, the most '... intelligible, persuasive values are [increasingly] drawn from the entertainment industries', which is 'undermining of standards of seriousness'. As a result, 'tepid, the glib, and the senselessly cruel' topics are becoming the norm.

[<http://en.wikipedia.org>]

4.1.4 Do you think popular culture and societal norms are driven by the entertainment industry? Explain your response.

4.1.5 Explain whether you agree or disagree that many of these norms could be considered 'tepid, glib and senselessly cruel'?

> Van den Haag argues that "... all mass media in the end alienate people from personal experience and though appearing to offset it, intensify their moral isolation from each other, from reality and from themselves."

[<http://en.wikipedia.org>]

4.1.6 Explain whether you agree with Van den Haag's concern about mass media and the resultant popular culture which emerges there from.

QUESTION 5

Read the extract below and answer the following questions:

> **Popular Culture's Influence on Children's Identity**
> By Jenn Nix
>
> "One of the most important features of childhood and adolescence is the development of identity." Within a few hours of being born, a child begins to identify with the world around them. Children absorb everything from sounds, smells, the touch of their mother's hand and even emotions from the people around them despite their inability to comprehend fully. This early stage of development is the foundation for a child's future identity. If they are born into poverty, a mixed family of languages and cultures, a small village or penthouse suite in Manhattan, the environment has a tremendous impact on who that child will become in the future. While environment is not the only means to forming an identity, it is one of the more significant, well-researched, and documented influences responsible for identity in the early stages of life.
>
> Children learn and absorb all the information around them on a daily basis, thus helping them to formulate their own ideals, opinions and outlook on life. Many children mimic or take on personality traits of people around them in early stages of development. If these children are overly exposed to pop culture media such as television or movies, some part of their newly formed identity will be based on this medium.

[Adapted from <http://www.associatedcontent.com>]

5.1 To what extent do you believe that children's identities are being shaped by unlimited exposure to popular culture? Explain your answer.

5.2 Explain how exposure to popular culture could be both **positive and negative** in the development of young people's identity.

5.3 Would you say that your childhood identity was affected through exposure to popular culture?

5.3.1   If so, can you provide examples to explain your answer?

5.3.2   Would you describe this effect as being positive or negative? Explain your response.

QUESTION 6

Alternative culture/sub-cultures

> Alternative culture is a type of culture that exists outside or on the fringes of mainstream or popular culture, usually under the domain of one or more subcultures.
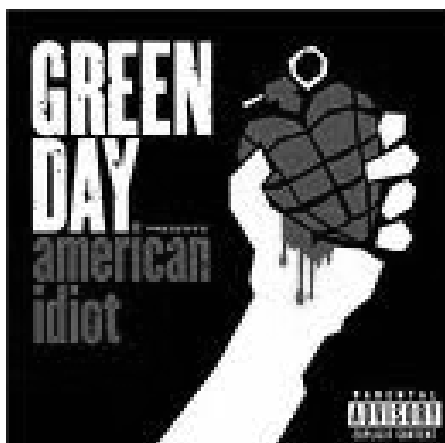
[<http://en.wikipedia.org>]

6.1   Brainstorm suggestions of alternative cultures of which you are aware.

Here are some graphics below to get you thinking:

6.2   Do you believe that alternative cultures differ from mainstream popular culture? Explain to what extent they may be similar and in what ways they may differ.

6.3   Do you believe that people adapt their behaviour to fit into particular subcultures or do these subcultures simply reflect the person? Explain your answer.

6.4   Read the extract below which focuses on the Voëlvry movement in South Africa in the 1980s:

'Voëlvry was the Boere-Woodstock,' writes Max du Preez. 'It was a significant movement in every social, political, cultural and musical sense of the word … 'Rock revolution just got a delicious new double meaning.'

