

PART II

ACQUIRING CORE SKILLS

DECISION MAKING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART II: ACQUIRING CORE SKILLS

Decision Making

1. Starting the Decision Making Process 3
2. Gathering Information 12
3. Exploring Alternatives and Considering Consequences 32
4. Making and Evaluating Decisions 42

STARTING THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS



AGENDA

- Starter
- Quick Toss
- Let It Flow
- Fallout Shelter: Defining the Problem
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will discover what makes some decisions harder than others.

Students will learn that decisions are influenced by many factors.

Students will identify and illustrate the steps of the decision making process.

Students will begin the fallout shelter simulation, which allows students to practice the decision making process.

Materials Needed

- A soft ball or a ball of rolled-up socks (Part I)
- Six large pieces of poster board, and six long strips of paper (Part II)
- One manila folder for each group of six or seven students (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Explain to students that today they will begin to study the decision making process. Begin the discussion by asking students to consider all of the decisions they have made during the day so far. Have three volunteers alternate writing student responses on the board so that students can quickly call out answers for about one minute.

Have the volunteers tally the number of decisions made by the class. The number should be large. Point out to students that people make many decisions every day, some easy and some more difficult. Explain that today's lesson will help them learn the process for making a decision, which can make tough decisions easier.

Part I Quick Toss (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students discover what makes some decisions harder than others and learn that decisions are influenced by many factors.

1. Students participate in an activity that requires them to make choices.

Hold the soft ball or the ball of rolled-up socks. Explain that you are going to ask a question and then throw the ball to a student. That student has three seconds to answer the question and throw the ball back to you. You will then repeat the exercise with different questions and different students.

Toss the ball. Begin by asking students to make easy decisions. For example:

- Which show will you watch on television tonight?
- What color would you choose for a new car?

If possible, throw the ball to every student.

2. Students respond to increasingly complex questions.

As the game continues, increase the difficulty of the questions. For example:

- If you found money, what would you do with it?
- If your dog were very ill, would you put it to sleep or spend as much money as possible to cure it?

Then, ask about the process students use to make decisions. For example:

- How did you decide to wear your hair like that?
- How did you choose your after-school job?

3. Students discuss what makes some decisions more difficult than others.

Discuss what students experienced during the game. Ask questions such as the following:

- What made some of the decisions easy? What made some of the decisions more difficult?
- Would it have helped to know what your friends think about the situation? Why?
- If you had more information, would the choice have been easier? What kind of information would you like to have had?

Lead students to the understanding that consequences usually make decisions difficult. Often, the more significant the consequences, the more difficult the decision.

Ask students to suggest some other factors that can influence the decisions they make. (Students might respond: peer pressure, personal beliefs, the opinions of someone they respect.) Elicit from them that such factors affect the choices they make.

Part II Let It Flow (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify the steps of the decision making process and create a flowchart to illustrate the process.

1. Students identify the steps of the decision making process.

Ask students to think about what they have learned regarding the factors they consider when making a decision (e.g., consequences, peer influence, personal beliefs). Have them suggest the steps they think people should take when making an important decision. Once students have created a list, have them put the steps in order. The final list should resemble the following:

1. Define the issue.
2. Gather information.
3. Develop alternatives.
4. Analyze the consequences.
5. Make the decision.
6. Consider feedback and evaluate.

Point out that the final step—consider feedback and evaluate—may result in returning to the first step to rework the decision. Decision making can be a recursive process. Sometimes, one must return to the beginning of the process or repeat a step several times.

2. Students create a flowchart that shows the decision making process.

Provide the class with the following scenario: the local school board is trying to decide if students at your high school should be required to wear uniforms to school.

Divide the class into six groups. Tell students that each group will illustrate one step of the decision making process regarding the school board's choice. Give each group a large piece of poster paper and a long strip of paper.

Assign each group one step of the decision making process. Tell them to consider and discuss the problem with regard to the step assigned to them. For example, the "gather information" group would discuss how the school board would gather relevant information to help in its decision making. On their poster papers, the groups are to illustrate their assigned steps of the decision making process. They should use the long piece of paper to make an arrow that will be used to connect their steps to the next step.

When students have finished, collect the steps and post them on a bulletin board or wall. Connect all of the steps using the arrows. Review the results to reinforce the steps of the decision making process.

Part III Fallout Shelter: Defining the Problem (30 minutes)

Purpose: Students begin a simulation, which continues throughout this module, and practice the first step of the decision making process (define the issue).

1. Students prepare for a simulation that highlights decision making.

Explain to students that they are now going to begin working through the decision making process, as illustrated in their flowcharts. Explain that the activity will continue over the next few lessons.

Divide the class into groups of six or seven. Give each group a manila folder. Have a member of the group write all the members' names on the folder. Inform students that all group work and notes related to this activity are to be kept in the folders. You will collect them at the end of each session and distribute the folders at the beginning of the next.

Explain the following situation to the groups:

Your group is composed of members of a federal agency in Washington, D.C., that is in charge of running fallout shelters in the far outposts of civilization. Suddenly, World War III breaks out and nuclear bombs begin dropping, destroying places all across the globe. People are heading for whatever fallout shelters are available. You receive a desperate call from one of your stations asking for help.

