



Morning Comment – Academic Captains

Term 4 Assembly – Friday 24 October 2025

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James: At the start of the year, we stood before you and talked about shopping and I mentioned some baked beans. Some of you may have forgotten, so we are here to revisit that idea.

Throughout this year we've all been forging our own way down the aisles of the supermarket. Dashing here and there trying to juggle all the different parts of our lives. Some will have stuck to their shopping lists they made and kept consistent and organised. Others may have found they have what I'd like to call a 'wobbly trolley wheel' which took them off course. That is okay, a wobbly wheel doesn't stop the journey – it just teaches you how to adjust.

And just like in any good supermarket, there are always the produce workers stocking shelves who notice when you're lost in the wrong aisle or staring blankly at the same shelf for too long. Those workers are your teachers, peers, and classmates. They don't push the trolley for you, they just realign your wobbly wheel in the right direction. So, I want to say a big thank you to all the teachers for helping guide us through our academic year and the aisles of procrastination, deadlines and exams.

It's also important to remember that not everyone's trolley is going to look the same; a successful shopping trip for you may not be measured the same way as someone else's. If you're baking Maths pie, you need different ingredients than if you are mixing media in Art or stirring up Drama. Every subject, every choice you make, has its own recipe, and so everyone's trolley will have its own unique combination of ingredients.

As we reach the checkout line of our exams, it's worth pausing to see how far we've come and what we've added to our trolleys along the way. Every choice, every effort, and yes, even those baked beans, will shape the success you carry with you at the end of the year.



Masha: As James said, your choices and efforts will determine your success at the end of the year. For those of us who sat the prelim exams, I want to remind you of their importance. No, I don't mean that they're used for derived grades, but more so for feedback. I know how it feels to be so disappointed with a bad grade that you don't even want to look at the paper for feedback. I want to remind you that the mistakes you made in your prelims are actually for the better, and they will shape the success you carry at the end of the year.

Picture it like this. Before the prelims, you have a shopping trolley filled with some healthy vegetables and some rotten vegetables. The healthy vegetables represent the knowledge you have mastered, and the rotten ones are the areas you still need to work on.

You sit your prelims and then come back to class the following week. You see your grade and then read the feedback... Some of us optimise the feedback... and some of us don't. If you disregard your prelim feedback, then not only will your rotten vegetables decompose, but they will also cause the healthy vegetables to decompose too. If you procrastinate studying the areas you need to work on, then ultimately you will forget the knowledge you had mastered before prelims, and your whole trolley will be rotten.

Pro tip: you can't succeed with a rotten trolley. To prevent this from happening, use the feedback to your advantage. Look through the marking schedules, see where you went wrong, and keep practicing – it always, always pays off. For further support, you could also go to some tutorials, as our awesome teachers are always keen to help.

Ultimately, using your prelim feedback basically gives you the answer on how to prevent vegetables from decomposing, and it ensures that your trolley is filled with healthy vegetables that guarantee excellent results. Even if you didn't sit prelims, the idea still stands – feedback is your shopping list for success.

Sarah: So far, we've tailored our "shopping lists and trolleys" for those of us doing NCEA, but don't think we've forgotten about you, Years 9 and 10. While your exams are unlikely to alter your career path drastically, it's important to use these exams as a bit of a "practice shopping run" before going into the grand supermarket that is NCEA. As you guys were probably told at the beginning of the year "Years 9 and 10 are years for discovery and opening yourself up to opportunities."

By now, you will have discovered which subjects you're good at and the best way you remember stuff, but you might need to hone the skills of how to avoid distractions and just get on with it (some of us are still working on that part!). We know it's hard to stay focused when the sun is shining, there's a new Netflix show out, and a Christmas break with a period of "no more algebra" is looming. But it's important to remember the end goal – what's going to show up in your final receipt – your Mathematics result will show up, but your top score in Tetris will not. By keeping to your shopping list and focusing on getting the things you need (rather than those 'impulse purchases') you will get the receipt you deserve.

So, in order to get the receipts we want, we must do the following: use the study resources collected in our carts, alongside the healthy shopping carts we have created from our prelims, and learn to self-motivate even before NCEA starts. On behalf of the Academic Captains we wish you the best, good luck with your end-of-year exams, and happy shopping.