In what the *Cape Times* described as 'an unprecedented orgy of Boere anarchy', the Alternative Afrikaans Music Movement unleashed Afrikaner Beatlemania among the youth, and apoplexy within the Afrikaner establishment. At a time when South Africa was embroiled in the Border wars, PW Botha was Die Groot Krokodil and Potchefstroom University was debating whether dancing was a sin, an eccentric mix of young Afrikaans artists took to the road and became the voice of their generation.
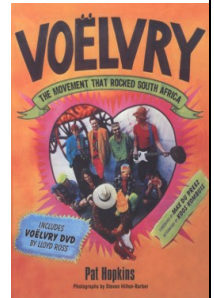
Their goal was the emancipation of Afrikaner youth from the strictures of their authoritarian, patriarchal culture and they would make it cool to be an Afrikaner.

[Adapted from <http://www.davidkrutpublishing.com>]

6.5   Explain whether you would describe this Voëlvry sub-culture as a positive or negative phenomenon.

QUESTION 7

The influence of popular culture on the real world

Read the article below and answer the questions which follow:

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6 Disastrous Ways Pop Culture Influences The Real World
By Cezary Jan Strusiewicz 10 February 2010

Cinema and literature can change our lives in noble and profound ways. They can, but usually don't. For every *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that can take credit for a net benefit to the human race, you have a *Jaws*, which made a generation of Americans afraid to even climb into their swimming pools for fear a great white was hiding in there. Think we're exaggerating? Trust us, some of Hollywood's effects on the world are far stupider than that. Such as ...

Seen in: *CSI*
Impact on real life: Murderers are being set loose on the streets.

To put it simply, some experts believe that the growing popularity of the *CSI* franchise has created unrealistic expectations among juries, who see on TV that a single skin cell is all you need to create a 3D hologram of the suspect's face, and assume that if you don't have that, then he must not have done it, right? Therefore you have jurors who think they need to vote 'not guilty' in every case that doesn't have 100 percent indisputable DNA evidence.

Seen in: *Finding Nemo, 101 Dalmations, Babe,* basically any movie starring an adorable animal
Impact on real life: Roving packs of neglected, occasionally furious predators.

Whenever a movie with a bunch of cute critters hits the theatres, there is an immediate, sharp spike of adoptions for that breed ... It happened when *101 Dalmatians* premiered; it happened after *Beverly Hills Chihuahua*, it even happened during the *Teenage Mutant Nina Turtles* craze. Of course, when the realisation inevitably hit that your new pup actually requires work and can neither spout cutting one-liners nor surf, they usually end up in the pound or on the streets. That's depressing and all; that adorable animals have to pay because you can't tell the difference between fiction and reality.

[<http://www.cracked.com>]

The article above suggests that popular culture serves to 'dumb down' society's ability to behave in a rational manner in the real world.

7.1   Using examples from both a South African and global context, explain whether you agree that this concern is valid.

QUESTION 8

Popular culture and gender inequality

The following extract is taken from a live blog on International Women's Day.
Read the article and the blog responses which follow:

Pop culture and media messages keep women down

International Women's Day remains an important reminder of disadvantaged women globally, as well as a marker of women's progress in society. The sad fact is there has been little movement in gender-based stereotypes of leader behaviours, so that it is expected and appropriate for a man to be ambitious, competitive, forceful, controlled, objective, determined, instrumental and tough – all of which are perceived as 'effective' leader behaviours. Yet when a woman demonstrates herself to be an effective leader in accordance with this male stereotype, she causes a 'jolt of assumptions' – which reverberates with negative perceptions of and behaviours towards her. Women leaders who don't stick to their own traditional gender stereotype of behaving in ways that are helpful, kind, empathetic, interpersonally sensitive – in short, those behaviours traditionally considered feminine – are perceived as 'more male than the men', 'battle-axes', 'bitches'.

In the Western world particularly, popular culture and the media play a strong role in constructing women leaders as unfit for, and out of place in, positions of power. Media messages doubt women's ability to take on such responsibility and reinforce traditional gender stereotypes of women as non-leaders, men as leaders. Moreover, women face a double bind in that stereotyped 'feminine behaviours' or non-leadership behaviours are not yet valued in senior leader positions. Masculine leader behaviours are still the expected norm at the top of organisational and societal hierarchies. The upshot, then, is 'feminine' leader behaviours won't get women to the top table, yet if women leaders are too masculine then they are vilified for not being 'feminine enough'!