It seems that 10 people have arrived looking for shelter, but there is only enough space, air, food, and water in the fallout shelter for six people for a period of three months, which is how long they must stay underground before they can safely leave. They realize that if they have to decide among themselves which six should go into the shelter, they are likely to become irrational and begin fighting. So, they have decided to call your department and leave the decision to you. They will abide by your decision.

Explain to students that, as a group, they have to decide which four people will have to be eliminated from the shelter. Impress upon them the following important considerations:

- It is possible that the six people they choose to stay in the shelter might be the only six people left to continue the human race.
- You (the federal agency group) must make the decision—no exceptions.

2. Students begin the simulation by defining the problem.

Explain to students that their responsibility today is to carefully define the problem. Instruct students to take 10 minutes to write a clear definition of the situation, including all the factors they feel are important.

Instruct the groups' members to brainstorm the most important criteria (including core beliefs and values) to consider when making this decision. Have students include any outcomes the group wants. As a prompt, ask, "What qualities are important: intelligence, creativity, kindness, or other qualities?" Allow students 10 minutes to write their answers.

3. Students discuss their group work.

Have each group share its definition with the class. Ask:

- What difficulties did you encounter when your group wrote its definition of the problem?
- Why is it necessary to have a clear definition of a problem when making a decision?

Lead students to the understanding that having a clear definition of the problem helps them to focus on each specific aspect of the problem and helps ensure that they will not be distracted later by things that aren't part of the issue.

Have the groups return their materials to their folders. Collect the folders.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students how often they make decisions. Ask them to explain how good decisions are made. Elicit from students the following key points that were taught in this lesson:

- People make many decisions every day, some more difficult than others.
- Decisions are influenced by many factors, including beliefs and values.
- Following the decision making process results in the best decisions.
- A clear definition of the problem leads to a better understanding of the issue.

Student Assessment

1. What factors can make some decisions more difficult than others?
2. List three factors that influence the decisions you make.
3. List the steps of the decision making process in order.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favorable.”

Have students illustrate this quote (perhaps by showing a ship labeled with a decision being buffeted by various winds). Display the drawings or have students explain them in small groups.

Using Technology

Choose a television show with a historic or ecological theme. Pick one example of decision making illustrated in the show. Have students create flowcharts of the example based on the decision making process.

Have students discuss the flowcharts in small groups.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about a decision they will have to make in the near future. Students should define the problem and describe why the choice may be difficult to make. Students should choose a topic they can discuss with their classmates.

Ask students to submit a one-sentence description of the problem they’ve identified. Have the class discuss the types of problems to be solved.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Explain to students that mnemonic devices are techniques for assisting memory. Provide the class with an example of a mnemonic device.

Divide students into groups. Have each group create a mnemonic to help students remember the decision making process (e.g., “Dizzy gators don’t always make choices.”). Have groups share their mnemonic devices with the class.

Homework

Have students track news stories that describe choices to be made by local, state, or national government officials.

Have students keep a log of their stories and write a short paragraph summarizing each decision made, including stated reasons for arriving at decisions as well as hidden agendas.

Additional Resources

Have students research a recent decision made by the president or another political figure.

Have students chart the process that may have been used in making this decision.

GATHERING INFORMATION



AGENDA

- Starter
- The Box
- Info Search
- Fallout Shelter: Exploring Alternatives
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will recognize the importance of gathering relevant facts and ignoring irrelevant information when making a decision.

Students will learn that their prior experiences can direct them to good sources of information.

Students will apply the step of gathering information to the fallout shelter simulation.

Materials Needed

- 10 slides or large pictures of diverse groups of people, such as Asians, African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, Caucasians, men, women, teenagers, children, elderly people, well-dressed people, and so forth (Starter)
- Projector, if using slides (Starter)
- A cardboard box filled with various small items, including string, paper clips, toothpicks, one or two red items, and one or two blue items (Part I)

- One copy of “The Search” activity sheet for each student (Part II)
- One copy of the “Fallout Shelter Hidden Biographies” activity sheets for each role-playing volunteer (Each volunteer receives a unique biography.) (Part III)
- Fallout shelter folders (Part III)
- One copy of the “Fallout Shelter Biographies” activity sheet for each group (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Show students the 10 slides or large pictures featuring varieties of people.

Ask students to write their answers to the following questions:

- Whom would you choose as a friend? Why?
- Whom would you like your sibling to have as a friend? Why?
- Which of these people would make the best teacher? Why?
- Which of these people would get your vote for president of the United States? Why?

Ask students how comfortable they are with their choices. Elicit from them that these decisions seem difficult because they do not know anything about the people other than their appearance. Point out that in order to make an informed decision, they would need more information.

Part I The Box (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize the importance of gathering relevant facts and ignoring irrelevant information when making a decision.

1. Students complete a task using relevant information.

Explain to students that you have a challenge for them. Draw their attention to the box containing the various small items.

