

## WHAT SHOULD SARAH DO? *SARAH, PLAIN AND TALL*

Language Arts

Grades 3–4

### OBJECTIVES

#### CONTENT

Students will practice their listening skills. They will also learn what the plot of a story is and how to identify the major parts of a story’s plot. Finally, they will learn to search in a story for information that supports predictions about what the characters will do and how they will feel.

#### THINKING SKILL/PROCESS

Students will learn to think about options and the consequences of those options in making decisions.

### METHODS AND MATERIALS

#### CONTENT

Students will read and discuss the novel *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia McLachlan.

#### THINKING SKILL/PROCESS

An explicit thinking map, graphic organizers, and structured questioning facilitate a thinking strategy for decision making.

### LESSON

#### INTRODUCTION TO CONTENT AND THINKING SKILL/PROCESS

- **A few weeks ago I wanted to go shopping. There were some things that I needed to buy and I also wanted to browse around to see if I spotted other things that I needed. So I thought about where I should go. Well, there were a number of possibilities. I could go shopping at the neighborhood mall where there were a few stores, go to the next town to another shopping mall where there were several stores, or go even farther to a huge shopping mall thirty miles away with lots of stores. I decided to travel to the next town to the shopping mall where there were several stores because, even though it took me longer to get there than the neighborhood mall, I was able to have more variety in my shopping choices, and I didn’t lose the time it would have taken me to travel back and forth to the biggest mall thirty miles away. It worked—I got what I needed, found some other things that I bought, and I didn’t have to fight the traffic or rush around because I didn’t have enough time to shop.**
- **Now, think about a time when you had to decide about something, and you weren’t sure what was best. Take turns and tell your partner what you were trying to decide, but don’t tell them yet what you decided. Listen carefully to what your partner tells you so that you understand the situation well enough to tell someone else if you were asked.** Give students enough time (four or five minutes) for both students in each pair to relate their decisions. If necessary, prompt the class to switch roles to give each partner a chance to relate his or her decisions. If you have not worked on listening skills for a while, you may want to review the listening skills of seeing—keeping eyes on the speaker, head nodding, not playing with things—and the listening skills of hearing—restating what the speaker says and asking questions. Then ask two or three student volunteers to introduce their partners and to report the decision that their partners told them about. If no one volunteers call on two or three students at random. **Now tell your neighbor what you finally decided to do and why.** Allow time to share choices.

Ask for student volunteers to tell about their partner's choices and why they chose what they did, or call on two or three students at random.

- **Do you know what it is called when you think about what to do?** Most students respond with words like “decision making,” “choosing,” “deciding.” Write these words on the chalk board, a flip chart, or a transparency. **I’m going to call this kind of thinking “decision making.”** Underline this term. **What are the things you think about when you aren’t sure about something?** Students usually respond with “choices,” “options,” “things that I could do.” Write these under the heading “Decision Making.”
- **When picking the best thing to do, we usually don’t just think about options. In what you reported, I also heard comments about what might happen if you chose some of those options. Why didn’t I go to the huge mall 30 miles away?** Students usually comment that it would take too much time. **When I am not sure what to do, like in the shopping situation, I always try to think of what I call the “pros” and “cons.”** The pros are the good things that might result and the bad things are “cons.” Pros and cons are things that I think will probably happen if I do what I am considering. These are called “consequences” or “results” of our options. Write these words on the board under “Options,” and write “Pro” and “Con” after them. **Using the words we’ve just discussed, how would you describe my realization that it would take too much time to go to the big mall? Tell your partner.** Ask for a few responses. Most students are quick to respond that taking too much time is a consequence that is a con.
- **Go back to your example. With your partner, discuss the option you chose and which of the things you thought were consequences. Talk about which of these were pro and con. If you didn’t think about this, see if you can now identify some pros and/or cons of the option you chose. An easy way to do this is to think back to the time you were making the decision and ask what might happen if you choose your option and which consequences you would want to happen or not to happen.** After a few minutes, ask again for student volunteers to report on what their partners told them.
- **Some pros or cons may be much more important than others. If you realize this when you are making a decision, then these pros or cons should count for more in deciding whether the option is a good one. With your partner, discuss which of the pros and cons were really important to you.** Allow a few minutes for this.
- **After thinking about all of these things, we can pick the best thing to do. With your partner, discuss whether your pros and cons show why you made the decision that you did.**
- **This thinking map shows what we need to think about when we make a decision.** Display a copy of the thinking map on the board, make a poster, or write it on chart paper. If you display it on a transparency, students will not be able to see it as they do the thinking activity in the lesson.
- **When we read stories, we learn about many characters who make decisions. It’s interesting to think about whether they picked the best thing to do. We’re going to read part of a story. As we do, we will think about the**

#### SKILLFUL DECISION MAKING

1. What makes a decision necessary?
2. What are my options?
3. What are the likely consequences of each option?
4. How important are the consequences?
5. Which option is best in light of the consequences?

