

**Title: Choosing a College: Using a Weight and Rate to Evaluate Your Options**

Domain: Structuring Decisions, Valuing and Applying Rationality

Grade Band: 10-12

**Impact: This lesson introduces the weight and rate tool, which provides a structured process for considering options and how they align to one's values. Students will apply this weight and rate tool to help choose a college.**

**Decision Education Standard(s):**

Focus Standards:

- SD.2 Clarify the values and objectives of the decision-maker in a given decision.
- SD.5 Make predictions about the outcomes of each decision option.

Supported Standard(s):

- SD. 3 Generate and develop significantly different and criteria-aligned decision options.
- SD.4 Gather and analyze information from multiple sources to evaluate decision options.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Use a weight and rate tool to guide decision-making.

**Suggested Timing:** 50-60 minutes

**Optional Teaching Strategies:**

- Turn and talk, group discussion

**Materials:**

- Weight and Rate Tools:
  - [Step-by-Step Template](#): Students complete one step at a time to generate a weight and rate table
  - [One Page Template](#): Students complete all steps in one table
  - Students can also draw their own weight and rates, use a printed version of the One Page Template, or make their own spreadsheet.

**Engage (5-8 minutes)**

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**Apply (30-40 minutes)**

- Use one of the tools shared above to model completing a Weight and Rate for What Type of Car Should I Buy?
- Walk through the following steps, using either this provided example or one of your own choosing:
  - **What is the decision I am facing?** *Right now, I'm just focusing on what type of car would best fit my family's needs. I'm not*

looking at specific models yet.

- **What options do I have?** *I really would love a sports car, but a sedan or minivan is probably a better fit with my needs.*
  - **What criteria will I use to make the decision?** *Safety, fitting my family comfortably, and reliability are all extremely important. Wow factor matters to me, but not nearly as much as the other criteria. I'm going to weigh each one so that they total to 100.*
  - **How does each option rate against the criteria?** *For each option, I'm going to assign a score of 1-10 (1 is the worst and 10 is the best).*
  - **Calculate the scores.** *Multiply your ratings for each option against how much that criteria is weighed, and then add up the numbers for an overall score. Repeat this for each option.*
  - **Analyze the results.** Stress to students: You don't always necessarily have to select the option with the highest weight and rate score. However, it is a great way to analyze the big picture. Hopefully it illustrates a new way to think about your decision process.
  - More detailed directions are available [here](#).
- Next, students repeat the Weight and Rate process by completing a separate table for 2-3 colleges they are considering, using the list of criteria they generated in **Choosing a College: Clarifying Your Values (Part 2)**.
  - They can use either of the Weight and Rate templates provided above, or one of the other alternatives.
  - Stress to students that active open-mindedness is essential. Completing this activity represents their best thinking of college selection at this time, but they should absolutely keep an open mind and be willing to adjust their thinking as they assemble new information. They might, for example, adjust their ratings for a specific after they visit one of the colleges. They might also add new colleges to their list, remove other colleges, add new criteria, remove different criteria, adjust the weights of their criteria, etc.
  - Avoid having students feel they are making a large determination based on a single ten-minute activity. The only goal of this lesson is to practice using a new tool!

### Reflect (5-7 minutes)

- Bring the class together to discuss key takeaways from the weight and rates.
  - What was it like to complete the weight and rates?
  - Did anything about the weight and rate experience surprise them?
  - How might this tool be useful for making decisions?
  - What are some examples of decisions you will make that could benefit from a weight and rate? What are some examples of decisions you will make that wouldn't benefit from a weight and rate?
  - How will you use the weight and rate moving forward?
- End with a quick self-assessment where students rate their confidence in implementing weight and rates, and reflect on any additional support they might need to succeed.

**Differentiation:**

**What To Look and Listen For:**

- Use the provided template or a sheet of paper.
- Similarly, have students calculate their own weight and rate totals, or allow the template / a calculator to make the calculations.
- You can generate alternative decisions to use as the model, guided practice, or independent practice activities.

- Students clearly identify the problem or opportunity.
- Students generate significantly different and criteria-aligned decision options.
- Students use the criterion-identification step to clarify their values and objectives as decision-makers.
- Students analyze the results of the weight and rate for insights they may have missed without the tool.
- Students are able to explain and provide rationale behind their decision.