Ask for a volunteer to come to the box. Inform the volunteer that they have 10 seconds to connect a red item and a blue item using paper clips, strings, or other items from the box. Dump the contents of the box on the floor or the table and say, "Go!" When 10 seconds have passed or when the student is finished, ask if anyone sees other solutions. Have these students connect the red and blue items they suggest.

2. Students discuss the importance of using relevant information to make decisions.

When students have exhausted combinations, ask students why no one attached irrelevant items. For example, hold up two items that were not red or blue and say, "Why didn't you connect these?" You might also hold up another item and ask, "Why didn't anyone use this to connect a red and a blue object?" Elicit from students that these things did not fulfill the requirements of the challenge.

Ask students why the solution was so easy. Elicit from them that they had the knowledge to recognize what was important in this exercise and what did not fit the solution. Point out that to make a good decision, one must have the relevant facts and ignore information that is unrelated.

Part II Info Search (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize that their experiences can direct them to good sources of information.

1. Students recognize the importance of identifying appropriate sources of information.

Explain to students that sometimes they will not have all the important facts they need, which will require them to find additional sources of information.

Ask students, “Where would you go to find the scores of last night’s baseball (or another sport, depending on the season) game?” Encourage students to give several sources, such as sports websites, newspapers, and television. Ask students why they would choose those sources. Lead students to the understanding that they would choose those sources because they have found the information there before.

2. Students practice identifying appropriate sources of information.

Explain that students will practice identifying the appropriate sources of information for different situations. Tell students that they will be able to do this easily if they use their prior experiences and knowledge. Distribute a copy of “The Search” activity sheet to each student.

Allow students five minutes to complete the activity sheet. While students are working, write the five situations on the board.

When time has expired, have students share the sources of information that they felt were pertinent to each situation. Have two volunteers list the responses under the appropriate situation on the board. Elicit from students the greatest variety of sources possible. (Students might respond: libraries, reference books, atlases, encyclopedias, interviews with knowledgeable people, the internet, newspapers, magazines, clubs, organizations, and associations.)

Have students add any new sources of information to their worksheets. Suggest that students keep their lists of sources as an aid for research and information gathering. Explain that when they are trying to gather information, reviewing the list will help them uncover sources they may not immediately consider.

Part III Fallout Shelter: Exploring Alternatives (30 minutes)

Purpose: Students apply the step of gathering information to the fallout shelter simulation.

1. Volunteers prepare character roles for the fallout shelter simulation.

Explain to students that they are now going to return to the fallout shelter simulation to practice gathering information from different sources.

Ask for 10 volunteers to play special roles in this activity. Assign each volunteer a character to role-play. Give each volunteer one of the “Fallout Shelter Hidden Biographies” activity sheets and ask them to read the hidden biographical information quietly. Explain that the activity will require them to answer questions related to their characters. Instruct them to answer truthfully, creatively, and in character if there is a question not covered in the hidden biography. Instruct each volunteer to write down the answers to the questions they are asked during the activity so that they can give consistent information to any groups that ask similar questions.

2. Students receive biographical information about the characters in the simulation.

Have students return to their simulation groups; then, distribute the fallout shelter folders. Review the fallout shelter situation with students. Remind them that each group has to decide which four people will have to be eliminated from the shelter. Point out that the six people they choose to stay in the shelter may be the only six people left to start the human race again, so this decision is very important.

Distribute copies of the “Fallout Shelter Biographies” activity sheet. Explain that this is all they know about the 10 people. Read the sheet out loud:

- Bookkeeper, 31 years old
- Second-year medical student, member of militant group
- Famous historian, 42 years old
- The famous historian’s 12-year-old daughter
- Hollywood star, actor/actress
- Biochemist
- Member of the clergy, 54 years old
- Olympic athlete in track and field, world-class triathlete
- College student
- Firefighter

3. Students develop a list of questions to answer.

Explain to students that their task is to decide what they need to know in order to make the decision. They must develop a series of questions that will elicit the information they need about each person. Allow students 10 minutes to prepare their lists of questions.

4. The fallout shelter groups identify the sources that they would use to gather relevant information.

When 10 minutes have passed and the groups have completed their lists of questions, tell them that they must identify as many sources as possible to find the information they need. Give students two to three minutes to complete this task. Ask the class if they included interviews with the individuals as important sources of information.

5. Groups interview the fallout shelter characters.

Explain to the class that the teams are able to communicate with the fallout shelter site, so they will be able to ask reasonable questions of each of the individuals involved.

Ask the 10 volunteers to stand. Introduce each one as the character they are portraying.

Have the actors circulate among the groups for a few minutes and answer questions. Remind the actors that if they do not have information on the hidden bio to answer a specific question, they must make up an answer that is consistent with the character. Tell actors to write down the made-up information they give out so all groups that ask similar questions get similar answers. Instruct group members to take notes on the information they learn from the characters.

When time has expired, have students put all their materials in their group folders. Collect the folders from each group and put them aside until the next session.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students what they must do in order to make well-informed decisions. Ask students to explain the importance of discerning between relevant and irrelevant information. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- To make an informed decision, gather relevant information and ignore information that does not apply to the situation.
- Our own experiences can guide us to appropriate sources of information.
- Collect information from varied sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation.

