



Thinking Through Risks and Rewards

Thinking Probabilistically



ALLIANCE FOR
**DECISION
EDUCATION**

Grade Level

1st-5th

Suggested Timing

40-60 minutes

Focus Standard

TP.5 - Use probabilistic thinking to weigh decision options and their possible outcomes

Supporting Standards

VAR.6 - Practice and demonstrate self-regulation and self-direction

SD.5 - Make predictions about the consequences and outcomes of each decision option

Impact

This lesson introduces students to the concept of evaluating the potential risks and rewards associated with their decisions. Learning to identify and evaluate potential risks and rewards helps students to fully process the impact of their decisions.

Objectives

- Students will identify potential risks and rewards associated with their decisions.

Optional Teaching Strategies

- Follow up with a lesson on the likelihood and magnitude of the potential risks and rewards associated with a decision.

Differentiation

- For students ready for a challenge, introduce thinking about magnitude (how big of a problem would that be?) and likelihood (how often does that usually happen?).

What To Look and Listen For

- Are students able to identify multiple options?
- Are students able to name potential risks and rewards for each option?
- Do students consider the potential risks and rewards in their decision-making?

Engage (10 minutes)

Facilitate a discussion to create a shared understanding of the terms risks and rewards, and how they can be used to support decision-making. Use the example below to develop their understanding of the terms, and to model the process of thinking through the risks and rewards associated with a decision.

Suggested Prompts & Questions:

- You saw a kid on TV with a very cool hairstyle. You'd like to try it out, but it's very different from the style you have now, so you feel a little nervous about it.
- What might you like about the new hairstyle? What rewards might there be with a cool, new hairstyle?
- What might you not like about the new hairstyle? What risks might there be if you're not happy with the hairstyle?

Make a t-chart to record student responses and to help them decide if they'd get the new hairstyle.

Apply (20–25 minutes)

Group your students to rotate through stations. At each station, they will explore a different scenario, discussing the potential risks and rewards associated with each decision.

Suggested Scenarios:

You have a lot of homework, but really want to spend the afternoon playing with your friends.

- What choices do you have?
- What are the possible risks and rewards?
- What would you do?

You want to save money for a new skateboard that costs \$50, but a fun toy is on sale now for \$5. The toy is cool, and many of your friends have one, but it would mean waiting longer and doing more work to earn money for a skateboard.

- What choices do you have?
- What are the possible risks and rewards?
- What would you do?

You got cool new headphones for your birthday and want to show them off to your friends at school. But at school, they could get lost or stolen.

- What choices do you have?
- What are the possible risks and rewards?
- What would you do?

Reflect (10–15 minutes)

Bring the class back together to share and discuss their poll responses, and the impact of thinking through the risks and rewards associated with the possible outcomes of a decision.

Suggested Questions:

- Which decisions were easy/hard for you to make? Why?
- Did you change your mind after considering the risks and rewards?
- How can thinking through risks and rewards help you make strong decisions?
- Would this have been helpful for any situations or decisions you've faced? How might this be helpful in the future?