**decision the character has to make, use our thinking map to decide what we think is the best thing to do, and then think about whether what the character decided to do was a good idea.**

#### THINKING ACTIVELY

- We have been reading about Sarah in *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. Let's concentrate for a minute on the story. We are going to read up through Chapter 7 in the book. In the story, many things happen. We've been studying about how stories work in order to be able to write good ones ourselves and have learned some of the words people use to describe the things that make stories work. What are the events that take place in the story called?** Students should identify this as the plot of the story. Write "*The Plot of Sarah, Plain and Tall*" on the chalkboard or on a flip chart. **Now we will break into seven groups.** Break the class into seven groups of two, three, or four depending on your overall class size. Assign each group a number from one to seven. **Your group will now identify and write the main events of the plot in the chapter corresponding to your group number.** On a piece of paper, write "Plot Chart Chapter \_\_\_\_." Write "Chapter 1," etc. under "*The Plot of Sarah, Plain and Tall*" on your class chart, leaving enough room for students to record the events they have identified. After four or five minutes, ask one student from each group to write their identified main plot events on the class chart that you have constructed. POSSIBLE STUDENT RESPONSES: *Sarah's brother, William, got married. Sarah answered a newspaper ad for a possible wife to a farmer in Kansas. Sarah moved from William's house to Kansas to live in the farmer's (Jacob's) house for a month to see if that was what she wanted to do. Sarah took care of Jacob Whitting's children, Caleb and Anna. Sarah worked hard on the farm. Sarah is now thinking about whether she wants to continue living in Kansas.* When this task is completed, focus attention on some of the main events and ask students in the group responsible for identifying the event some "Why?" or "How?" questions to explore the plot more deeply. POSSIBLE STUDENT RESPONSES: "Why did Sarah answer the newspaper ad?" *Sarah feels the need to move from William's house and have her own life.* "Why is Sarah not sure she wants to stay in Kansas?" *Sarah misses the sea and her brother William.* If students don't readily provide these responses, ask leading questions like "Do you think she misses the sea and her brother William?"
- Let's see how the plot through Chapter 7 has affected Sarah, the main character in the story. To do this, I'd like you now to "become" Sarah in Chapter 7 as she thinks about whether she wants to continue living in Kansas. What is Sarah thinking? We've already noted that she misses the sea and her brother William. How does she feel about living with the Whittings?** Students usually respond that she has grown to love Caleb and Anna, who she is taking care of, and has become very friendly with Jacob, their father. **How do you think this makes Sarah feel when she also knows that she misses being in Maine by the sea?** Students usually recognize that she both likes being in Kansas but also likes being in Maine by the sea. If students don't identify this using words like "conflict," you should identify this as a conflict in Sarah's life, using the metaphor of two forces pulling Sarah in different directions. Write the word "Conflict" next to the plot chart that the students have created and write a statement expressing Sarah's conflict under the word "Conflict." **In this story, the way the plot unfolds creates a conflict for the main character, Sarah. Usually, when authors write stories, they write them in a way that leads up to some conflict or problem.**
- Now, if you were Sarah, feeling this conflict, what question would you be asking?** Students almost always respond, "What should I do?" or "What can Sarah do?" **In this story, the plot has led to a conflict which creates a need for a decision by the main character. After we finish this lesson, we will come back to this feature of this story and see if we can identify similar features in other stories we've read. I will ask you to write a story in which something similar happens. For now, let's continue thinking like Sarah. You have a major decision to make. Let's look at**

the questions on the thinking map for decision making again. We will ask and try to answer these questions carefully as we think through what the best thing to do is. You will be making the decision for Sarah. What is the first question? Students identify the question, “What makes a decision necessary?” Ask students what they think about this question. Typically, they respond by reiterating the major parts of the plot thus far identified. If students have trouble reiterating the ingredients in the plot that make a decision necessary, ask them leading question like “What specific events made you think about moving to Kansas?” “How do you feel about living in Kansas?” etc.

- Now that we know why Sarah thinks a decision about staying with the Whittings is necessary, let’s try to answer the second question on the thinking map. What is that question? Students respond “What are my (Sarah’s) options?” or “What can I (Sarah) do?” We are going to use a special graphic organizer to help us write down answers to this question, and to the other questions that are important to ask in making decisions skillfully.

