

# MAKING A CHOICE

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## AGENDA

- Starter
- The Five Steps
- What's Best for All?
- What's Best for Me?
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

## Objectives

Students will recognize that decision making is a process.

Students will collaborate with each other to make a decision about their school.

Students will demonstrate the decision making process and make a personal decision.

## Materials Needed

- Three copies of the “Circle Me!” activity sheet for each student (Starter)
- A small poster board or flip chart page (Part I)
- One copy of the “Make It Easy” activity sheet for each student (Part II)

### **Starter** (3 minutes)

Place a packet of three “Circle Me!” activity sheets face down on each student’s desk. Give the students the following directions:

- I will give you 30 seconds to circle as many numbers as you possibly can.
- You must wait for me to tell you to start.
- Numbers must be circled consecutively (one, followed by two, three, four, etc.).
- You must stop when I say time is up.

Have students begin. When 30 seconds have passed, ask them to share which number they circled last. Repeat the above activity two more times. Each time students finish, ask them to share the last number they circled.

Explain that experience doing something usually makes it easier and makes us feel more confident about doing it. Tell students that today they will continue building their confidence and strengthening their skills by making more decisions.

### **Part I The Five Steps** (10 minutes)

Purpose: Through a review of the steps used to make decisions, students recognize that decision making is a process.

#### **1. Students review the process of decision making.**

Guide students in conducting their own review of what they have learned about decision making. Prompt students by suggesting that they do the following:

Think about what they would say if they were going to teach someone who is not in this class how to make a decision.

Look through the activity sheets in their folders to help them recall what they have done in previous sessions.

#### **2. Students outline what they have learned.**

Through questions, comments, and a few revisions, guide students to write an outline on the board that identifies these five basic steps of the decision making process:

1. Define the problem.
2. Gather any information you may need—ask questions.
3. Identify options available to you—think of as many as you can.
4. Weigh the pros and cons of the options and the consequences.
5. Decide.

### **3. Students recognize decision making as a process.**

Through discussion, encourage students to describe as many details about each of the steps as they can recall. Help students reach a consensus that this outline represents a process that they can follow whenever they need to make a decision.

Ask for a volunteer to make a poster that presents the five steps of the decision making process. Display the poster in the room.

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## **Part II What's Best for All? (20 minutes)**

Purpose: Students collaborate with each other in using the five steps of the decision making process to make a decision about their school.

### **1. Students prepare for the activity.**

Decide whether you wish to have students work as a class or in smaller groups for this activity. If you prefer to have everyone work together as a class, write a few questions such as the ones below on the board, and have the class choose one question to discuss and make a decision about. Choose topics that are of interest to your students.

If you prefer, divide the class into two or three smaller groups. Keep groups large enough to ensure that a number of opinions will be represented. You might assign each group a question, or list a number of questions on the board and allow each group to choose one.

The following are possible topics/questions that groups can consider:

- Should our school require students to wear uniforms?
- Should schools enforce a dress code for their students?
- Should students get a passing grade at the end of the year even if they have not completed all of the work?
- Our school can support only five after-school programs. Which programs should it support?
- What should be done about students in our school who are caught writing graffiti and committing other acts of vandalism?
- Should students be allowed to use AI to help write papers?
- What should be done about students who harass other students?

### **2. Students use the decision making process to make a decision.**

Distribute copies of the “Make It Easy” activity sheet, and suggest that students use them to organize their thoughts and ideas.

If the class is working in smaller groups, give students a time limit (perhaps 10 minutes) to discuss and make a decision. Try to leave enough time at the end of this activity for each group to share briefly the options they considered as well as their final decision.

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## **Part III What's Best for Me? (10 minutes)**

Purpose: Students practice using the decision making process to make a personal decision.

### **1. Students reflect on decisions they are currently dealing with in their own lives.**

Explain that students will have the opportunity to make one more decision before they leave class today. Ask them to think about what is happening in their lives. Suggest that they think about relationships with friends, what might happen in the future, or anything else that they need to make a decision about. Or students may want, instead, to reconsider a past decision that had negative consequences.

### **2. Students work through the decision making process.**

Tell students to make their own pro/con lists to help them organize their thoughts. If students need information, suggest that they make a list of questions and write down whom they need to ask. Explain that they have the remainder of the class period to think about options and consequences, and to evaluate the pros and cons for each.

Tell students that they do not need to actually make their decision today—especially if they need to gather information. The goal is to at least start the process.

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### Conclusion *(2 minutes)*

Ask students if they think that people who are successful in life are good decision makers. Ask them to explain their answers. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Use all the steps of the decision making process when making decisions that are important to you: define the problem, gather information if needed, identify options, weigh options and consequences, and decide.
- The best decisions are thoughtfully made, so take the necessary time to make them.

### Student Assessment

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1. List the five steps of the decision making process.
2. What makes a decision thoughtful?
3. Write a scenario in which all the steps of the decision making process are used.

## LESSON EXTENSIONS

### Using Quotations

“Nobody ever did, or ever will, escape the consequences of his choices.”

Have students create an acronym that will help them remember the five steps of the decision making process (e.g., “CROWD” for “consequences, research, options, weigh choices, decide”).

### Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Have students write about a choice that seemed completely out of their hands. Have them write about available options that might have yielded a different outcome.

Have interested students anonymously address unresolved concerns to “the Source,” as in Lesson 1.

Have students role-play alternate solutions.

### Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about a recurring choice that’s difficult to make (e.g., withstanding peer pressure to smoke, resisting tempting alternatives to doing homework).

Have students share their writing in small groups. As a class, create a list of tough decisions that come up on an ongoing basis. (See the “Homework” extension below for a follow-up activity.)

### Using Technology

Have students prepare a list of questions about decision making. (It may be helpful to narrow this to a single topic.) Have them record video or audio interviews with students from other classrooms.

If possible, edit the recordings so that answers from different students are interspersed throughout.

You might also have students transcribe the answers. Invite guests to class to see the finished product.

## Homework

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Have students create posters with advice about a choice that could be difficult to follow through on (e.g., saying no to smoking, doing homework daily). They should include three consequences of following (or not following) the advice.

Display the finished posters around the classroom.

## Additional Resources

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Have students read selections from *Baseball in April and Other Stories* or *Local News*, both by Gary Soto.

Have students write about a character's decision, whether they would have chosen similarly, and why.

# CIRCLE ME!

