G.C.E. O/L Grade 11 ICT · Lesson 5

5.1 Planning a Website: Purpose, Audience, Content, Layout and Design

Syllabus 14.1. Before a builder makes a house, an architect draws a plan. A website is the same. In this note you will plan a website for **Sunrise College**: decide its **purpose** and **audience**, organise the **content** into a **site map**, draw a **wireframe**, choose **colours, fonts and media**, and write a simple **specification**. Good planning saves time and makes a site that people enjoy using.

1. Website, web page and home page

A **web page** is one document you see in a browser. A **website** is a group of linked web pages under one name, such as **www.sunrise.lk**. The first page you see is the **home page** (often called **index.html**). Every page has its own address called a **URL**.

Web page වෙබ් පිටුව	**Website** වෙබ් අඩවිය
Home page මුල් පිටුව	**URL** URL

2. The planning steps

Plan in this order. Each step answers one simple question. When the site is tested, you go back and improve – planning is a **cycle**, not a one-time job.

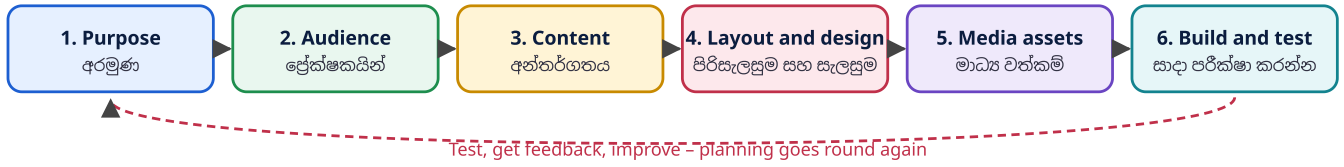


Figure 5.1 – The six planning steps. After testing, you go round again.

Step	Question it answers
Purpose	Why is the site needed? e.g. share school news
Audience	Who will use it? students, parents, old pupils
Content	What to say; group it into pages (site map)
Layout and design	Wireframe, colour scheme, fonts

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Media assets	Choose photos, logo, audio, video
Build and test	Make pages, test on phone and PC

3. Purpose and target audience

The **purpose** is the reason the website exists: to **inform** (school news), to **sell** (an online shop), to **teach** (e-learning), or to **entertain** (games). The **target audience** is the group of people who will use it. Know their **age, language, device and needs**. In Sri Lanka many visitors use **phones** and read **Sinhala, Tamil or English**.

Audience	What they need from the school site
Students	Timetables, notes, results, club news
Parents	Term dates, notices, contact details
Old pupils	History, events, how to help
New families	Admission, location, facilities

> 💡 Write the purpose in **one sentence**: “The Sunrise College site tells students and parents about school news, dates and clubs.” If a page does not help this purpose, leave it out.

4. Organising content – the site map

Content is everything on the site: text, photos, videos and files. Group it into pages, then draw a **site map** – a diagram that shows all pages and how they link, like a family tree. Our school site has **12 pages** in **3 levels**: the home page, 5 main pages (About us, Academics, Clubs, News, Contact), and sub-pages under some of them.