Show students the graphic organizer for skillful decision making on chart paper, on the chalkboard, or on a transparency. Give each student a photocopy of the graphic organizer. **Everyone should work on this question in his/her group. Fill in the blank with “Sarah” under the word “Options” on the graphic organizer.** Model-write “Sarah” on your large graphic organizer under “Options.” **Work together and write as many options as you can think of.** After three or four minutes, ask each group to respond by mentioning one of their options, then go back and ask if any groups have any other options that haven’t been mentioned. Write these on your master-graphic as they are mentioned by the students. **This graphic organizer helps me remember my thoughts and organize them so that I make sure that I think about each one.**

POSSIBLE STUDENT RESPONSES: *Go back to Maine. Stay in Kansas with the Whitting family. Move somewhere else. Live in Kansas and visit Maine. Try to convince brother William and his wife to move to Kansas. Move to some other state. Write and ask another friend to come and visit.*

SKILLFUL DECISION MAKING		
OPTIONS		
What can _____ do?		
OPTION CONSIDERED		
CONSEQUENCES What will happen if _____ takes this option?	SUPPORT Why do you think the consequence will or will not occur?	VALUE How important is the consequence? Why?

- Now, I’m going to show you how to complete the rest of this organizer. We are going to consider one of the options you’ve mentioned. When you consider an option, you think about the consequences that would result if the option were carried out. Then, you will each take another option to consider and, with your group, write down the consequences of the option you are working on. Let’s choose “Stays in Kansas with the Whitting family.” Model-write this option under “Option Considered” on the master graphic organizer.

- What is the next question we should think about on the thinking map? Students quickly identify “What are the consequences of the options?” **Let’s think about the consequences of this option. What would happen if Sarah stayed in Kansas with the Whitting family? Work**

**in your group and write down as many consequences as you can think of for Sarah staying in Kansas.** After a few minutes, ask each group to mention one consequence. Write it on the master graphic. Then ask if there are any other consequences that the groups have identified that haven't been mentioned. Add these. POSSIBLE STUDENT RESPONSES: *Sarah will not see her brother. Sarah will have a new life of her own in Kansas. Caleb and Anna will have a caretaker. Sarah will learn more about the Midwest. Sarah will become a member of the Whitting family. Sarah will miss the sea.*

- **There is a column on the graphic organizer called “Support.” It is always important to make sure that you have reasons for thinking the consequences will really happen. Sometimes people guess at consequences of options that they are considering. It’s important, though, to base your decisions on consequences that are likely to happen, not just on guesses. Let’s think about the first consequence—Sarah will not see her brother. What do we know from the story that makes us think that this consequence will probably happen?** POSSIBLE STUDENT RESPONSES: *William lives in Maine, which is far from Kansas. We’ll write this information in the “Support” column on the organizer. Since we have a reason to support the consequence, we’ll put a check mark next to the consequence. If you can’t find a reason or if there is a reason against the consequence happening, cross out the consequence. Model-write a check mark next to the consequence “Sarah will not see her brother.”*
- **Work with your groups again to see if you can find support for your other consequences. Remember, you may not always find support. If you don’t find support, then you don’t have good reason for thinking that the consequence will happen. Then you can cross it out.** After a few minutes, ask for a few more examples. If there is disagreement among the students, spend a few minutes of class time discussing the disagreement. Then tell students that they can change their minds about what is on the graphic organizer. POSSIBLE STUDENT RESPONSES: *Sarah will not see her brother: William lives in Maine, which is far from Kansas (Checked because there is story support). Caleb and Anna will have a caretaker: Sarah lives with Caleb and Anna (Checked because there is story support). Sarah will learn more about the Midwest: There are new flowers and foods in the Midwest. People do things differently. Sarah is interested in learning (Checked because there is story support). Sarah will have a new life of her own in Kansas: Sarah will be without her family and on her own in Kansas, a new state (Checked because there is story support). Sarah will become a member of the Whitting family: Sarah and Jacob like each other and do things together. (Checked because there is story support). Sarah will miss the sea: Sarah loves the sea. She will not be near it when she is in Kansas (Checked because there is story support).*
- **In your groups, think about whether each likely consequence counts in favor of or against the option. Put a plus next to the consequence if it counts in favor of the option, and use a minus if it counts against the option.** Consider each consequence one-by-one and ask for student responses. Put a plus to the left of the consequence if most of the class says it counts in favor, and a minus if most say that it counts against. If there is disagreement, ask for some reasons why it counts in favor, and some reasons why it counts against, and then ask the class to reconsider and vote again.
- **Finally, let’s think about the next-to-the-last question on the thinking map. What is that question?** Students quickly respond that we should ask how important the consequences are. Ask students why they should ask this question. Most will respond that some of the consequences may be so important that they count much more than the others. **If the consequence is very important, circle it and write “Very Important” in the last column (marked “Value”) on the same level as the consequence. Then explain why it is very important. If it is only important, but not very important, write that and explain why, and do the same if you think it is**