Student Assessment

1. Imagine that you have been chosen to plan a class trip. List the information that you need to gather and how and where you would get this information.
2. Explain the differences between relevant and irrelevant information. List examples of relevant and irrelevant information in planning the class trip.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Basic research is what I am doing when I don’t know what I am doing.”

Have a volunteer prepare a one-minute bio on Wernher von Braun, a German rocket scientist who came to the U.S. during World War II. Discuss the possibility of someone so accomplished not knowing what he’s doing.

Additional Resources

Invite a businessperson or government representative to speak to the class about choices they make, factors they consider in decision making, whom they consult, etc.

Have students write an article for the school newspaper (or a career newsletter) summarizing what they learned.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Divide the class into small groups. Have each group make a list of 10 to 20 questions concerning famous decisions/decision makers (e.g., “Which president decided to free the slaves?”).

Have teams trade their lists and answer the questions. Award prizes in various categories. Have each student write a one-minute report on a different decision maker, what dilemma they faced, and how they arrived at a decision.

Using Technology

Show *Breaking Away* and/or *October Sky*, movies about kids who dream of escaping their small-town, working-class lives. The first is the charming story of Dave, a college-town kid who fancies himself an Italian bicycle racer. The second is the true—though highly romanticized—story of Homer Hickam, who, as a Sputnik-era youth, “went bonkers” about rockets and ultimately found work at NASA.

Have students list factors the main characters considered in the decisions to pursue their dreams.

Homework

Have students choose and research a controversial issue faced by a government official.

Have students list possible resources that could help the official make a decision about the issue.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about a decision they must soon make. Tell them to list possible sources of information that might help them make their decisions.

Have volunteers share their work with the class.

THE SEARCH

Where would you go to find information that could help you with the following situations? List as many sources as possible.

1. You have to write a research paper for history class.
2. You are writing an editorial for the school newspaper on a problem in your community.
3. You are searching for a part-time job to earn money.
4. You are interested in getting to know and possibly dating a new student in the school.
5. You are buying a new stereo system.

FALLOUT SHELTER

HIDDEN BIOGRAPHIES

INSTRUCTIONS:

You are going to role-play one of the characters based on the biographical information below. You are not to tell anyone, including other characters, about this additional information. If you are asked a question that is not covered by this information, you may make up your own answer that is consistent with the character. Write that answer in the notes section below. Always give the same answer to the same or similar questions.

BOOKKEEPER, 31 YEARS OLD

Hidden Biography

You have invented a machine that converts any plant into gasoline. You love sports of all kinds. You are an excellent fisherman. You are a convicted felon.

NOTES:

FALLOUT SHELTER

HIDDEN BIOGRAPHIES

INSTRUCTIONS:

You are going to role-play one of the characters based on the biographical information below. You are not to tell anyone, including other characters, about this additional information. If you are asked a question that is not covered by this information, you may make up your own answer that is consistent with the character. Write that answer in the notes section below. Always give the same answer to the same or similar questions.

SECOND-YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT

Hidden Biography

Despite being a gifted student, you have learned that you will be expelled because you fell behind in your studies due to time spent on political activities. Your family has spent nearly all the money it has on your education. You are an excellent sculptor and artist.

NOTES:

FALLOUT SHELTER

HIDDEN BIOGRAPHIES

INSTRUCTIONS:

You are going to role-play one of the characters based on the biographical information below. You are not to tell anyone, including other characters, about this additional information. If you are asked a question that is not covered by this information, you may make up your own answer that is consistent with the character. Write that answer in the notes section below. Always give the same answer to the same or similar questions.

FAMOUS HISTORIAN, 42 YEARS OLD

Hidden Biography

You have a photographic memory. Since you are well read, you are knowledgeable about history, carpentry, and handiwork. You are married with one child. Your spouse is a United States Senator.

NOTES:

FALLOUT SHELTER

HIDDEN BIOGRAPHIES

INSTRUCTIONS:

You are going to role-play one of the characters based on the biographical information below. You are not to tell anyone, including other characters, about this additional information. If you are asked a question that is not covered by this information, you may make up your own answer that is consistent with the character. Write that answer in the notes section below. Always give the same answer to the same or similar questions.

THE FAMOUS HISTORIAN'S 12-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER

Hidden Biography

You are a top student, a talented flutist, and a competitive gymnast. As an only child, you are used to a great deal of attention from adults. Adults enjoy your company very much. Sometimes, you have difficulty getting along with other children your age.

NOTES:

FALLOUT SHELTER

HIDDEN BIOGRAPHIES

INSTRUCTIONS:

You are going to role-play one of the characters based on the biographical information below. You are not to tell anyone, including other characters, about this additional information. If you are asked a question that is not covered by this information, you may make up your own answer that is consistent with the character. Write that answer in the notes section below. Always give the same answer to the same or similar questions.

