



F1.

CHANGES, CHOICES AND LESSONS

WORD WALL

Change: To give a different position, course or direction

Choice: Selection or preference

Decision: Result of considering options

Consequence: A result of a decision that was made

Plagiarism: The unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and/or thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work



TARGET AUDIENCE

Students grades 4 through 8



50-80 MINUTES

Lesson may be extended over several days



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Preview Activity Handout: *I Will Go Through Changes*
- Lesson Handouts: *Changes, Choices and Lessons Scenarios* and *My Changes and Choices*
- Reflection Activity Handout: *Changes, Choices and Lessons*

LEARNING GOALS

- ➔ Students will explore the types of personal, academic and social changes they are likely to experience over the next few years.
- ➔ Students will explore the factors that they should take into consideration when making a choice or decision.
- ➔ Students will consider scenarios and think through the consequences of good and bad decisions.

alcohol or become sexually active; and peer negativity toward academic accomplishment. Students need strategies to overcome these and many other challenges, such as a lack of positive role models. Students are especially at risk during the middle school to high school transition period when adolescents need to feel accepted and long for a sense of belonging. It is important for students to know that all children and adolescents experience changes and challenges as they get older. The key to making successful transitions is how we respond to changes with the choices and decisions we make. When we make bad choices or decisions, which everyone does from time to time, the important thing is to seek positive advice and support from peers and trusted adults and to learn from our mistakes. The next lessons aim to prepare students for the changes and challenges ahead by engaging them in discussions regarding their future and the importance of their decision making.

INTRODUCTION

"I believe I can make good choices...when I face challenges...when I go through changes...when I achieve success!"

As students strengthen their belief in themselves, they should know that they will undergo personal, academic and social changes. Some challenges students may experience are bullying or cyber bullying; peer pressure to take drugs,

PREVIEW ACTIVITY

This activity should be given 1-2 days prior to the in-class lesson. Explain to students that they will start a new lesson that requires them to gather information from their home or community and bring it to the classroom. *(See handout)*

- ➔ Distribute *I Will Go Through Changes* and explain instructions to students.
- ➔ As you begin the in-class lesson, have students share (as individuals or within small groups) what they discussed and learned in the Preview Activity.
- ➔ You may wish to add value by collecting ideas generated and distributing them to students as a resource

ACTIVITIES

Part 1: I Will Go Through Changes

⌚ 10 minutes

- ➔ Write the following statement on the board: “I believe I can make good choices ... when I face challenges ... when I go through changes ... when I achieve success!” Ask students to read the statement and share what it means to them, as well as why it is important for students to believe this.
- ➔ Discuss and review the Preview Activity.

Part 2: Changes, Choices and Lessons Scenarios

⌚ 40 minutes

- ➔ Print out the *Changes, Choices and Lessons Scenarios* handout for each student to follow along and refer back to as you present each of the following scenarios — not all students are auditory learners.
 - Academic Challenge/Dishonesty: Over a month ago, students were given the task of writing a research paper. Raquel had written one before and was confident that she would earn an “A.” Although Raquel was originally motivated to work on her research paper, she decided to wait to write the paper until the weekend before it was due. On Friday and Saturday, she was making progress toward completing the paper, but on Sunday she realized she had not done enough research at the library and began to worry about not finishing. Her older brother recommended that she do some research on the Internet. Raquel decided to take her brother’s advice and she found a lot of great information online. She decided to copy a few small sections from a website and paste them directly into her paper. Because her teacher had not reviewed how to reference websites, Raquel decided not to put the website on the bibliography page of her paper. On Monday, Raquel happily submitted her paper. When grading the papers, Raquel’s teacher noticed that Raquel’s paper had some very advanced



vocabulary and noticed that there were sections where she did not mention her sources. After doing some investigation, Raquel's teacher found that she had copied directly from the Internet and decided to fail Raquel due to academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

- **Social Challenge/Bullying:** For the past two months, Joel has been harassed by a classmate. At first, the bully called Joel names as he walked past him and spread lies about him online. As a result, Joel began to feel very anxious at school and began to miss more days than usual. Eventually the bully told Joel that he would stop if he gave him a dollar a day and did his book report. Joel agreed and the bullying stopped for a while. Lately, the bully has started to push Joel as he walks past him in the halls. Joel is now feeling really unsafe at school and tells his parents he wants to change schools.

