

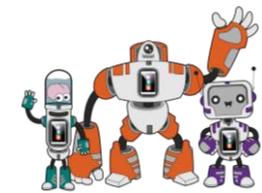
Making Choices Guide

This activity supports pupils to explore different scenarios and make choices for themselves about what they would do in those situations. Since it provides useful practice at making decisions in difficult circumstances, **teachers could intentionally teach the strategy using the suggested scenarios once a week.**

Once teachers and pupils are familiar with the strategy it can be used in response to real situations as they arise. This will help pupils develop ways of resolving issues on their own, using the structure in the example lesson plan.

Examples of scenarios that could be explored:

- Your teacher says you are going to work in a group with people you would not choose to work with doing something you have never done before. For exemplification see Making Choices Scenario 1
- You have had a disagreement with your friend and are no longer speaking to one another (conflict)
- Someone in your class makes unpleasant comments about a member of your family (prejudice)
- A group of children have been calling you names because of your home language and have warned you with threats not to tell anyone (prejudice)
- You are part of a group of friends who have decided not to let another pupil join the group (discrimination)
- Someone is being teased and called names by other pupils because they weren't wearing the latest fashion (discrimination)
- There is a new boy from South Africa in your class. He speaks with a different accent and people are calling him names because he is different (prejudice/discrimination)

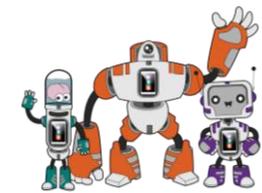


All of the scenarios could be related also to local/national/international issues

School based examples that mirror global situations of disagreement/agreement	
• <i>Call each other names, sometimes gender, religion or race-related</i>	<i>Prejudice</i>
• <i>Exclude others from play for arbitrary reasons</i>	<i>Discrimination</i>
• <i>Argue over materials</i>	<i>Resource distribution</i>
• <i>Protest that rules are 'not fair'</i>	<i>Human Rights</i>
• <i>Fight</i>	<i>Peace and conflict</i>
• <i>Find that more can be accomplished by sharing and working together in groups</i>	<i>Interdependence / co-operation</i>
• <i>Negotiate to find a solution to a problem that both parties will find acceptable</i>	<i>Diplomacy</i>

Making Choices Guide continued...

The sessions can be run in small groups or as a whole class with small group discussions. In some cases a small group can provide the safe and secure environment in which to discuss feelings and develop new skills. It would be advisable, once teachers have decided on a structure, to keep it constant from week to week. In order for any group to be successful, they need to contain



good role models so pupils can learn from one another. It is also important that there is a balanced gender mix and the pupils are of similar age.

Running the sessions with a whole class

The sessions are intended to be short, sharp and enjoyable. To support effective discussion and problem solving amongst the pupils, it is recommended that the class teacher has the help of learning support assistants. Below is an example lesson plan and simple lesson structure, which could be used as a basic structure for any of the sessions. Whole class sessions will need approximately 50-60 minutes. Small group sessions should last between 30-40 minutes.

The aim of the sessions is for pupils to discuss a range of options in any given scenario; this will enable them to explore the consequences of their suggested options, as well as their associated feelings and beliefs. **Teachers should not be seeking the 'right answer' to any particular scenario or problem presented to the group and should avoid making any judgemental statements.** At the end of the sessions there could be an opportunity for the teacher to ask pupils to raise their hands if they have made a choice as to what they would do in a given circumstance. If unsure, they could be given the option of explaining their thoughts about the situation instead, not necessarily their chosen option. **There are no right answers.**

Example Whole Class Lesson Plan – Making Choices

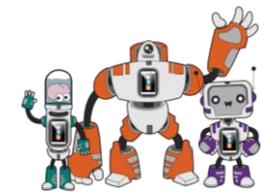
Small discussion groups and a system of scribing will need to be identified.

The skill the pupils will be developing is that of 'Managing one's moral and social development.'

Introduce the objective

Objective - I can explain why I believe in something, giving a variety of reasons

"This is because we need to be clear in our own minds not only what we would do or say in different circumstances but why".



The success criteria require pupils to think and make decisions about what they would do or say in different circumstances. Tell the pupils that as a group they are going to explore a scenario or problem they might encounter at school (or it could be outside of school)

Introduce the scenario

Your teacher says you are going to work in a group with people you would not choose to work with doing something you have never done before

At this point, teachers could also draw pupils' attention to the 'I can' statement – 'I can sustain friendships over a period of time and join other friendship groups without hurting (upsetting) others.' ['I can' statements](#)

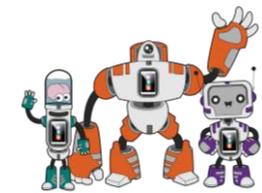
Teachers or learning support assistants could map the problem, solutions and consequences on the board. For examples see [Making Choices Scenario 1](#) and [Making Choices Scenario 2](#).

Possible options

Ask the pupils to go into their small discussion groups and brainstorm as many possible options as they can. Explain that you are thinking of all possible options, good or not so good. At this stage **only** the options should be discussed (the consequences of these options will come later in the session). Allow 5 minutes for discussion and bring back to the whole class. Each group's scribe should feedback their ideas and the teacher/learning support assistant could scribe on the large board. It may be necessary for an adult to propose some more negative options as pupils sometimes give what they think the teacher wants to hear. You may also encounter some bravado! Accept **all** suggestions **without comment**.

Consequences

Next, if there are a large number of possible options, identify a couple of positive or negative samples, or group them. Then ask pupils to return to their small discussion groups to discuss the consequences of these options. Once again, the group scribe



should feedback to the class and their ideas be scribed on the board. All thoughts and ideas should be accepted, merely ask 'How do you think the person/you would feel if they/you did that?' **Accepting pupil's negative reactions without comment is important.** Often bravado will lead to negative statements designed to challenge the teacher/adult – be prepared to accept all suggestions by using a phrase such as 'You might do that'. **The aim of the session is for pupils to think first and then reach their own decisions, not reiterate the 'right answer' for the teacher.**

Decisions

Finally, discuss the options as a class. To help teachers avoid the temptation to be judgemental, pupils might be asked just to raise their hand if they are clear what choice they would make in that scenario and not necessarily explain themselves to the class.

Learning Review

The following could be displayed and provide a useful strategy /prompt for children to consider when faced with a difficult decision

- **STOP**
- **THINK** (what are the possible options, what are the consequences of those options)
- **CHOOSE**
- **DO**

Discuss with pupils when and how they might use this strategy