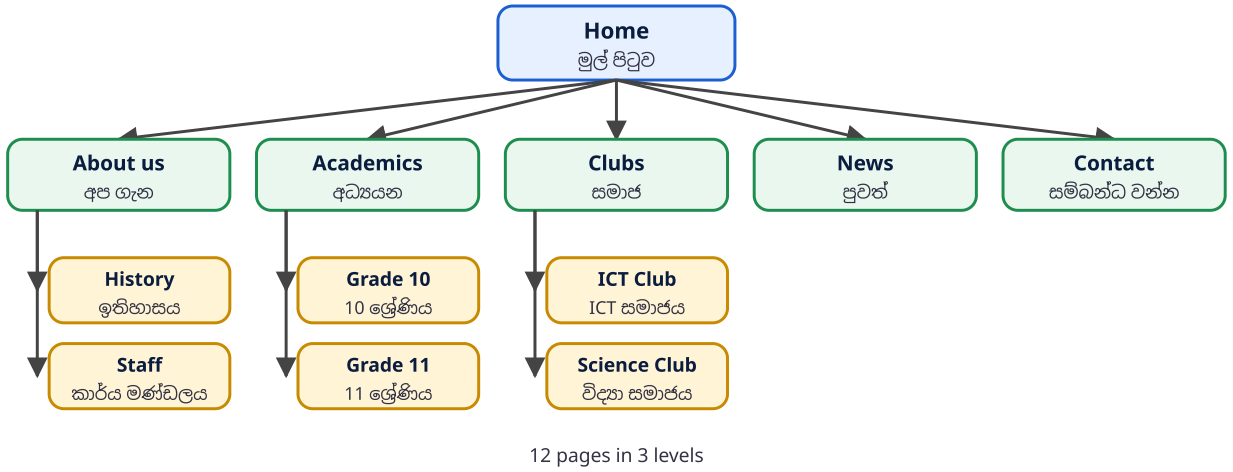


Figure 5.2 – Site map of the Sunrise College website (hierarchical structure).

Structure	How pages link	Good for
Linear	One after another, Next / Back	A step-by-step lesson or quiz

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Hierarchical (tree)	Home → main pages → sub-pages	Most school and business sites
Web (networked)	Any page can link to any page	Wikipedia, blogs

> 💡 Keep the menu short: **5 to 7 main pages**. A visitor should reach any page in **3 clicks** or fewer.

5. Layout – the wireframe

Layout is where things go on the page. A **wireframe** is a simple sketch of a page with boxes, drawn before any colour or photo is added. Most pages use the same parts: **header** (logo and name), **navigation menu**, **main content**, a **sidebar** and a **footer**. Using the **same layout on every page** (consistency) helps visitors feel at home.

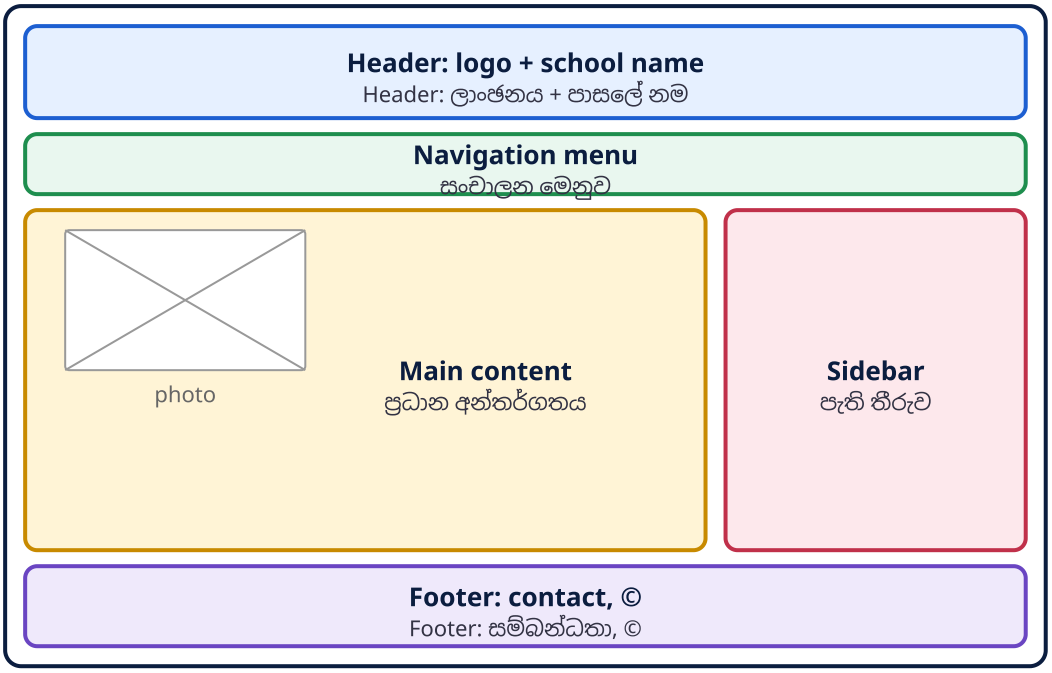


Figure 5.3 – A wireframe of the home page: header, menu, main content, sidebar and footer.

6. Colour scheme

A **colour scheme** is a small set of colours used across the whole site – usually **2 or 3 main colours** plus white or grey. Take them from the school badge. Colours on the web are written as **hex codes** like **#0B1D3F** (Red 0B, Green 1D, Blue 3F).