➔ Facilitate discussion based on the following questions:

- Identify the choice each person made. What action(s) did Raquel and Joel take in these situations?
- Identify what Raquel was hoping to get out of cheating and what Joel was hoping to get out of bribing the bully.
- Identify what Raquel did not think about when deciding to cheat and what Joel did not think about when deciding to bribe the bully. (Write responses on the board.)
- Consequences of getting caught cheating or agreeing to a bribe (e.g., getting suspended, going to detention, getting a failing grade, having a bad relationship with the teacher, getting in trouble at home).
- Alternative ways to approach the situation (e.g., talking to the teacher, starting the research paper earlier, talking to someone at home about the situation).
- As a class, decide what things should be considered when making a decision. Have students come up with a list of questions or things to consider. Below are some examples.
 - Result and Consequences
 - How it will affect us at home, in school and with peers?
 - How will it affect others?
 - Alternatives
 - Is this the only way?
 - What other things can I do?

- Advice
 - How will asking an adult or peer for advice help or affect me?
- Research/Timing
 - How much time do I need to do research and think to make a good decision?

➔ Summarize their responses. End the discussion with the following messages:

- As you travel along the road to your future you will experience personal, academic and social changes.
- We respond to changes with the choices and decisions we make.
- There are questions we can ask ourselves that will help us make better choices.
- When we make bad choices or decisions, which everyone does from time to time, the important thing is to seek advice and support from peers and trusted adults and to learn from our mistakes.

➔ Share with students that they will now explore changes they are likely to experience at home, in school and with peers along the road to success



Part 3: My Changes and Choices

 30 minutes

- ➔ Distribute the *My Changes and Choices* handout, review instructions and allow time for students to complete it.
- ➔ Allow students to share their responses with the group or split them into small groups so that every student has a chance to share.
- ➔ Facilitate discussion based on the following question: “Going back to the scenarios shared earlier about Raquel and Joel, what do you think they learned from their experiences?”
- ➔ Allow students to share their responses with the group.

REFLECTION ACTIVITY

- ➔ Thank students for their participation and talk about how important it is for them to share their discoveries with significant people in their lives.
- ➔ Explain to students that this activity will allow them to share the information they explored at school with their copilot. In addition, the assignment will allow them to reflect on the topic a bit further.
- ➔ Distribute *Changes, Choices and Lessons* and explain instructions to students (*See handout*)

RESOURCES

- ➔ *Breaking Through*
 - Jiménez, Francisco. *Breaking Through*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.
- ➔ *Who Moved My Cheese? For Kids*
 - Johnson, Spencer and Christian Johnson. *Who Moved My Cheese? For Kids*. New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 2003.

CURRICULUM AND SKILLS STANDARDS

- ➔ Standards for the English/Language Arts: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12
- ➔ National Standards for Social Studies Teachers:
 - Culture
 - Time, Continuity and Change
 - People, Places and Environments
 - Individual Development and Identity
 - Individuals, Groups and Institutions

See *Appendix A* for complete curriculum standards descriptions.



HANDOUT: I WILL GO THROUGH CHANGES



NAME

Take a moment to talk to one of your copilots or someone else you trust about the changes you are likely to experience in the near future. Whoever you choose will be your copilot for this activity. Be sure to thank your copilot for supporting you.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK YOUR COPILOT:

1. What should I do if my relationships with my friends change over the next two years?

2. How might my schoolwork change over the next two years?

3. Besides changes with friends and at school, what other changes might I experience over the next two years?

HANDOUT: CHANGES, CHOICES AND LESSONS SCENARIOS

Scenario 1: Academic Challenge/Dishonesty

Over a month ago, students were given the task of writing a research paper. Raquel had written one before and was confident that she would earn an “A.” Although Raquel was originally motivated to work on her research paper, she decided to wait to write the paper until the weekend before it was due.

