

Digging Into Decision Making

Miss Bridie Chose A Shovel

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Lesson Description

By discussing the children's book *Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel*, by Leslie Connor, the students will learn how to analyze the choice made by Miss Bridie who chose to take one item with her on her journey to America and how to make informed decisions themselves.

Grades K-3

Concepts

- **Alternatives** — One of many choices or courses of action that might be taken in a given situation.
- **Benefits** — Monetary or non-monetary gains received because of an action taken or a decision made.
- **Choice** — A decision made between two or more possibilities or alternatives.
- **Costs** — An amount that must be paid or spent to buy or obtain something. The effort, loss or sacrifice necessary to achieve or obtain something.
- **Decision Making** — Reaching a conclusion after considering alternatives and their results.
- **Opportunity Cost** — The value of the next-best alternative when a decision is made; it's what is given up.
- **Scarcity** — The condition that exists because there are not enough resources to satisfy everyone's wants.

Standards

Arkansas Economics Standards

- E.4.K.1: Recognize that all people have unlimited wants and limited resources (e.g., scarcity) D2.Eco.1.K-2
- E.4.K.2: Explain reasons behind a personal decision D2.Eco.2.K-2
- E.4.1.1: Explain ways scarcity necessitates decision-making D2.Eco.1.K-2
- E.4.1.2: Identify benefits and costs of making a decision D2.Eco.2.K-2
- E.4.2.1: Discuss the importance of scarcity in relation to choices and opportunity cost D2.Eco.1.K-2

- E.4.2.2: Explain a decision in terms of costs and benefits D2.Eco.2.K-2
- E.4.3.2: Identify problems, alternatives, and trade-offs involved in making a decision D2.Eco.2.3-5

Arkansas English Language Arts Standards

Kindergarten

- RL.K.1. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- RL.K.2. With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.
- RL.K.3. With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.
- SL.K.2. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details to demonstrate understanding of a topic read aloud, presented orally or through other media.
- L.K.6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.

Grade 1

- RL.1.1. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- RL.1.2. Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
- RL.1.3. Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
- SL.1.2. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- L.1.6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships (e.g., because).

Grade 2

- RL.2.1. Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- SL.2.2. Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud, information presented orally or through other media.
- L.2.6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe. (Example: When other kids are happy, that makes me happy.)

Grade 3

- RL.3.3. Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- SL.3.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- L.3.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and do-

main-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships.
(Example: After dinner that night, we went looking for them.)

Objectives

Students will be able to

- explain the decision making process and apply it to real world situations
- recall the sequence of events of Miss Bridie's choice by completing a story path
- create a story sharing their choice of a good to take on a trip.

Time required

25-30 minutes class time, plus 5 minutes of preparation time

Materials required

- *Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel*, by Leslie Connor, 1 classroom copy
- World map
- Visual 1 (benefits and costs song)
- Activity 1 (decision-making grid), multiple copies
- Activity 1a (sample answer key), one copy
- Activity 2 (beginning, middle, end sheet), multiple copies for students in grades K-1 OR
- Activity 3 (story path sheets), multiple copies for students in grades 2-3
- Activity 3a (story path answer sheet), one copy
- Pencils (one per group of two to three students)
- Writing paper (one per student)

Teacher Preparation

- Prepare materials **prior to class**.
 - a. Make 1 copy/per group of 2-3 students of Activity 1.
 - b. For grades K-1, make 1 copy/per group of 2-3 students of Activity 2 OR
 - c. For grades 2-3, make 1 copy/per group of 2-3 students of Activity 3.

Procedure

1. Ask students if they have ever moved. If so, why did they move and what did they take with them as they moved? (Allow time for discussion.)
2. Challenge them to imagine they were traveling to another country as an immigrant (someone who left their country to come to live in another country). Instruct them to turn to a partner and discuss what they would want to take, knowing that it would be a very long time and possibly never before they would return home. Explain that immigrants had very limited space on their journey to their

new homeland, so they couldn't take everything they owned.

