

## How to Make a Decision

You want to try out for the school play. But you'd also like to join the track team. The activities meet on the same days, so you can't do both. How do you decide what to do? What is the best way to make a decision?

Researchers say that there are seven steps to decision making. In step one, you identify the decision. In this case, you are trying to decide which activity to join.

The second step is to gather information. You find out which days the activities meet. You ask how much each activity will cost. You assess whether you are likely to get a part in the play or make the team. Is there any other information that will help you make your decision?

In step three, you identify alternatives. Your alternatives are the play or the track team. Maybe there's a third alternative - joining the orchestra. If so, you need to go back to step two and gather information about that choice too.

Now you're ready for the fourth step. You weigh the evidence. That means you look at the pros and cons of the information that you gathered about your alternatives. The play is going to be less expensive, and you're more likely to get a part. Some of your friends are going to try out for the play too. Track costs a lot of money. It's very competitive and hard to get picked

for the team. You recently hurt your foot, so that might affect your running ability.

After you weigh the evidence, you can move on to step five and choose among the alternatives. Because it is less expensive and more likely, you choose to try out for the play. The fact that your friends will be doing it makes it an even stronger choice.

In step six you take action. You sign up for auditions. You practice your scene and prepare to try out.

The seventh step is to review your decision. Your decision making might not end after you make your choice! Did you make a good choice? After the play is over, you can think about your feelings. Are you glad you participated? If so, you might choose to do the play again next year. If not, maybe you'll try for the track team next time around.

These steps can be applied to any decision to make the process easier. Sometimes it can feel overwhelming to have choices, especially when there is no clear-cut winner. There is not always one right answer, but it is always good to make an informed decision.



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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the third step of decision making?
  - a. Identify alternatives
  - b. Take action
  - c. Weigh the evidence
  - d. Gather information
  
2. According to the author, does decision making end once you make a choice?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Rarely
  - d. It depends
  
3. Why should you gather information?
  - a. Because the method tells you to
  - b. Because you want to know what other people are doing
  - c. Because it will help you figure out the pros and cons
  - d. Because you are good at asking questions
  
4. What is an informed decision?
  - a. One that you flip a coin to decide
  - b. One that you research and think about
  - c. One that you choose on a whim
  - d. One that you let someone else make

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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