

Grade 9 Life Orientation Worksheet

Deaf pupil's court battle

You already know about the rights of citizens and personal choices.

Now read the passage below. It is by Nivashni Nair and appeared in The Times on Friday 17 July 2009.

Deaf Pupil's Court Battle

Sign language should be a matric subject

A deaf matric pupil at KwaZulu Natal's Westville Boys' High School will not know until a few days before the trial examinations whether he will be allowed to write a sign-language matric paper later this year.

Kyle Springate's efforts to get a matric exemption could be pushed further into limbo if the KwaZulu-Natal High Court, in Pietermaritzburg, reserves judgement in his legal battle with the Department of Education, which in March told him that sign language was not a matric subject.

Springate, 18, intends to study Fine Arts at university next year and had been unconcerned about obtaining his matric exemption.

But the Department of Education told him in March that sign language, which it had allowed him to write as an exam subject since Grade 10, would not be recognised as contributing to qualifying him for a matric exemption.

Supported by his mother, Paige Mclennan-Smith, the Durban Legal Resources Centre, the Deaf Federation of SA and the KwaZulu-Natal Blind and Deaf Society, Kyle has taken the Education Department to court. He has applied for an order that would compel the Department to allow him to write his matric examination this year and to declare sign language a school subject.

He cannot write the matric exams because, unless sign language becomes an approved subject, he did not register for the minimum number of subjects.

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Answer the questions below, using your own words as far as possible.

1. Who is Kyle Springate? [2]
2. Who is he taking to court? [1]
3. What is he asking the court to do? [2]
4. Why does he need to get a matric exemption? [2]
5. Why might he not be able to write matric this year? [2]
6. When will he know whether he can write matric? [2]
7. Besides Kyle's mother, who else is supporting him? [2]
8. Why do you think these organisations are supporting him? [3]
9. Do you think the Department of Education is being fair? Why do you say so? [4]
10. What would you do if you were the judge? Explain your reasoning. [4]

Total marks: 25

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Suggested Solutions

Question number	Possible marks	
1	2	Kyle Springate is a deaf matric pupil at Westville Boys' High School in KZN.
2	1	The Department of Education.
3	2	He is asking the court to force the Department of Education to allow him to write matric and to declare sign language a matric subject.
4	2	He needs the matric exemption in order to get into university next year.
5	2	He might not be able to write matric, because, if sign language does not become a matric subject, he will not have the minimum number of subjects needed for matric.
6	2	He will probably only know about it a few weeks before the trial exams.
7	3	The Durban Legal Resources Centre, the Deaf Federation of SA and the KwaZulu-Natal Blind and Deaf Society.
8	3	Own opinion.
9	4	Own opinion.
10	4	Own opinion.
Total marks: 25		