3. Introduce the concept of scarcity as a problem that exists when there is not enough of a thing to satisfy our wants. When there is a scarcity problem (e.g., not enough space), choices must be made. Imagine having to choose one thing to take with you as you moved. Instruct students to turn to their partner and share one thing from their list they would want to take.
4. Look at a world map. Tell them that today they will travel back in time to the 1850s and hear a story about a young lady whose name is Miss Bridie. She left her home in Ireland to travel to New York City. Plot both places on the map. Challenge students to consider how she might have traveled. (If students suggest that she flew on a plane, tell them that was not an option for travel during the time Miss Bridie lived. They will conclude a boat or ship would be the method.) Ask students to think about their choice again. Could they take their choice on a long boat ride to America?
5. Summarize the first page of story by saying, "She could have picked a chiming clock or a porcelain figurine, or a shovel back in 1856."
6. Tell them that in economics we learn that we make decisions every day. Some of them are small, like what snack we will choose to eat, what TV show to watch, etc. Others are very big. Miss Bridie had a big choice. She could only take one thing with her as she left her family, friends and home to travel to America. Ask them what her options were. (Chiming clock, porcelain figurine or a shovel.) We call those options alternatives. All three of the alternatives are called goods. They are things that we can touch, hold, feel or use. It is important to stop and think when you make a choice. We say you must look at the costs and benefits. Benefits are the good things about an alternative. We also look at the costs. We sometimes think of those as the unfavorable things - things about an alternative.
7. Introduce the song "Benefits and Costs" to the tune of "The Muffin Man" — Visual 1.
8. We are going to look at a decision-making grid, Activity 1, that will help us learn to make wise choices. Display the grid. Point out alternatives and the happy face and sad face at the top. Those represent the benefits and costs of each alternatives. Tell students that we'll begin together by looking at the first good mentioned: the chiming clock. Ask students what a benefit would be of having a chiming clock. (Answer may vary but may include: always know the time, it's pretty to look at, like the sound). List those under the happy face. Ask students what might be a cost of having a chiming clock. (Answer may vary but may include: it might break on the boat ride and shatter, the battery/wind up spring might quit working). List those under the sad face. (A sample answer key, Activity 1a, is provided.)
9. Instruct the students to work in small groups of 2-3 students. Hand out a copy of Activity 1 to each group. Instruct the students to work in small groups as they continue the decision-making process with the remaining goods of figurine and the shovel. Allow time for them to share when they are completed and identify what they would choose if they were Miss Bridie.
10. Ask students to predict what they think Miss Bridie chose. After students have shared, read the first and second pages. "She could have picked a chiming clock or a porcelain figurine, but Miss Bridie chose a shovel back in 1856. Miss Bridie chose the shovel from the peg in the barn, and she took it to the dock, where she stepped aboard the ship."
11. As you continue to read the entire book, instruct the students to listen for ways Miss Bridie used the shovel throughout her lifetime. Note that the shovel became a capital resource (a tool) as Miss Bridie used it to work. An example is when she made her flower bed so that she could sell flowers to customers.

12. When you have finished, ask if students feel Miss Bridie made a good choice. Allow time for discussion.

Closure

Ask students the following questions to review and debrief the lesson:

- As the story begins, what problem did Miss Bridie have? (Answers may include: She was moving. She had limited space for her journey. She couldn't take all the things she wanted with her as she moved. She had a scarcity problem.)
- What does it mean if there is a scarcity? (*There is not enough of a thing to satisfy our wants.*) What kind of scarcity problem did Miss Bridie have? (*Space*)
- What were Miss Bridie's alternatives? (*Chiming clock, porcelain figurine, or shovel*)
- What was a benefit of choosing the clock? (Answers may include: *She would always know the time. She would have something pretty to look at. It would remind her of home. It would make nice sounds.*)
- What was a cost of choosing the clock? (Answers may include: *It might break on the trip over. It might quit working.*)
- What did Miss Bridie choose? (*Shovel*)
- Was it a good choice for Miss Bridie? (Allow time for discussion.)

Assessment

Divide students into groups of two or three.

Provide **students in grades K-1** with Activity 2 (Beginning, Middle, End activity sheet) and ask them to record key events of how Miss Bridie enjoyed the benefits of her choice of the shovel in the beginning, middle and end of the story. (Beginning box might include a drawing of Miss Bridie carrying her clothes on it, digging her garden. Middle might include digging holes for animal pens or to plant apple seeds. End might include planting a tree in memory of her husband or shoveling snow for her grandchildren to skate.)

To students in grades 2-3, distribute to them Activity 3 and a pencil. Have them recall from the story sequentially the many ways Miss Bridie enjoyed the benefits of her choice of the shovel throughout her lifetime. Record each use in a box on the path. The last box is available for students to predict an additional way she might use it. Compare their answers to Activity 2a., the story path answer sheet.

