



THE DECISION-MAKING CHART

(40-50 minutes over a few days)

OBJECTIVE

Students gather and evaluate information to help them make an informed decision.

MATERIALS

Decision-making Chart handout

GETTING READY

- ✓ Make copies or a transparency of the *Decision-making Chart* handout.
- ✓ Before the activity, you may want to talk to your students about various forms of media and information.
- ✓ Check the Appendix for information on “The Media and Politics.”

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Inform your students that they will be evaluating information and forming opinions by using a “Decision-making Chart.”
- ✓ Tell your class that first they need to define some words for the purpose of the activity.
- ✓ First, ask your students to define “credible” in terms of how it relates to information-gathering. Students may mention things like “recent information” or “from a variety of sources.”
- ✓ Students should next define “reliable” in terms of sources of information. They may mention things like “expert in their field” or “unbiased organization.”
- ✓ Instruct students to gather information, individually or in small groups, on a candidate or an issue. They should gather from at least five separate sources of information.
- ✓ Using the information gathered, students should pass each item of information through the questions on the *Decision-making Chart*.

- ✓ Students should continue this process until they have evaluated all the information and are able to make a decision and/or form an opinion.
- ✓ Remind students that in their final decision-making/forming of an opinion, they should consider what was consistent across the various sources.
- ✓ Ask your students to share and defend their decisions/opinions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What does “credible” mean? What does “reliable” mean?*
- ★ *Give an example of somebody making an uninformed decision.*
- ★ *Do you think people often make decisions based on inadequate information?*
- ★ *Why is it important to understand that not all information is credible?*
- ★ *Which sources of information did you find most credible?*
- ★ *Is the information you receive from major network newscasts, news magazine shows, talk shows, morning shows, cable TV news and public broadcasting news equally credible? If not, how would you rank them in terms of their credibility?*

VOTE QUOTE

“Voting is the least arduous of a citizen’s duties. He has the prior and harder duty of making up his mind.” – Ralph Barton Perry



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