Navy blue	Gold	White	Light grey	Dark grey
#0B1D3F	#F5B700	#FFFFFF	#F2F4F8	#1F2937
නාවික නිල්	රන්වන්	සුදු	ලා අළු	තද අළු

Figure 5.4 – The colour scheme of the school website with hex codes.

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Colour	Hex	RGB	Used for
Navy blue	#0B1D3F	11, 29, 63	Header, menu, headings
Gold	#F5B700	245, 183, 0	Buttons and highlights only
White	#FFFFFF	255, 255, 255	Page background
Light grey	#F2F4F8	242, 244, 248	Boxes and table rows
Dark grey	#1F2937	31, 41, 55	Body text

Text must stand out from its background. This is called **contrast**. Web rules (**WCAG**) ask for a contrast ratio of at least **4.5 : 1** for normal text. Look at the checks below: gold text on white fails, so gold is used only for buttons with navy text.

Text	Background	Contrast	Result
Dark grey	White	14.7 : 1	✔ Easy to read
White	Navy blue	16.6 : 1	✔ Easy to read
Navy blue	Gold	9.2 : 1	✔ Easy to read
Gold	White	1.8 : 1	✘ Too pale – do not use
Dark grey	Light grey	13.3 : 1	✔ Easy to read

7. Fonts and text

- Use **one or two fonts** only – one for headings, one for body text.
- **Sans-serif** fonts (Arial, Noto Sans) are easy to read on screens. For Sinhala use a Unicode font such as **Noto Sans Sinhala** or **Iskoola Pota**.
- Body text about **16 px**; headings bigger. Short paragraphs and clear headings help people scan.
- Do not write whole sentences in CAPITALS, and do not underline words that are not links.

8. Media assets

Media assets are the photos, logo, icons, audio and video files the site needs. Collect them before you build. Make photos **small for the web** (for example 1200 px wide, JPEG or WebP, under 300 KB) so pages load fast on mobile data. Use your own photos or ones you have **permission** to use, and give every picture **alt text** for blind users.

9. User needs and usability

Easy to find
සොයා ගැනීමට පහසුයි

Fast
වේගවත්

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Works on phones දුරකථනවල ක්‍රියා කරයි	**For everyone** සැමට
Up to date යාවත්කාලීනයි	**Safe** ආරක්ෂිතයි

10. Writing the specification

A **specification** is a short written list of what the finished site must have. The client (the principal) and the developer (the ICT club) both agree to it. Here is a simple one:

Item	Sunrise College website
Purpose	Share school news, dates and club activities
Audience	Students, parents, old pupils
Pages	12 pages, 3 levels (see site map)
Languages	Sinhala and English
Design	Navy and gold scheme, Noto Sans fonts
Devices	Phones, tablets and computers (responsive)
Updates	News every week by the ICT club

NEW 2026 **2026:** Most visitors now arrive on a **phone**, so plan **mobile first**: design the small screen, then the big one. Also plan for **accessibility** (alt text, contrast, keyboard use) and **HTTPS**. AI tools can suggest a site map or draft text, but **you** must check facts and photos before publishing.

Key Words

Website – A group of linked web pages under one name.	**Home page** – The first page of a website, often index.html.
URL – The address of a web page.	**Purpose** – The reason a website is made.
Target audience – The people the website is made for.	**Site map** – A diagram of all pages and how they link.
Wireframe – A simple box sketch of a page layout.	**Navigation** – The menu and links used to move between pages.
Colour scheme – The small set of colours used on all pages.	**Contrast** – How much text stands out from its background.

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Media assets – Photos, logos, audio and video used on the site.

Specification – A written list of what the finished site must have.

Sample Q&A

1. What is the difference between a web page and a website?

> **Answer:** A web page is one document; a website is many linked pages under one name.

2. Why must you know the target audience?

> **Answer:** So the content, language, design and device suit the people who will use the site.

3. How many pages are in the school site map, and how many levels?

> **Answer:** 12 pages in 3 levels.

4. What is a wireframe?

> **Answer:** A simple box sketch showing where the header, menu, content and footer go.

5. Why is gold text on a white background a poor choice?

> **Answer:** Its contrast is only 1.8 : 1, below the 4.5 : 1 needed, so it is hard to read.

