

GATHERING INFORMATION



AGENDA

- Starter
- Any Takers?
- A Job Offer
- Mystery Interview
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will recognize that gathering information is an important part of the decision making process.

Students will recognize that asking relevant questions and actively listening to answers are effective ways to gather information.

Students will practice asking relevant questions in order to gather information and make informed decisions.

Materials Needed

- A paper grocery bag or cloth sack (Part I)
- One copy of the “Mystery Person #1” and “Mystery Person #2” activity sheets for each pair of students (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Begin class today with the following anecdote that illustrates the importance of taking the time to get information:

A man was driving to Alaska. Halfway there, he ran into a huge snowstorm and got lost. He pulled over to wait out the storm. Finally the snow stopped and he noticed that there was a snowplow right in front of him. Relieved, he started his car and began following the plow as it cleared snow off the road.

After a while, the snowplow stopped. The driver got out and walked back to the man's car. "Where are you headed?" she asked.

"I'm on my way to Alaska," the man answered.

"Well," the plow driver replied, "you're not going to get there by following me. I'm just plowing out this parking lot!"

Ask students to explain why you may have told this story. Tell students that the point of this story is that if you don't find out the facts, you can end up making decisions that don't get you anywhere. Explain to students that today they're going to learn how easy it can be to get the information they need to make good decisions.

Part I Any Takers? (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize that gathering information is an important part of the decision making process.

1. Students recognize that gathering information can change their decisions.

To illustrate how facts and information can change decisions, present students with the following scenario. Explain that if students wish to respond yes to a question, they should stand. If they wish to respond no, they should sit.

- If I offer you \$1,000 to go on a shopping spree, will any of you take it?
- There's one thing you should know: you will only be able to spend this money in certain stores. Will you still take it?
- If you take the money, you'll be required to spend half on yourself and half on someone else. Will you still accept it?
- Here are two more conditions: If you take the \$1,000, you'll have to spend it by the end of the week. You'll also have to spend it on something that will last longer than one year, like a smartphone, 4K TV, laptop, or video game system. How many of you will still take the money?

Take a tally of the number of students who are standing. Tell students to remain standing, and ask two or three volunteers to briefly explain why they would keep the money despite all the conditions you stipulated. When they have finished their explanations, read the last requirement:

- There's one very important thing I forgot to mention! If you take the \$1,000, you'll have to pay me \$6,000 by the end of the week. Do you still want the money?

2. Students explain the reasons for their decisions.

Invite students who stood and then sat down to explain why they changed their minds. Elicit responses acknowledging that the deal you offered did not actually benefit them in the end because it resulted in students owing you more money than you gave them. Ask students for suggestions on what they could have done to find this out earlier (e.g., asking if there was a catch).

Explain to students that it's very important for them to make sure that they have as much information as possible before making a decision. Assure students that getting information isn't a difficult thing to do; they just need to take the time to ask the right questions.

Part II A Job Offer (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize that asking relevant questions and actively listening to answers is an effective way to gather information.

1. Students form small groups and listen to directions.

Divide the class into groups of four or five students, and ask each group to send a volunteer to the front of the room. Explain that the volunteers are to imagine that they have been offered a job, and that they must decide whether to accept it. Ask the volunteers to leave the room for a few minutes. Tell them to think about any questions they may have about the job while they are waiting. Suggest that, in order to determine which questions to ask, they think about what is most important to them (e.g., what they value, what they would like to get out of a job).

While the volunteers are out of the room, explain to the groups that they will be answering questions about the job. Have students write this information for their responses:

- The hours are from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday.
- The job is working as an assistant in the elementary school office.
- An assistant runs the copy machine, changes bulletin boards, and cleans and sets up classrooms.
- The supervisor is very strict but fair.
- Assistants must wear orange smocks while working.
- The pay is \$8 an hour.

2. Students ask questions to gather information.

Have volunteers come back into the room and join their groups. Explain that the volunteers may ask five questions about the job they have been offered. They are to ask one question at a time to each group member. Their goal is to find out as much information about the job as possible.

Tell the groups that they are only to respond to questions and give only the information that is requested. If a volunteer says, “Tell me about this job,” the response should be, “I can only answer a question.” If a volunteer asks a yes or no question (such as, “Is it a good job?”), the response can be either yes or no—nothing more.

Before the groups begin working, remind them that only five questions can be asked and answered.

3. Students identify effective questions.

When the class has finished, invite volunteers to report whether they decided to accept the job and explain their decision. Then, read aloud all of the details from the job description. Prompt volunteers to evaluate the effectiveness of the questions they posed to their groups by asking questions such as the following:

- How many of the details were you able to find out?
- Were you missing information that was important to you? If so, what?
- What kinds of questions did you ask?
- What kinds of questions should you have asked?

Encourage students to give examples of questions that were successful in gathering the necessary information. Through questions and comments, guide students to recognize that using who, what, where, when, why, and how questions is very effective when gathering information and details.

Point out to students that sometimes just asking questions may not get them all the information they need. When this happens, they may need to use other methods of research. Remind them that if the decision is important to them, they should take the time to gather information. Explain that they will feel much more confident about making decisions when they know they are making informed decisions.

Part III Mystery Interview (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students practice asking relevant questions in order to gather information and make an informed decision.