MOVIE STAR

Hidden Biography

You are a computer wizard. Your first starring role in a movie is to be released in two weeks. You have written three hit songs under a stage name.

NOTES:

FALLOUT SHELTER

HIDDEN BIOGRAPHIES

INSTRUCTIONS:

You are going to role-play one of the characters based on the biographical information below. You are not to tell anyone, including other characters, about this additional information. If you are asked a question that is not covered by this information, you may make up your own answer that is consistent with the character. Write that answer in the notes section below. Always give the same answer to the same or similar questions.

BIOCHEMIST

Hidden Biography

You are antisocial. You can't stand to be around people. You are bitter about a recent divorce. You write poetry in your spare time.

NOTES:

FALLOUT SHELTER

HIDDEN BIOGRAPHIES

INSTRUCTIONS:

You are going to role-play one of the characters based on the biographical information below. You are not to tell anyone, including other characters, about this additional information. If you are asked a question that is not covered by this information, you may make up your own answer that is consistent with the character. Write that answer in the notes section below. Always give the same answer to the same or similar questions.

MEMBER OF THE CLERGY, 54 YEARS OLD

Hidden Biography

You have just learned that you have one year to live. You recently returned from a world conference on religions, where your keynote speech was widely acclaimed. You worked on an oil rig while you were in college.

NOTES:

FALLOUT SHELTER

HIDDEN BIOGRAPHIES

INSTRUCTIONS:

You are going to role-play one of the characters based on the biographical information below. You are not to tell anyone, including other characters, about this additional information. If you are asked a question that is not covered by this information, you may make up your own answer that is consistent with the character. Write that answer in the notes section below. Always give the same answer to the same or similar questions.

OLYMPIC ATHLETE IN TRACK AND FIELD, WORLD-CLASS TRIATHLETE

Hidden Biography

In order to compete, you have taken performance-enhancing drugs. You are a vegetarian and can't stand the sight of meat. You have a strict training and diet regimen. If your routine is disturbed, you become aggressive.

NOTES:

FALLOUT SHELTER

HIDDEN BIOGRAPHIES

INSTRUCTIONS:

You are going to role-play one of the characters based on the biographical information below. You are not to tell anyone, including other characters, about this additional information. If you are asked a question that is not covered by this information, you may make up your own answer that is consistent with the character. Write that answer in the notes section below. Always give the same answer to the same or similar questions.

COLLEGE STUDENT

Hidden Biography

You are an engineering major. You can design and build many types of structures using whatever materials are available. You are also very knowledgeable in electronics and how to repair them. You are known at your school as being a social climber, and you only associate with the “in” group.

NOTES:

FALLOUT SHELTER

HIDDEN BIOGRAPHIES

INSTRUCTIONS:

You are going to role-play one of the characters based on the biographical information below. You are not to tell anyone, including other characters, about this additional information. If you are asked a question that is not covered by this information, you may make up your own answer that is consistent with the character. Write that answer in the notes section below. Always give the same answer to the same or similar questions.

FIREFIGHTER

Hidden Biography

You are a health fanatic and very strong. You are known to be very helpful to people who know you. You recently won an award for a program you created for children experiencing homelessness.

NOTES:

FALLOUT SHELTER

BIOGRAPHIES

Bookkeeper, 31 years old

Second-year medical student

Famous historian, 42 years old

The famous historian's 12-year-old daughter

Hollywood star, actor/actress

Biochemist

Member of the clergy, 54 years old

Olympic athlete in track and field, world-class triathlete

College student

Firefighter

EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERING CONSEQUENCES



AGENDA

- Starter
- Hit the Nail on the Head
- The Gift
- Fallout Shelter: Considering Consequences
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will discover that they should think creatively about alternative solutions to problems and not restrict themselves to obvious choices.

Students will practice weighing the consequences of various alternatives by investigating the positives and negatives of each.

Students will apply the steps of exploring alternatives and weighing options to the fallout shelter simulation.

Materials Needed

- Nails, a long wood board, a rock, a hammer, a mallet, and a balloon (Part I)
- One copy of “The Gift” activity sheet for each student (Part II)
- Fallout shelter folders (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Ask students to imagine that it's a rainy Saturday evening, and they're on their way to a concert. They hear that an accident has closed the route to the concert. What will they do? (*Students will likely mention taking an alternate route.*)

Now, ask them to imagine that a fire has closed the alternate route they've chosen. What will they do now? (*Students will likely mention taking yet another route.*)

Ask them which route they would choose. (*Students should respond that to get to the concert on time, they will try to find the shortest alternative route.*)

Explain that to get to their destination, they must identify their goal, look at all the possibilities, and consider the advantages and disadvantages of each one. Explain that the same is true when they make any decision—they must know what is important, explore all the alternatives, and consider the consequences of each possibility.

Part I Hit the Nail on the Head (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students discover that they should think creatively about alternative solutions to problems and not restrict themselves to obvious choices.

1. Students identify solutions to a challenge.

Place a hammer, several nails, wood, a rock, and a balloon on a table in the front of the room or on the floor in the middle of the classroom. Ask a student volunteer to figure out a way to drive a nail into the wood. Ask the volunteer to write a sentence describing the solution on the board (e.g., "I would use the hammer to drive the nail into the wood").

