



Let's Decide

The Last Newspaper Boy in America

By Marsha Masters, Economics Arkansas and
Jennifer Taunton, Master Economics Teacher, Springdale School District

Lesson Description

In the book *The Last Newspaper Boy in America*, 12-year-old Wil David fights a publisher's decision to stop home delivery of the daily paper, *The Cooper County Caller*, to his small, out-of-the-way hometown. Wil ends up the local hero who preserves his paper route and unmasks a fraudster at the annual county fair at the same time. In this lesson, students will explore decision-making using a cost-benefit analysis.

Grades 3-4

Concepts

- **Choice:** A decision made between two or more possibilities or alternatives.
- **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.
- **Cost/Benefit Analysis:** The analysis of weighing costs against benefits.

Standards

Arkansas Economics Standards

- E.4.3.2: Identify problems, alternatives, and trade-offs involved in making a decision D2.Eco.2.3-5
- E.4.4.2: Apply economic decision-making models when making decisions (e.g., PACED Decision Making Model) D2.Eco.2.3-5

Arkansas English Language Arts Standards

Grade 3

- W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons

Grade 4

- W.4.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

Objectives

Students will be able to

- discuss the choices made by the publishers of *The Caller* and by Wil
- practice decision-making using the teacher-provided scenarios

Time required

1 class period, plus 30 minutes of preparation time; students will need to have read through p. 32 of the book.

Materials required

- *The Last Newspaper Boy in America*, by Sue Corbett, 1 copy per student for home reading OR 1 copy for a class read-aloud
- Visual 1
- Activity 1
- Activity 2
- Overhead or dry erase markers
- Journal

Teacher Preparation

- **Prior to class**, instruct students to read through page 32 of the book.
- Prepare materials:
 - a. Prepare Visual 1 for full classroom display.
 - b. Copy Activity 1 on cardstock, laminate and cut out. You need one card for each group.
 - c. Make one copy per student of Activity 2.

Procedure

1. In class, review the phone call Sonny received about the cancellation of the Steele delivery route of *The Caller* and Spike's explanation of the decision.
2. Display Visual 1.
3. Discuss the following questions with students:
 - a. What might be the benefits of continuing home delivery of *The Caller* to Steele? Record their answers on the visual.
 - b. What would be some of the costs of continuing home delivery of *The Caller* to Steele? Record their answers on the visual.
 - c. What might be the benefits of stopping home delivery of *The Caller* to Steele? Record their answers on the visual.
 - d. What would be some of the costs of stopping home delivery of *The Caller* to Steele? Record their answers on the visual.
4. Ask the students to think about the costs and benefits of each alternative and then make a decision.
5. Ask for volunteers to share their decision and explain why they chose that alternative.

6. Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students and distribute a card from Activities 1 and 2 to each group.
7. Allow the groups enough time to work through the costs and benefits of their scenario.
8. Instruct each group to share. As different groups share the same scenario, discuss why their decisions might be the same or different.

Closure

















Review the economic vocabulary. Instruct the students to complete a journal entry over the course of the next week that details a decision they made using cost/benefit analysis.

Assessment

Students were able to document in their journals a decision they made using cost/benefit analysis.

Cost/Benefit Analysis of the Steele Newspaper Route

What should *The Caller* do? Help the newspaper executives decide whether or not they should keep the Steele route by filling in the chart with some of the advantages and disadvantages of the two alternatives (choices).

	Alternative 1 Continue delivery of <i>The Caller</i> to Steele	Alternative 2 Stop delivery of <i>The Caller</i> to Steele
Benefits Advantages or Good Points	   	   
Costs Disadvantages or Bad Points	   	   

What would you decide? _____

Why did you make this decision? _____

I have \$10.00 I want to save it for a new video game. I have been invited to a birthday party and must buy a gift.

I must make a **CHOICE**.

I have been invited to go to a movie with a friend. I promised to help Mom mow the lawn.

I must make a **CHOICE**.

My bedroom is small. I want a desk and a bigger bed. There is not enough space.

I must make a **CHOICE**.

I just received \$25 as a present. I must decide whether to save it or spend it at the mall.

















I must make a **CHOICE**.

I have one hour of free time. My friends want me to come out and play with them, but there's a show I really want to watch on TV.

I must make a **CHOICE**.

Cost/Benefit Analysis of an Individual Choice

What should *you* do? Use the chart below to help you decide.

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
<div>Benefits</div> <div>Advantages or Good Points</div>	<div>   </div>	<div>   </div>
<div>Costs</div> <div>Disadvantages or Bad Points</div>	<div>   </div>	<div>   </div>

What would you decide? _____

Why did you make this decision? _____

