

LESSON 13

We Decide .

1. FOCUS

Student Objective

- Understand opportunity cost.

Background

Scarcity requires people to make choices about using goods and services to satisfy wants. Opportunity cost is the next best alternative that must be foregone when a choice is made. Whenever a person makes a decision, an opportunity cost is incurred.

Concepts

Choice, opportunity cost

2. PREPARE

White drawing paper

Pencils

Crayons or colored markers

Physical education game equipment

1. Assemble enough drawing paper for each student to have one sheet of each.
 2. Plan and assemble equipment for three or four group games for physical education or in-classroom "choice time."
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3. TEACH

Introduction

Early on the day of this lesson, ask students to remember the activity they chose to do yesterday when they returned home from school. Ask volunteers to share their *choices*. Ask the students to recall another activity that they had wanted to do but did not get to do because they chose the other activity. Remind them that the activity they gave up was their *opportunity cost*. Ask volunteers to state their opportunity costs. Complete steps one through four at this time and steps five through nine later in the day.

Activities

1. Write on the chalkboard a list of three or four group games or activities.
2. Distribute a sheet of drawing paper to each student, and instruct students to fold their papers in half, greeting card fashion. Help students write at the top of the front page, "I decide what I want to do during physical education."
3. Instruct the students to open their cards to the inside. Ask them to draw, color, and label pictures of the **two** activities they would most like to do.
4. Immediately before the activity time, instruct students to choose the activity in which they will participate by circling the appropriate drawing. Ask students to make individual decisions rather than to consult with their friends.
5. Organize the students into groups by their choices and conduct the activities.
6. **Critical Thinking:** After the activities are completed, have the students write, under the circled activity, "My Choice" and under the foregone activity, "My Opportunity Cost." Ask students to draw, on the back side of their cards, a happy or sad face, reflecting how they feel about their choices. Have them write several words or sentences describing how they feel and why.
7. **Closure, Evaluation.** Ask students to share their pictures, one at a time, with the class, describing their choices and opportunity costs.
8. Display the students' drawings in the classroom or allow them to take the papers home to share with their families.

4. CONNECT

Language Arts. Help students write stories about choices they have made, their opportunity costs, and how they feel about their choices. Combine the stories to produce a classroom book about choice and opportunity cost.

Music, Language Arts. Teach the students the following song. Put the lyrics on an overhead transparency or chart, and use them to discuss rhyming words and to identify sight word vocabulary.

Oh Give Me a Choice
(Tune: *Home on the Range*)

Oh give me a choice,	Opportunity cost!
Oh, a difficult choice,	It's the thing you give up when
And I'll think about what I could use,	you choose.
I'll have to decide,	It's the price that is paid
With my eyes open wide,	When a choice must be made.
What I'll give up and what I will choose.	It's the thing that I surely will lose.

Family Corner. For your family newsletter: In our economics unit, we are learning about making and evaluating choices. Ask your child to show you his or her drawing for our "choice time" activity. Allow your child to make simple decisions about time or resource use and ask how he or she feels about the choices. Whenever possible, involve your child in the family decision-making process.

Children's Literature:

- Seuss, Dr. *Hunches in Bunches*. New York: Random House, 1982. An indecisive boy and his "hunches" contemplate the alternative uses of his time and struggle to make a decision.
- Silverstein, Shel. *A Light in the Attic*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1981. *Magic Carpet* discusses alternative uses of a flying rug.
- Silverstein, Shel. *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1974. *Us* describes the conflict within a person in deciding between alternatives.
- Viorst, Judith. *Alexander Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1978. Alexander explores the consequences of his spending decisions.