Women leaders fare no better when depicted on screen. Take, for example, the bestselling film of *The Devil Wears Prada*, which constructs the glossy women's magazine editor and leader of a major organisation as the Queen of Queen Bees, more male than the men and a complete bitch to other women. The message here is clear – 'look what you'll turn into if you want to lead a major corporation' – and reinforces why it's better for women to stay away from positions of power. In a nutshell, finding love requires sticking to the gender stereotype. As we celebrate International Women's Day, we must address gender inequalities – the challenge now is how to fracture traditional gender stereotypes and message positively to enable women to be accepted as powerful leaders, and for it to be natural and 'every day', for women to hold powerful positions in society.

[<http://blogs.reuters.com>]

Blog responses

Blog A

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26 February 2010
10:30 p.m.

Every prominent female politician gets a massive amount of support from large swathes of the media just because of her sex, all of which you choose to ignore. Male politicians also get a huge amount of criticism, which is unrestrained by fear of counter-attack from state funded gender-rights warriors. This sort of article only serves to undermine women, by suggesting that they want success handed to them just because of their gender, while men are expected to earn it. You are living in the 21st century, so stop fighting gender wars and do something constructive instead.

Blog B

1 March 2010 2:11 p.m. Brilliant article. The portrayal of women in the media is shocking and keeps shoving the same old 'all assertive businesswomen are b**ches' vs 'all assertive men are expected' mantra in our faces. The media demonises successful businesswomen for no other reason than they're female! The amount of hugely inaccurate misreporting in the ... media about successful businesswomen is constantly absurd – and facts don't ever even come in to it, just plain hard opinion and hearsay from the media whipping up a senseless gender story!

[<http://blogs.reuters.com>]

8.1   Create your own blog response to the article on the previous page. Once each member of the group has completed their blog, share your responses with one another.

My blog response ...

8.2   Blog A and Blog B express two very different opinions. Which opinion, based on examples which are drawn out of your group discussion, would you agree is more accurate?

8.3   With reference to the issue of gender inequality raised in the above extracts, do you agree that the media/popular culture reinforces destructive labels and stereotypes which become pervasive in society and limit the freedom and movement of gender in society?

QUESTION 9

Popular culture and art

Read the extract below and answer the questions which follow:

The famous pop culture artist, Andy Warhol is considered to be a founder and major figure in the pop art movement. As a pop culture artist, Warhol thrived throughout the 50s and 60s when pop culture was just beginning to emerge into American society. Pop art was a response to what was happening during the rise of manufacturing and based off a culture that was commercially driven. Warhol's art played off of consumerism and mass marketing.

[<http://www.exampleessays.com>]

9.1   What is meant by a 'culture that was commercially driven'?

9.2   Do you feel that you live in a culture that is commercially driven? Provide specific examples to support your answer for class feedback.

9.3   The quotation below refers to a 'consumer-driven culture' which 'came to value the brand name and iconic item above individuality'.

> For visionary power, the giant of Pop Art is Andy Warhol whose work anticipated a world where a consumer-driven culture came to value the brand name and iconic item above individuality.
> Guest editor Margaret Morse with additions by SBK

[<www.biddingtons.com>]

9.3.1   Consider the manner in which many young people construct their identity (the factors that contribute to this process). To what extent do you believe that people value associating themselves with, and defining themselves through, popular brand names – at the expense of their own unique individuality?

SECTION A

My culture: my voice

You have spent preparatory time discussing the possible impact of popular culture on the formation and development of the identity of the individual. Section A requires you to apply what you have discussed and learnt to the development and formation of **your own unique identity**.

Read the extract below and answer the questions which follow:

> Theodor Wiesengrund, German sociologist and political thinker, argues that the culture industry, which produces and circulates cultural commodities through the **mass media, manipulates the population**. He believes that '**popular culture is the reason why people become passive; the easy pleasures available through the consumption of popular culture make people docile and content.**' He refers to '**the manipulation of taste**' **which results in a pseudo–identity (not their real identity) at the expense of the unique identity of each individual.**

[<http://www.reference.com>]

To what extent are the highlighted aspects of this quotation true in your experience of popular culture and the formation of your unique identity? Your exploration must also include those aspects of popular culture which contradict the quotation and those which you believe enhance your sense of individuality.

