

Decision-Making Challenge

The **BIG** Idea

- How can we use our decision-making skills to solve a practical problem?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up: Making Decisions... Together (5 minutes)
- II. Stay or Go? (10 minutes)
- III. The Challenge (10 minutes)
- IV. This Land is Your Land (15 minutes)
- V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

MATERIALS

- PORTFOLIO PAGES:**
 - Portfolio page 26, Grade 8 Skills Checklist (Setting Goals skills only)
- STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**
 - Student Handbook page 21, The Story of Your People
- FACILITATOR RESOURCE PAGES:**
 - Facilitator Resource 1, This Land Is Your Land: Decisions
- Ten or more “footprints,” to create a path across the room
- Poster board or computer paper
- Lined paper
- Pencils, paper, colored pencils
- Two rolls of tape

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Adapt their decision-making skills to a group activity.

OVERVIEW

In past weeks, students have explored the ways people make decisions and learned to use a decision-making model that will help them think before they act. In this lesson, they discover that this same model applies to making decisions with a group. By participating in challenging activities, they put what they've learned into practical—and fun—group action.

PREPARATION

- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
 - **Facilitator Resource 1, This Land Is Your Land: Decisions**
 - **Student Handbook page 21, The Story of Your People**
- Make seven copies of **Facilitator Resource 1, This Land is Your Land: Decisions** for each of your classes.
- Before students arrive, write the 3C model on the board or chart paper: IDENTIFY THE CHALLENGE, DETERMINE YOUR CHOICES, WEIGH THE CONSEQUENCES.
- For **Activity III**, figure out how many giant footprints (approximately two feet long) it will take to make a single footpath across the room, when chairs and desks are pushed out of the way. (Often 10 footprints will do it; add one if you have an odd number to make it even.) Then, make that number of footprints, cutting out the shape from poster board or cardboard. Keep in mind that kids will step on the footprints, so they must not rip easily. Mark half the footprints (with an X, a red circle, or make them a different color), so you have two distinct sets.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

DO NOW:

(You may choose to present the **Warm Up** activity as a written Do Now. Present the questions on the board or overhead projector, and have students write only their answers on index cards. You could also choose to give the students a handout by copying **Facilitator Resource 1, This Land is Your Land.**)

Questions:

1. In your opinion, what types of decisions require advance planning?
2. What is the most important thing you learned about decision making in this unit?

[Then call on students to read their answers, and then discuss the **Warm Up** as written.]

For **Activity III**, instead of footprints you can use pieces of cardboard or flat boards. If you think you will be unable to carry out this activity in your classroom, you may have the students complete this exercise in the hallway. You could also try to secure a larger space like the gym.

Activity IV can easily fill an entire class period. In the interest of time, you may wish to assign a single decision you'd like your students to work on.

If you think you will run short on time in this lesson, you may choose to skip **Activity III, The Challenge.**

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. Warm Up: Making Decisions...Together (5 minutes)

1. [When students have taken their seats, briefly ask them to review what they learned in the past few weeks about how people make decisions. Do we all make decisions the same way? What kinds of decisions require strategizing beforehand?]
2. [Point to the board and ask students to comment on the 3C decision-making model. Have they seen it in action outside the classroom? Have they tried it yet themselves?]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Using the 3C model will help you make good decisions. And it's not only true for you as individuals, but it's also helpful when you're part of a group. Today, we're going to play some games that rely on group decisions, and we'll put the 3C model to the test.

II. Stay or Go? (10 minutes)

1. [Tell the students that you are going to read them a story, which will be the basis for a group activity. While they're listening they are to imagine they are all one "people," and the story is about them.]
2. [Instruct students to turn to **Student Handbook page 21, The Story of Your People**. Then read the story out loud.]
3. When you finish, **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Usually, when a group faces a dilemma like the one described in the story, some people will think, "I can live with that," and others will think, "It's time to leave." And, of course, there will be pros and cons to both sides. So, to decide what your people should do, you're going to break into small groups, weigh the pros and cons of staying, and leaving, and make a group decision as to which you think is right. Then, each group will present their decision to the class.
4. [Divide the students into groups of five or six. Instruct them to use the 3C model to weigh their options, and decide. They must write everything down (challenge, choices, consequences), and be ready to present it in five minutes.]
5. [Allow the students five minutes to generate their lists. Then ask a volunteer from each group to read their decision, along with their reasons. When all groups have presented their cases, tell the students you will now decide—as one large group—

what their people should do. “All in favor of staying, raise your hands.” Count the vote. “All in favor of leaving, raise your hands.” Count the vote, and announce the group decision.]

III. The Challenge (10 minutes)

1. ***If the group decided to stay, SAY SOMETHING LIKE:*** Even though you’ve chosen to stay, the leader has heard your complaints, and decided it would be best, in the long run, to give you your own land. But to prove yourselves worthy, you must complete this challenge.

If the group decided to leave, SAY SOMETHING LIKE: You have been granted permission to leave. But first, you must prove yourselves worthy, by completing this challenge.