Ask other volunteers to demonstrate other solutions. Have each volunteer write their solution on the board.

2. Students recognize that they instinctively weigh options.

Ask students why none of them chose to drive in the nail with the balloon. (Responses should indicate that the balloon would pop and would not drive in the nail.)

Ask students to consider why you might have asked such a silly question. Lead students to the understanding that they used their experiences to weigh options and disregard possibilities that obviously would not work.

3. Students create alternative solutions.

Ask students why no one used their shoe. (Students may respond that you did not tell them that they could use something that was not on the table.) Explain that you told them to figure out a way to drive the nail into the wood, not what to use or where to find it.

Now that students know this, ask them to suggest other ways they could achieve the goal. Have students brainstorm possibilities and add them to the list.

When students have finished brainstorming, explain that what they have just done is come up with some creative alternatives that contribute to well-thought-out decisions. Remind them that when they are exploring alternatives, they shouldn't restrict their thinking; they should evaluate their options and consider consequences only after they've created a list of alternatives.

Part II The Gift (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students weigh the positive and negative consequences of various alternatives.

1. Students are presented with a situation that requires a decision.

Distribute "The Gift" activity sheet to students.

Read aloud the following situation:

You have just won \$2,000. You've wanted to buy a used car that a neighbor is selling. The last time you asked, the owner said she would sell the car for \$1,995. You know what money you have saved and what you earn weekly.

On the chart, list the positives and negatives of buying the car.

2. Students analyze positive and negative consequences.

As students begin to fill out the positives and negatives on the activity sheet, prompt them with the following questions:

- Have you considered the cost of gas, maintenance, and insurance?
- Would you have to give up spending money on some things to pay for car expenses? How will you deal with this?
- How will your time be affected if you buy the car?
- Could car ownership affect your social life?
- Are there any consequences that might affect your family?

Ask students to share some of the positive and negative consequences that they listed. Allow students to add consequences that they find relevant.

Ask students to raise their hands if, after analyzing the positives and negatives, they will buy the car.

3. Students are confronted with unexpected consequences.

Say, “You’ve decided to buy the car. You tell a close friend that you’re getting wheels next Tuesday. Your friend says, ‘That’s great. I can’t wait to borrow it.’ What are the consequences of telling your friend that he can drive the car? What are the consequences of telling your friend he can’t drive the car?”

Give students a minute to fill in the positives and negatives of each choice in the second row.

When students have finished listing the consequences, say, “Something else has come up. When you tell your mom that you’re going to buy the car, she tells you that if you buy the car, you will have to pick up your brother at the elementary school and your sister at the middle school every day. Then, she adds that you can also help her take the groceries to your grandmother every Saturday morning. What are the positives and negatives here?”

4. Students learn that a decision can be revised when unexpected consequences appear.

Give students time to add the consequences in the third row. Then, have students discuss their responses. Ask if any of these unexpected consequences caused them to change their decision. Why?

Point out to students that decisions can be changed or revised when they have considered all the consequences, if a situation changes, or if more information becomes available. Explain that in this case, their decision affected not only themselves, but others around them (including friends and family).

Part III Fallout Shelter: Considering Consequences (30 minutes)

Purpose: Students apply the steps of exploring alternatives and weighing options to the fallout shelter simulation.

1. Students review their progress in the fallout shelter simulation.

Have students return to their simulation groups. Return the fallout shelter folders. Ask a volunteer to summarize the situation and the decision that each group must make. Reinforce the understanding that the groups must decide which six individuals make the best combination of people.

Remind them that during the last lesson, they developed questions for which they needed answers to help make the decision. They also identified sources that would be useful in obtaining pertinent information. In addition, they learned more about the characters.

2. Students determine the alternatives.

Have students work in their groups to determine as many alternative groupings as possible. Remind students that they should keep their minds open and look for alternatives that are “outside the box.” Remind them that they should not restrict themselves or comment on others’ suggestions at this stage. Explain that they should also not be weighing consequences yet; they are just brainstorming alternatives and will weigh consequences next. Allow them 10 minutes to complete this step.

3. Students consider the positive and negative consequences of each alternative.

After 10 minutes have passed, suggest that the group decide on a simple method of recording positives and negatives (e.g., pro/con lists). Allow them 10 minutes to weigh the positives and negatives for each alternative. Remind them to look for unexpected consequences.

4. Students participate in a debriefing process for the simulation.

Ask groups to identify how many alternatives they discovered. Then, ask them to think about the process of considering the consequences. Inquire:

- What methods or procedures did your group develop in order to consider the positives and the negatives?
- What problems or challenges did your group face?
- How did your group resolve any difficulties?
- If you were to do this step again, what would your group do differently?
- What were some of the surprising or interesting alternatives and consequences your group considered?

Have the groups return any materials to their folders. Collect the folders.

Tell students that during the next session, they will make their decisions.