Extension

Writing: Challenge students to imagine they were moving and could choose only take one thing from their home. What would they choose? (There are a number of writing opportunities for this activity. Tailor to your group and grade level writing expectations.)

Benefits and Costs

(Tune: *The Muffin Man*, <http://www.kidsongs.com/lyrics/the-muffin-man.html>)

By Martha Hopkins and Donna Wright
















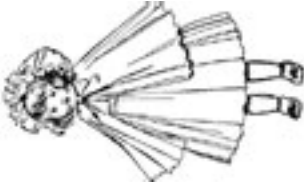

Do you know the benefits?
The benefits,
The benefits,
Do you know the benefits?
When making a decision.

Yes, I know the benefits.
The benefits,
The benefits,
Yes, I know the benefits
When making a decision.




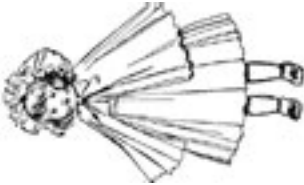
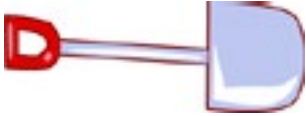
Do you know the cost of it?
The cost of it,
The cost of it,
Do you know the cost of it?
When making a decision.

Yes, I know the cost of it.
The cost of it,
The cost of it,
Yes, I know the cost of it.
When making a decision.



<p>Costs</p> 	 	 	 
<p>Benefits</p> 	 	 	 
<p>Problem: What would Miss Bridie choose as she moved to America?</p>			

$A - + \ominus r \cap \overline{D} + \cdot - > \ominus s$

Problem: What would Miss Bridie choose as she moved to America?	Benefits 	Costs 
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● She would always know the time.● It is very pretty to look at on the shelf.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It might break on a boat trip.● The wind-up spring might quit working.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is beautiful.● It is a reminder of when she was a little girl.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It might break.● She might grow tired of it.● She might outgrow it or find it impractical to have.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It will help her do work.● She can use it for a long time.● It is sturdy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is not pretty.● It is big and heavy.

Afternoon

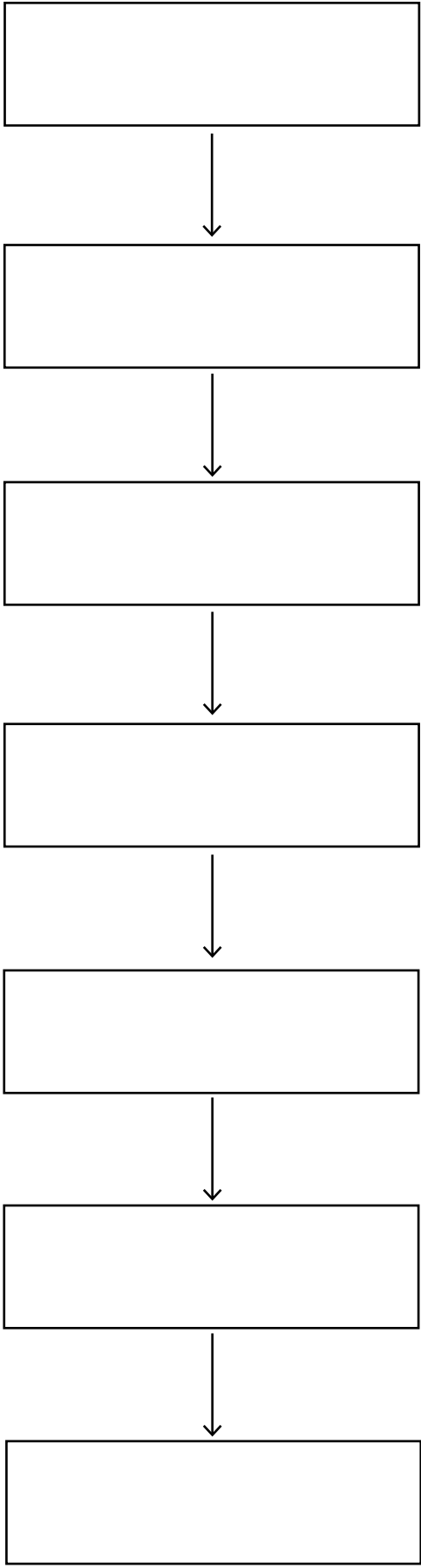
Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel

How did she use the shovel in the story? Draw a picture or write a sentence to show how she used it in the beginning, middle and end of the story.

Beginning

Middle

End



**Miss
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Shovel**