On Friday and Saturday, she was making progress toward completing the paper, but on Sunday she realized she had not done enough research at the library and began to worry about not finishing. Her older brother recommended that she do some research on the Internet. Raquel decided to take her brother’s advice and she found a lot of great information online. She decided to copy a few small sections from a website and paste them directly into her paper. Because her teacher had not reviewed how to reference websites, Raquel decided not to put the website on the bibliography page of her paper.

On Monday, Raquel happily submitted her paper. When grading the papers, Raquel’s teacher noticed that Raquel’s paper had some very advanced vocabulary and also noticed that there were sections where she did not mention her sources. After doing some investigation, Raquel’s teacher found that she had copied directly from the Internet and decided to fail Raquel due to academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

Scenario 2: Social Challenge/Bullying

For the past two months, Joel has been harassed by a classmate. At first, the bully called Joel names as he walked past him and spread lies about him online. As a result, Joel began to feel very anxious at school and began to miss more days than usual. Eventually the bully told Joel that he would stop if Joel gave him a dollar a day and did his book report.

Joel agreed and the bullying stopped for a while. Lately, the bully has started to push Joel as he walks past him in the halls. Joel is now feeling really unsafe at school and tells his parents he wants to change schools.



HANDOUT: MY CHANGES AND CHOICES



NAME

Along the road to success, you will experience changes at home, school and with peers. While change is normal, there may be positive or negative consequences depending on your reaction to change.

Think of changes you may face at home, school and with peers. In addition, think of positive ways you may respond to these changes.

At Home Change/Positive Response	At School Change/Positive Response	With Peers Change/Positive Response

HANDOUT: MY CHANGES AND CHOICES



NAME

Along the road to success, you will experience changes at home, school and with peers. While change is normal, there may be positive or negative consequences depending on your reaction to change.

Think of personal, academic and social changes you may face. Think of positive ways you may respond to these changes. What makes them positive in the ways they will affect you and others?

Personal Change/Positive Response	Academic Change/Positive Response	Social Change/Positive Response

HANDOUT: CHANGES, CHOICES AND LESSONS



NAME	
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Take a moment to talk to one of your copilots or someone else you trust. Talk about a wrong decision you made in the past. Whoever you choose will be your copilot for this activity. Be sure to thank your copilot for supporting you.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK YOUR COPILOT:

1. Describe a time in the past when you made a decision you wish you could change.

2. Looking back, what could you have done differently?

3. What did you learn from this experience?

EXTENSIONS: THE CHOICE GAME

You may wish to lead students in *The Choice Game*. This game is a fun way to give students the opportunity to discuss the choices they have and the decisions they make. Encourage students to come up with their own scenarios and make it as relevant as possible.

ACTIVITIES

1. Print and cut out the *Scenario Cards*.
2. Use an existing board game, such as Chutes and Ladders, with the *Scenario Cards*. Have students play the game in groups of two to four.
3. Have students act out scenarios in groups and perform them later for the class. Discuss the scenarios, consequences of the students' choices and other possible outcomes.



TARGET AUDIENCE

Students grades 4 through 8, may also be used for students grades 9 through 12



60 MINUTES



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Scenario Cards handout
- Existing board game, such as Chutes and Ladders¹

¹*Chutes and Ladders* is a trademark of Hasbro, Inc.



HANDOUT: SCENARIO CARDS

Cut out the cards and combine them with an existing board game, such as Chutes and Ladders, to play *The Choice Game*.