Conclusion *(2 minutes)*

Ask students to explain why it is important to consider the long-term effects of their decisions. Ask students to explain how it is possible that the decisions they make may affect other people. Elicit from students the following key points that were taught in this lesson:

- When making a decision, consider all the alternatives and think creatively.
- Carefully weigh the consequences of each alternative by examining the positives and the negatives of each possibility.

Student Assessment

1. List five positive consequences and three negative consequences of doing volunteer work in your community.
2. Describe a situation in which you made a decision that led to unexpected consequences. How did you react to those unexpected consequences? Would you react differently now?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Most of the things we decide are not what we know to be the best. We say yes, merely because we are driven into a corner and must say something.”

Have volunteers relate situations in which students might say yes when they want to say no. Discuss the consequences of these decisions.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Have students create comic strips illustrating decisions they must soon make, the options available to them, and possible consequences for each alternative.

Post the strips around the classroom.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students identify a problem in their communities. Tell them to list options for solving this problem and write the possible positive and negative consequences for each option.

Have students share their work in small groups. Ask the groups to discuss options/consequences that might have been overlooked.

Using Technology

Show *Hoop Dreams*, a documentary that follows the high school careers of two African American teenage boys, both extraordinary basketball players who hope to earn NBA contracts.

Discuss with students who and what influenced the boys' decisions, the alternatives open to them, and what consequences seemed to be most important in their decisions.

Homework

Have students chart their TV viewing for one week. The chart should include shows, genres, characters, decisions made, and how those decisions were made (e.g., peer influence, advice, research). Students should also include the outcome of each decision.

Have students construct a bar graph categorizing the influences on decisions in each show, using a different color for each one.

Additional Resources

Have students read *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer, his taut first-person account of the 1996 Everest expeditions that resulted in the deaths of 12 people—a chronicle of bad decisions from start to finish.

Have students chart the reasons for the various decisions in the book and the consequences of those decisions.

THE GIFT

You have just won \$2,000. You've wanted to buy a used car that a neighbor is selling. The last time you asked, the owner said she would sell the car for \$1,995. You know what money you have saved and what you earn weekly.

On the chart, list the positives and negatives of buying the car.

	Positive Consequences	Negative Consequences
1. Expected Consequences		
2. Unexpected Consequences		
3. Unexpected Consequences		

MAKING AND EVALUATING DECISIONS



AGENDA

- Starter
- Fallout Shelter: Making the Choice
- Because...
- One More Time
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will demonstrate the decision making process by making the final decision in the fallout shelter simulation.

Students will explain and defend their decisions.

Students will review the decision making process.

Students will recognize that some decisions need to be modified and will reflect on the decisions made by their groups.

Materials Needed

- Fallout shelter folders (Part I)
- One copy of the “Evaluating Fallout Shelter Decisions” activity sheet for each student (Part II)

- Journals or writing paper for student responses (Part III)

Starter (2 minutes)

Tell students that “a stitch in time saves nine” is a maxim, or well-known saying. Ben Franklin first wrote this saying in *Poor Richard’s Almanac*. Ask students to explain what the maxim means.

Lead students to the understanding that it means that if we do things in a timely manner, we will save ourselves work.

Explain to students that the same is true for decisions. Ask for a show of hands from students who feel they often procrastinate when they make decisions. Explain that this is common. Ask students to suggest reasons why this happens. (Students might respond: people can’t make up their minds, they believe that there are going to be bad consequences no matter what.)

Explain that if people procrastinate as they make decisions, opportunities can be lost and the consequences can be serious. Explain to students that they will now have to make a timely decision.

Part I Fallout Shelter: Making the Choice (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students review the decision making process as they make their final decisions in the simulation.

1. Students review the decision making steps they have taken.

Distribute the folders to the groups.

Review with students the first four steps of the decision making process that you have covered so far:

1. Define the issue.
2. Gather information.
3. Develop alternatives.
4. Analyze the consequences.

Call on volunteers to name the steps. Ask each volunteer to explain what their group did while working on that step. As appropriate, ask what difficulties the groups faced as they worked and why those difficulties occurred.

2. Student groups make the final decision.

Explain to students that in today’s session they will decide which characters will be accepted into the fallout shelter.

Have students recall their assignment: they must choose four people who will not be allowed into the shelter. Remind them of the gravity of the situation—the six people they choose might be the only six people left to start the human race over again.

Allow students five minutes to make their decisions. Remind them to review the data, issues, and considerations they had gathered in order to make their decisions.

3. Groups prepare to present their decisions.

While students are working, write the following questions on the board:

- What critical issues and considerations did you have to take into account?
- Who did you choose to move into the fallout shelter?
- Why did you choose these people?

Explain to the groups that they will present their decisions and their reasoning to the entire class. Tell the class that each group will have two minutes for its presentation. Have each group select one or two spokespersons and allow them five minutes to organize their answers. Instruct students to address the specific questions above in their presentations.

Part II Because... (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students explain and defend their decisions.

1. Groups present their decisions to the class.

Distribute copies of the “Evaluating Fallout Shelter Decisions” activity sheet to each student. Then, call on each group to present its decision and explain its reasoning within two minutes.