6. Give two things a website specification should include.

> **Answer:** Any two: purpose, audience, list of pages, languages, design, devices, update plan.

MCQ

1. The first step in planning a website is to decide its

A. purpose
B. fonts
C. host
D. colours

2. The group of people a website is made for is its

A. administrator
B. web host
C. target audience
D. domain

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3. A diagram showing all pages of a site and how they link is a

A. wireframe
B. storyboard
C. site map
D. flowchart of code

4. A simple box sketch of where things go on one page is a

A. wireframe
B. site map
C. specification
D. colour scheme

5. In the school site map, how many pages are there?

A. 3
B. 12
C. 6
D. 5

6. A site where every page links in a tree from the home page has a

A. single-page structure
B. random structure
C. linear structure
D. hierarchical structure

7. The hex code #FFFFFF is

A. blue
B. red
C. white
D. black

8. The minimum contrast ratio for normal text (WCAG) is

A. 10 : 1
B. 4.5 : 1
C. 1 : 1
D. 2 : 1

9. Which colour pair is hardest to read?

A. Gold text on white
B. White text on navy
C. Navy text on gold
D. Dark grey text on white

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10. Which font is best for Sinhala text on a website?

A. Any decorative font
B. Wingdings
C. Noto Sans Sinhala (Unicode)
D. FM Abhaya (non-Unicode)

11. Why should photos be made small before putting them on a website?

A. Colours become brighter
B. They need no alt text
C. They become vector
D. Pages load faster

12. Alt text for an image mainly helps

A. blind users using screen readers
B. the page get a URL
C. the image change colour
D. the image load faster

13. Using the same header and menu on every page gives

A. compression
B. consistency
C. animation
D. encryption

14. A written list of what the finished site must have is the

A. domain name
B. source code
C. site map
D. specification

15. “Mobile first” design means

A. build only an app
B. design for the phone screen first
C. never use computers
D. use only images

Structured Questions

1. List the six steps of planning a website in order. *(2 marks)*

> Purpose, Audience, Content, Layout and design, Media assets, Build and test.

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2. Your school wants a website. Give its purpose and two groups in its target audience. *(2 marks)*

> Purpose: to share school news, dates and club activities. Audience: students and parents (also old pupils, new families).

3. Draw a wireframe for a home page and label four parts. *(2 marks)*

> A box diagram with: header (logo, name), navigation menu, main content, sidebar, footer (any four labelled).

4. Give three rules for choosing colours and fonts for a website. *(3 marks)*

> 2–3 main colours used on every page; strong contrast (at least 4.5 : 1); one or two easy sans-serif fonts, Unicode for Sinhala.

5. Explain why a site map is drawn before building a website. *(2 marks)*

> It shows every page and link, so no page is forgotten, the menu is planned and visitors can reach pages in few clicks.

Summary

- Website = linked pages; home page = index.html; each page has a URL.
- Plan: purpose → audience → content → layout → media → build and test.
- Purpose = why; audience = who (age, language, device).
- Site map shows all pages; structures: linear, hierarchical, web.
- Wireframe = header, menu, content, sidebar, footer.
- Colour scheme of 2–3 colours; contrast at least 4.5 : 1.
- 1–2 sans-serif fonts; Unicode for Sinhala; small, credited photos with alt text.
- Specification = agreed list; plan mobile first, accessible and HTTPS.

MCQ answer key – 5.1

1. **A** – First decide why the site is needed; everything else follows.
2. **C** – The target audience is who will use the site.
3. **C** – A site map shows the page structure.
4. **A** – A wireframe shows the layout of one page.
5. **B** – 1 home + 5 main + 6 sub-pages = 12.
6. **D** – Home → main pages → sub-pages is hierarchical.
7. **C** – FF FF FF = 255, 255, 255, all light on = white.
8. **B** – WCAG asks for at least 4.5 : 1.
9. **A** – Gold on white is only 1.8 : 1.
10. **C** – Unicode fonts show correctly on every device.
11. **D** – Small files load quickly, especially on mobile data.

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12. **A** – Screen readers read the alt text aloud.
13. **B** – Consistency makes a site easy to use.
14. **D** – The specification is agreed before building.
15. **B** – Most visitors use phones, so plan the small screen first.

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