2. [Reshuffle the students into two new groups. Send each group to a different side of the room, so they are opposite each other.]
3. [Give one group the set of plain footsteps. Give the other group the set of marked footprints. Give each group a roll of tape.]
4. [Explain that each group has to get their members from one end of the room to the other. “So this group (point to one group) will end up over there (point across the room). And this group (point to the group currently on that side) will cross over to there (point to where the first group is).”]
5. [Display the rules below on chart paper or an overhead transparency. When everyone seems to understand that, essentially, they switch sides, explain the following rules:
 - You can only step on the footprints; you can’t touch the floor at any time.
 - Once you put down a footprint, you can’t move it unless you pick up all the footprints and start all over from your starting point. Use the tape to keep the footprints in place; remove the tape to move them.
 - Once you step on a footprint you can go forward but not back.
 - No running, pushing, jumping, or climbing.

Suggest that the groups use their decision-making skills to talk through their options, before putting down the prints. Then say, “Go!”

Most students will think in terms of “their group” only, and will be unable to find a way to cross with so few footprints. Encourage them to keep thinking, and after five minutes, if they’re still stumped, give them a hint: What about working together, and helping each other? There’s no rule about the two groups not talking to each other, or sharing ideas and resources.

At this point, some students will probably see that if they lay out the footprints to meet in the middle, they will be able to cross. Then they will begin to work as a new “group” comprised of both groups, and try to arrange the footprints so the groups can get around each other, or go one at a time.

If the groups don’t see the answer, keep dropping hints until they do, and hurry them along to make the 10-minute deadline!]

IV. This Land is Your Land (15 minutes)

1. [Congratulate the groups on escaping, and **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** You have reached your new land, and now it’s time to make some decisions about what kind of a place it will be. In this next activity, you will create your own country.]
2. [Ask the class to organize into groups of four or five students. Display **Facilitator Resource 1, This Land Is Your Land: Decisions** using an overhead projector or chart paper.]
3. [Tell each group to pick a category. They will have 10 minutes to come up with a decision for their category. Then they will present their decision to the class, explaining what their choices were, and how they arrived at their final decision. Remind students that classroom rules still apply. It’s not OK to create a country where groups of people — women, men, people of a particular ethnicity or social group — are mistreated or excluded.)

Students may use poster board or computer paper and colored pencils to draw flags or fashions. To write out a list of laws or the words to a song, students should use lined paper.]

4. [After 10 minutes, invite the groups to present their choices and explain how they arrived at their decisions.]

V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. [Praise your students for making good decisions, and for successfully applying the 3C model to a group activity. Encourage them to use this model to help them with other group decisions, like at home, or when they are with friends.]
2. [Then, if possible, wave the group's new flag, give the students their new country's salutation, and dismiss class.]

SKILLS CHECKLIST

Direct students' attention to **Portfolio page 26, Grade 8 Skills Checklist**. Have students complete the skills checklist questions for Setting Goals Skills.

Setting Goals

I can ...

Set a goal for myself and make a plan to reach it.	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well
Choose high school courses with a future career in mind.	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Suggest that students play these games with friends, family, or any other groups to which they belong. Invite them to report back to the class with the results.

Also, "This Land is Your Land" makes an excellent after-school or club activity, and offers many opportunities for students with different talents to contribute.

This Land is Your Land: Decisions

1. Your country needs a name, and a slogan that sums up what it stands for (e.g. America: Land of the Free, or New Hampshire: Live Free or Die.)
2. What type of government do you have? Democracy (rule by the people)? Theocracy (religious authority)? Dictatorship (one absolute ruler)? Other? Elect a leader and some officials.
3. Define a few of your laws.
4. Design a flag, with symbols that represent what you believe in.
5. Draw a picture of your money. Whose face is on it, and why?
6. Choose an animal to be your mascot. What attributes does it have that represent your country?
7. Write the words to a national anthem.
8. What language do you speak? How do you say hello and goodbye? What other words are special to your people?
9. What kinds of fashion do you wear to special occasions? Design a representative outfit for your leader to wear.
10. Create a holiday to celebrate your country. Describe and explain your party traditions.

THE STORY OF YOUR PEOPLE

You live on a beautiful, sunny island, with great beaches and green mountains and fruit growing on trees everywhere. There are “all you can eat” fruit buffets every breakfast, lunch, and dinner. There’s no school or work, and everyone just sits around all day and smiles at each other. There is never any war.

You can always hear the birds singing, since the government banned all noise except what’s natural. There are no blaring car horns, because there are no cars. There are no screaming guitars or poetic rappers or off-key karaoke singers, because music is no longer allowed. Talking isn’t permitted, either, in order to make sure no one says anything hurtful or politically incorrect. There’s one leader and everyone does what she says, or else they disappear and are never seen again. It’s easy to be happy, as long as you stay in your seat, don’t make noise, and remember to smile.

CHALLENGE:

CHOICE	CONSEQUENCES	
	Pros	Cons