<p>Your grandma takes you to the natural history museum over the weekend. Move forward 1 space.</p>	<p>You've been a little bit confused in math class lately, so you join an after-school program to get tutoring. Move forward 5 spaces.</p>	<p>After a robbery in your neighborhood the night before, you and your family are fine, but you have a hard time sleeping and can't finish your homework. Stay where you are.</p>
<p>You've been saving up your money to buy a new video game, but you really need some new notebooks for school. You take \$10 of your hard-earned cash and buy yourself some school materials. Move forward 3 spaces.</p>	<p>After you've been caught talking in class a few times, you ask the teacher if you can change seats. Move forward 2 spaces.</p>	<p>You find out that friends are bringing alcohol the morning of a field trip. You are asked to carry one of the bottles in your backpack. You don't want to but agree anyway. Move back 4 spaces.</p>
<p>A friend hands you a bottle of orange juice, and you smell it before drinking it. You smell alcohol. You immediately give the bottle back. Move forward 4 spaces.</p>	<p>You receive a message that Friday is "cut school day." You and your best friend decide to go to school anyway. Stay where you are.</p>	<p>Your parents don't speak English, and they can't help you with your homework. You ask your older cousin to help. Move forward 2 spaces.</p>
<p>You've never entered the science fair, but this year you and your best friend decide to team up and do an experiment on rats. Move forward 4 spaces.</p>	<p>You forget your essay for English class. You go to the teacher before class starts, say that you're really sorry you forgot the essay, and ask if you can turn it in tomorrow. Move forward 2 spaces.</p>	<p>You failed your math class and must take summer school to graduate. Stay where you are.</p>
<p>Your teacher recommends that you try out for the school play. Even though you really like acting, you decide not to audition because it doesn't seem cool. Move back 1 space.</p>	<p>Your teacher asks a question he knows you can answer. You answer wrong on purpose to make your friends laugh. Move back 1 space.</p>	<p>You notice that your friends are no longer carrying their books. Now they carry only a single binder to class. You decide to do the same. Move back 3 spaces.</p>

<p>You receive a message that all students will get beat up on their birthday. You tell a trusted adult who informs the school. Move forward 3 spaces.</p>	<p>You see a classmate getting bullied after school and you decide to tell your teacher about it. Move forward 3 spaces.</p>	<p>Your friend convinces you to skip school to hang out in the mall. Move back 5 spaces.</p>
<p>You volunteer to help a youth soccer team after school. Move forward 4 spaces.</p>	<p>You join the public library summer reading program. Move forward 2 spaces.</p>	<p>The boy/girl that you have a crush on asks you to finish his/her homework. You agree and don't have time to finish your own homework. Move back 5 spaces.</p>
<p>You spend your summer sitting in front of your computer. Move back 2 spaces.</p>	<p>You're having trouble in Social Studies. You stop turning in your homework because you don't understand it. Move back 3 spaces.</p>	<p>You lost your bus pass and must walk to school. You are 40 minutes late. Move back 1 space.</p>
<p>You've been saving your money to buy yourself a new cell phone. You really need some notebooks and pencils but decide to let them wait. You need a cell phone! Move back 2 spaces.</p>	<p>Your parents can't find work, so you move to a new home — which means a new school. You don't really know what's going on in your classes and you know it'll take a while to catch up. Stay where you are.</p>	<p>You miss the application deadline for the high school you really wanted to go to. Stay where you are.</p>
<p>Your older cousin invites you to hang out with some of his friends. You have a great time but can't finish your homework. Move back 2 spaces.</p>	<p>You cut class to hang out with your crush. Move back 4 spaces.</p>	<p>Because of too many cuts and absences, you are not allowed to participate in promotion ceremonies. Stay where you are.</p>
<p>You're not sure where you're going to go for high school next year, so you go on the Internet to look at the websites of public, charter and private high schools in your area. Move forward 3 spaces.</p>	<p>It is time to sign up for your 9th grade courses. Instead of taking your counselor's advice, you decide to sign up for the same courses as your friends. Move back 3 spaces.</p>	