2. Groups are questioned about their decisions.

After each presentation, allow a brief question and answer period, during which the class asks about and comments on the decision. Remind students that some groups may have different information because they asked the characters different questions.

If necessary, remind students about the importance of being respectful of other people’s decisions. Point out to students that some of the factors involved in the decision making process are a person’s personal beliefs and values. For that reason, even people who have the same information might make different decisions.

3. Students evaluate each group’s decision.

After each presentation and discussion, allow students several minutes to complete the activity sheet by rating the decisions and the justifications on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely poor and 5 being outstanding.

Have students place all material, including the evaluations, into the group folders. Collect the folders.

Part III One More Time (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize that some decisions need to be modified and reflect on the decisions made by their groups.

1. Students have an opportunity to revisit their decisions.

Remind students that the last step of the decision making process is to revisit, revise, and modify decisions if necessary or if more information becomes available.

Ask students to respond to the following prompt in their journals: "Explain what you would change about or why you stand by your group's decision."

2. Students examine their own performance during the fallout shelter simulation.

Ask that students try to disregard the content of the activity and instead examine the process.

After several minutes, prompt students to consider how their experiences in this activity relate to their decision making processes in general. Ask the following questions and have students continue to write their responses in their journals:

- What influenced your decisions in this activity? What factors influence your decisions on a daily basis?
- What did you find difficult in this simulation? How does that compare with the decisions that you are faced with every day?
- What would have helped make the decision making process easier?
- If you were to do this again, what would you do differently? What do you think you did well?
- How will you use the decision making process in your life?
- Why is it important to understand how good decisions are made?

Conclusion *(3 minutes)*

Ask students why following the decision making process is helpful. Ask students to explain why knowing how to make good decisions can help guide them in the future. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Decisions must be made in a timely manner.
- Part of the decision making process is the opportunity to revisit and modify decisions we have made.

Student Assessment

1. What does it mean to make a timely decision? Why is making a timely decision important?
2. When, why, and how would you revise a decision?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“We can try to avoid making choices by doing nothing, but even that is a decision.”

Have students give examples of choices that were made because they took no action.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Have students choose a step of the decision making process and create a presentation that illustrates that step. Students should use various media in their presentations, including artwork, videos, songs, brochures, etc.

Have students evaluate each presentation.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students read the “Everyday Heroes” activity sheet and write their reactions.

Have students discuss making the choice to become an organ donor. Ask, “What might the decision making process for becoming an organ donor look like?”

Using Technology

Have students use the internet to research news articles about a recent decision the government has made.

Divide students into groups. Have students discuss their articles and evaluate the decision making process that was used.

Homework

Have students research the Oklahoma Dust Bowl and the resulting migration to California.

Have students write a one-page paper or prepare a chart illustrating the choices the migrating families had to make and the consequences of those decisions.

Additional Resources

Read *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse and/or *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. Compare these novels of Depression-era struggle with historical material on the causes and effects of drought in the Oklahoma Dust Bowl.

Have students debate the agricultural and political decisions made during this era, arguing for/against alternatives that might have prevented disaster.

EVALUATING FALLOUT SHELTER DECISIONS

Directions: Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely poor and 5 being outstanding, evaluate the work done in the fallout shelter simulation.

Group Members	Score for the Decision	Score for the Justification	Comments

EVERYDAY HEROES

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON LIVING

Tiffany Culy urges teens to become organ donors.

When she started feeling sick to her stomach, Tiffany Culy figured it was the flu. But a few days later, the Saline, Mich., teen woke up with yellow eyes and yellow skin and an “unbelievable pain” in her belly. Rushed to a hospital, she began slipping into a coma.

Tiffany had Wilson’s disease, which was destroying her liver. Doctors said she would die without an immediate liver transplant.

After reviewing four possible organ donations, surgeons were able to find a liver that would work for her. Tiffany spent three months in the hospital. Now 19 and a freshman at Hope College in Holland, Mich., Tiffany is so healthy that she competed in two swimming events. She also has become a crusader for organ donations.

“Over 61,000 Americans are waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant,” Tiffany says. And an average of 12 Americans die each day waiting for a new liver, heart, kidney or other organ, according to the nonprofit Coalition for Donation.

Tiffany gives talks at schools and for youth groups, telling kids that needing an organ can happen to anyone. “It took me totally by surprise,” she says.

Tiffany tries to dispel myths about organ donation. For example, she says celebrities are not put at the top of the list for donations. “And there is no black market for stolen organs.”

Tiffany says she got a liver because “I was basically healthy and my chances for survival were good.” When deciding who gets an organ, the coalition says it does not take into account race, gender, age, income or celebrity.

Becoming a donor is simple, Tiffany says. “All you really have to do is tell your next of kin, because that’s who will be asked at the time of death. You can also sign up when you get your driver’s license.”

And you shouldn’t wait. “Even though you’re a teen, you’re not invincible,” she says. “Talk to your family. Tell them you want to save someone’s life.”

—Nancy Vittorini

**Reprinted with permission from React magazine.*