1. Students practice using their information-gathering skills in interviews.

Have students work with partners to conduct interviews. Give one student in each pair a copy of the “Mystery Person #1” activity sheet, and the other a copy of the “Mystery Person #2” activity sheet. Caution students to keep the details of their identities secret until their interviews.

Explain that students are to take turns interviewing their partners for a column in the school newspaper about new students. Then, give the following directions:

- As an interviewer, you have five minutes to ask questions. Your purpose is to find out as much as you possibly can about the mystery person in the interview. Remember to ask who, what, where, when, why, and how questions and to take good notes.
- As a mystery person, you have recently transferred to this school. Remember to listen carefully to the questions. If you are asked a question that isn't answered on your activity sheet, make up an answer that fits your character.

2. Students make an informed decision.

When 10 minutes have passed, ask students to suppose that their soccer team needs another member who knows the game and who could be a key player. Ask them if they would invite the person they interviewed to meet the coach and try out for the spot.

Allow a few seconds for students to make a decision; then, call on volunteers to share their decisions and the reasons for them with the class. (Mystery Person #2 has played soccer since the age of four and is probably an excellent player. Mystery Person #1 is probably not interested in soccer because it is not listed as an interest or hobby on the activity sheet.)

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to summarize what they learned about asking effective questions to gather information. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Before making decisions, take the time to get the information you need.
- Asking the right questions and listening to the answers is an effective way to get information.
- Informed decisions are always the best decisions.

Student Assessment

1. In what ways is gathering information an important part of the decision making process?
2. List three things you can do to gather information.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

Quote: “It’s better to be boldly decisive and risk being wrong than to agonize at length and be right too late.” —Marilyn Moats Kennedy

Activity: Ask, “Do you agree or disagree with this statement?” Have students write a paragraph supporting their choice, and hold a mini debate on the subject.

Math Connection

Activity: Provide students with math word problems. Have them work in pairs to distinguish between extraneous and necessary information before solving. Have students check the solutions in small groups, explaining which information they needed and why.

Writing in Your Journal

Activity: Have students interview adults they know about important decisions they have made. Remind students to use who, what, when, where, why, and how questions. They should make sure the interviewees know that their profiles will be shared. Have students present their work to the class. Have them share the questions they asked to gather the information they needed.

Using Technology

Activity: Visit www.youtube.com and perform a search using the term “newsreel.” Select newsreel footage of a critical moment in history and present it to the class. Explain that newsreels were often presented in movie theaters, and usually offered a rosy or humorous view of current events. Have students discuss what information might be needed to form an opinion on the event in the newsreel. They should research it and decide how they would have acted had they been in charge.

Homework

Activity: Have the class plan and conduct a poll on factors that influence people's decisions about what music to buy. (Possible answers might include streaming sites, radio, movie soundtracks, reviews, recommendations, in-store play, price, etc.) Tally the results in class, and have students create bar graphs to chart the results.

Additional Resources

Activity: Have each student clip or print a news article and list the details that correspond to the following questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Students should also list how the article is relevant to their lives. As a class, discuss the details of the articles and how asking the questions helped students discover the articles' relevance and what they were about.

MYSTERY PERSON #1

MIKA LEE

- ❖ You were born in Winnipeg, Manitoba. (Manitoba is a province in central Canada. Winnipeg is a city in southern Manitoba, not far from the U.S. border.)
- ❖ Your birthday is October 2.
- ❖ You have no middle name.
- ❖ You moved to the United States with your family last summer.
- ❖ You have one sister and one brother.
- ❖ Your sister is older than you, and your brother is younger.
- ❖ Most of your relatives live in Manitoba, but you have an aunt, uncle, and cousins who live in Fiji.
- ❖ Your family has two pets: a dog named Mister and a gerbil named Spike.
- ❖ You speak French as well as English.
- ❖ Your favorite foods are spaghetti, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and ice cream.
- ❖ Your favorite color is orange.
- ❖ Your favorite sport is hockey.
- ❖ You like to ice-skate, swim, and ride your bike.
- ❖ You also like to collect stamps from around the world and draw.
- ❖ You would like to be a veterinarian someday.
- ❖ You would also like to be a professional figure skater.
- ❖ You would like to travel around the world someday.

MYSTERY PERSON #2

JERRY SOLO

- ❖ You were born in Cordoba, Argentina. (Argentina is a country in southern South America. Cordoba is a city in north central Argentina.)
- ❖ Your birthday is February 28.
- ❖ Your middle name is Rawson, which is your mother's maiden name.
- ❖ You are an American citizen, but you were born in Argentina. Your family moved back to the United States when you were four years old.
- ❖ Your family moved here on account of your father's new job.
- ❖ You have one sister.
- ❖ Your sister is younger than you.
- ❖ Your grandparents and most of your other relatives live near you.
- ❖ Your family has no pets.
- ❖ You speak English and some Spanish.
- ❖ Your favorite foods are burritos, pizza, and steak.
- ❖ Your favorite color is purple.
- ❖ Your favorite sport is soccer—you have played it since the age of four.
- ❖ You also like to play basketball, and you are learning to swim.
- ❖ You love to read adventure and mystery stories, go to movies, and cook.
- ❖ You would like to be a pilot someday.
- ❖ You would also like to be an actor or a chef.