



Future Choices Four Corners Activity

Activity by

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Concepts

Choices

Opportunity cost

Benefits

Costs

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain why people have to make choices when faced with different alternatives.
- Identify a choice and the opportunity cost of that choice when provided with a list of alternatives for life after high school.
- Analyze personal choices to determine the benefits received and the benefits forgone when a choice is made.
- Evaluate the rationality of choices made based on whether the benefits received are greater than or equal to the benefits forgone.

Time Required

30 minutes

Materials

Visual 1: "Corner Signs"

Visual 2: "Henry Ford Quote"

Activity 1: "Life after High School"

Handout 1: "Life after High School Record Sheet"

Handout 2: "The Benefits and Costs of Making Choices"

Procedures

Before class begins:

Print Visual 1: "Corner Signs" to hang in the classroom. Hang the signs near each of the corners of your room or in the four best spaces for students to gather in your room.

1. During class, display Visual 2: “Henry Ford Quote” where the class can see it. Ask the students to read the quote. Ask one or two students to share how they feel about the quote. Responses will vary, but may include “It sounds like a good way to do business,” “It seems like it would be hard to have high quality and wages while keeping prices low,” and so forth.
2. Tell students businesspeople following Ford’s advice are making choices. Most choices, if rational, involve benefits we expect to gain as well as benefits we forgo by not choosing a different option. Ask the students what Ford could have chosen to do instead of following his own advice in the quote. Answers will likely include “He could have produced lower-quality cars, paid lower wages, and/or had higher prices.”
3. Ask students to list the benefits they think Ford got from following his own advice. Likely responses may include happy customers, happy and loyal employees, repeat customers, lower worker training costs, a mass market since more customers are able to afford his product, a positive brand identity, and personal satisfaction.
4. Ask students what benefits Ford gave up by choosing high quality, high wages, and low prices. Some responses may include profits in the short term, customers interested in more exclusive brands, raw material suppliers who do not meet company standards, relaxed work environment, and other responses. Tell students that in the field of economics, the profits, customers, suppliers, and relaxation Ford gave up are called his **opportunity cost**.
5. Tell students that life is full of choices and each one involves an opportunity cost. For the big choices in life, thinking rationally about the benefits and the opportunity cost of our choices can help us lead better lives. Tell students they are going to participate in an activity during which they will make choices about how they will live as adults.
6. Distribute Handout 1: “Life after High School Record Sheet.” Explain that students will be selecting one option out of four possible ones in each of the five categories shown on the handout. Explain that they will indicate their choice by walking to the corner of the room where the sign corresponds to their selection and circling the corner on their paper.
7. Tell the students that they will also be recording the choices of one classmate. Tell them mentally to select the person in the room who they think is most different from themselves. Students should not reveal who they chose, but just mark the person’s choices on their paper.
8. Ask the students to stand and take their pen and handout with them. Using Activity 1: “Life after High School,” read the first choice, Future Education. Read each of the four options and ask students to move to the corner corresponding with their personal choice. Ask them to circle the selected corner, and that of the classmate they are watching, on their paper under choice one.

9. Continue this process until all five choices have been completed and ask the students to go back to their seats. Survey the students, asking how many found that the classmate they watched was indeed very different from themselves or how many found the classmate chose almost all the same options. Ask students to share factors that may influence how people in their class made their choices. Answers will vary, but may include “We are an advanced class, so almost everyone is going to a four-year college,” “Where someone grows up may influence where they want to live as an adult,” and so on.
10. Post Activity 1: “Life after High School” or distribute a copy to each student. Also distribute Handout 2: “The Benefits and Costs of Making Choices.” Tell students to enter the choice they made for their education in column one on Handout 2 and then choose their next best alternative for their education and enter that in column two. Ask them to complete Handout 2 using the same process they used for the Henry Ford exercise about benefits gained from their choice and benefits forgone by not selecting their next best alternative. (You may want to do an example with the whole class using choices suggested by a student from your class.)



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Visual 1: Corner Signs

C1

C2

C3

C4

Visual 2: Henry Ford Quotation

"There is one rule for the industrialist and that is: make the best quality goods possible at the lowest cost possible, paying the highest wages possible."

Henry Ford
Entrepreneur
Founder of Ford Motor Company

Activity 1: Life after High School

Choice One: Future Education

- C1: Trade school, active duty military service, or on-the-job training for a skilled trade
- C2: Find a company that will pay for me to go to college; work and go to college
- C3: Definitely attend a four-year college right away
- C4: Forget school, I'm starting my own business

Choice Two: Vehicles

- C1: SUV or pick-up truck
- C2: Motorcycle
- C3: Car
- C4: Alternative transportation such as public transit, bicycle, scooter, hybrid vehicle, horse, or boat

Choice Three: Living Environment

- C1: Urban/big city
- C2: Suburbs/small city
- C3: Small town
- C4: Rural/country

Choice Four: Savings Plan

- C1: Put savings under the mattress
- C2: Use bank savings account, CDs, or government bonds
- C3: Stocks, commodities, and/or mutual funds
- C4: Real estate, venture capital, collectibles, and so forth

Choice Five: Hobbies

- C1: Latest electronics and gaming
- C2: Camping, hunting, boating/fishing, and outdoor gear
- C3: Extreme sports such as racing, mountaineering, skateboarding, bungee jumping, or skydiving
- C4: Home-based hobbies such as painting, cooking, gardening, sewing, or model airplanes



Handout 1: Life after High School Record Sheet

Choice One: Future Education

Your choice (circle one): C1 C2 C3 C4

Person you watched (circle one): C1 C2 C3 C4

Choice Two: Vehicles

Your choice (circle one): C1 C2 C3 C4

Person you watched (circle one): C1 C2 C3 C4

Choice Three: Living Environment

Your choice (circle one): C1 C2 C3 C4

Person you watched (circle one): C1 C2 C3 C4

Choice Four: Savings Plan

Your choice (circle one): C1 C2 C3 C4

Person you watched (circle one): C1 C2 C3 C4

Choice Five: Hobbies

Your choice (circle one): C1 C2 C3 C4

Person you watched (circle one): C1 C2 C3 C4



Handout 2: The Benefits and Costs of Making Choices

Choice One: Education

Your education:	Your next best alternative for education:
What did you gain by choosing your education over your next best alternative? 1. 2.	What did you give up by choosing your education over your next best alternative? 1. 2.

Choice Two: Vehicles

Your vehicle:	Your next best alternative for vehicle:
What did you gain by choosing your vehicle over your next best alternative? 1. 2.	What did you give up by choosing your vehicle over your next best alternative? 1. 2.

Choice Three: Living Environment

Your living environment:	Your next best alternative for living environment:
What did you gain by choosing your living environment over your next best alternative? 1. 2.	What did you give up by choosing your living environment over your next best alternative? 1. 2.

Handout 2: The Benefits and Costs of Making Choices (continued)

Choice Four: Savings Plan

Your savings plan:	Your next best alternative for savings plan:
<p>What did you gain by choosing your savings plan over your next best alternative?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 	<p>What did you give up by choosing your savings plan over your next best alternative?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2.

Choice Five: Hobbies

Your hobby:	Your next best alternative for hobby:
<p>What did you gain by choosing your hobby over your next best alternative?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 	<p>What did you give up by choosing your hobby over your next best alternative?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2.