* Explore to what extent the highlighted aspects of the extract above could be true with respect to the formation and development of your own unique identity **and**
* Keeping in mind that the above extract is the view of one person, explore those aspects of popular culture which you believe could be positive and enhance your individuality.

Presentation of Section A

Your response should take the following form:

* Create a visual diary. **(A visual diary is a collection of ideas and thought processes around a particular concept which combines both text and images.)**
* **Your visual diary must use both images and text to communicate your response of the negative and positive impact of popular culture on the development of your unique identity. Thorough personal reflection on what you have discussed in preparatory tasks is expected in order to communicate an insightful commentary on your own identity.**
* Your visual diary may take the form of a written copy or may be done in an electronic format.
* A **minimum** of **six** visuals which serve to complement the text and enhance your perspective must be included.
* Your text must consist of 500 – 600 words.

(30)

SECTION A

Assessment Rubric

Descriptors	4	3	2	1
13	**11 – 13**	**8 – 10**	**6 – 7**	**0 – 5**
Learner responds to areas where popular culture and mass media manipulate self and makes self passive resulting in a pseudo-identity at the expense of own unique identity.	Learner embraces exploration through articulate and insightful personal reflection with reference to manipulation /passivity and creation of a pseudo-identity in terms of their own experience of popular culture. Refers to a variety of aspects of popular culture – including alternative/sub-cultures.	Learner grapples with issues of manipulation /passivity and creation of a pseudo-identity in terms of their own experience of popular culture. Evidence of personal insight into self development. A tendency to stock response at times which lacks the substance and rigour of an 80%. Refers to a variety of aspects of popular culture – including alternative /sub-cultures.	Learner refers to issues of manipulation /passivity and creation of a pseudo-identity, but tends to describe the concerns as opposed to exploring and articulating their own experience of popular culture **OR** limited/ superficial exploration of own experience. Refers to limited aspects of popular culture.	Learner fails to address the issues of manipulation/ passivity and/or the creation of a pseudo-identity **OR** fails to relate exploration to own experience.
13	**11 – 13**	**8 – 10**	**6 – 7**	**0 – 5**
Learner identifies areas where popular culture and mass media do not manipulate self and makes self passive – rejecting the formation of a pseudo-identity at the expense of their own unique identity but serves rather to enhance individuality.	Learner embraces exploration through articulate and insightful personal reflection with reference to non-manipulation /passivity and rejection of a pseudo-identity in terms of their own experience of popular culture. Refers to a variety of aspects of popular culture – including alternative/sub-cultures.	Learner grapples with issues of non-manipulation /passivity and rejects creation of own pseudo-identity in terms of own identity. Evidence of personal insight into self development. A tendency to stock response at times which lacks the substance and rigour of an 80%. Refers to a variety of aspects of popular culture – including alternative /sub-cultures.	Learner refers to non-manipulation /passivity and rejects the creation of a pseudo-identity, but tends to talk around ideas as opposed to exploring and articulating their own experience of popular culture **OR** limited/ superficial exploration of that which serves to enhance own unique identity. Refers to limited aspects of popular culture.	Learner fails to address neither the issues of non-manipulation/ passivity nor the creation of a pseudo-identity **OR** fails to relate exploration to own experience.
4	**4**	**3**	**2**	**0**
Inclusion of six visuals which serve to compliment text and enhance learner's perspective.	Learner integrates text and image selection to complement and enhance meaning. Variety of aspects of popular culture reflected in choice of images.	Learner integrates text and image selection to complement and enhance meaning. Lacks variety of Level 4.	Leaner includes six images, but fails to integrate images and text to provide meaningful communication. One gets the sense of a random selection of images.	Learner fails to include minimum of six images.

Total: /30