**not very important. When we do this, we are ranking the consequences.** Write the word “Ranking” above the word “Value” on the graphic organizer. POSSIBLE STUDENT RESPONSES: *Sarah will not see her brother. Important: Sarah loves her brother. Sarah will have a new life of her own. Very Important: Sarah’s life is very important. She can grow as a person. Caleb and Anna will have a caretaker. Very Important: The children need someone to care for them. Sarah will learn more about the Midwest.* There are new flowers and foods in the Midwest. People do things differently. Sarah is interested in learning. *Important: Learning about an area is interesting, but it is not necessary to live there in order to do so. Sarah will become a member of the Whitting family. Very Important: It is valuable to belong to a family. Sarah will miss the sea. Important: She loves the sea, but people are more important than places, and Sarah can visit the sea.*

- **Overall, does this seem like a good option?** Most students respond that this seems like a good option because many of the important or very important consequences are pluses, and the very important consequences are all pluses. Students also sometimes remark that people are more important than places.
- **We have considered only one option and we are not quite finished with our thinking to be able to make a decision. You may think this is a pretty good option, but what do you have to do to decide that it is the best option?** Students usually respond that you have to compare it to the other options. **So let’s consider each of the other options the way we did this one. Work in your groups for the next fifteen minutes to fill in the lower part of the graphic organizer for another option.** Give students another blank graphic organizer. Assign one of the other options to each of the groups, or let them choose which one they want to work on, but make sure that two groups don’t pick the same one. If they do, assign a different one. Student responses vary.
- **Your group should now pick what you think is the best thing for Sarah to do. Be prepared to explain why.** Ask each group to report. After discussion, ask the class to vote on the best thing to do.
- **We’ve done some decision making by thinking carefully about what Sarah should do. Let’s read the rest of the section of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* to see what Sarah decides to do and how it works. For homework, fill out the remainder of the plot of the story like you did when your group worked on your individual chapter. Then, to the right, I want you to write the word “Resolution.” The resolution is what Sarah decided to do to solve her conflict. The resolution is usually the final ingredient in the story—the way the conflict or problem is resolved. We can also check see if the resolution is an ingredient in other stories we’ve read. I will ask you to end your stories with a resolution as well. For now, when you find out what Sarah actually did, think about what Sarah’s decision tells us about the kind of person she is. Write down two words or phrases that describe Sarah.** Read the rest of this chapter orally. Ask a number of students to report on their descriptions and why they chose these. POSSIBLE STUDENT RESPONSES: *adventurous, strong, feisty, risk taker.* Ask students to explain why they used these adjectives to describe Sarah. Answers will vary.

#### THINKING ABOUT THINKING

- **How did we think about what Sarah should do? What did you think first, second, third, and so on?** POSSIBLE STUDENT RESPONSES: *We used the thinking map for decision making. We asked, Why is a decision necessary? What are my options? What are the likely consequences of each option? How important are the consequences? and Which option is best in light of the consequences? We also used the graphic organizer for decision making to write down our options, the consequences of the option we chose, support for the possible consequences, and the value of the consequences. We rated the consequences as pros or cons and ranked them. Then we made a decision on what the best thing to do was.*

- **Look at the thinking map of decision making. Is this a good tool to use when making a decision?** Answers vary, but students generally agree that it is a good tool to use when making decisions. It takes more time; but in the long run, it saves time and possible mistakes.
- **Is this a good way to make decisions when you're not sure what to do? Is it good to do this even when you feel pretty confident about your choice? Is it better than the way you think about your decisions now? Why?** Student responses vary.
- **Can you write down a plan for your decisions to help you remember what you should think about? Draw your own thinking map and use some words that you learned from this lesson.** Student responses vary.

#### APPLYING THINKING

##### Immediate Transfer

- **We have been studying pioneer life. Think about a decision the pioneers had to make. Use your decision-making plan and decide what would be the best thing to do if for instance the pioneers had to lighten their wagon loads.**
- **Think about a decision you have to make or have recently made. Use your decision-making plan and decide what would be the best thing to do. Then compare this decision to the decision you made or might make.**

##### Reinforcement Later

- **We have studied the Pilgrims' decision to leave Europe and come to the New World. Use your decision-making plan and decide if this would be the best thing to do.**
- **We have studied the colonists' decision about whether to break away from England or to stay loyal to England. Use your decision-making plan and decide what would be the best thing to do.**

#### WRITING EXTENSION

Have students pretend to be Sarah and write a diary entry about their decision. Have them use the writing template for a persuasive letter together with the graphic organizer for skillful decision making to construct their essay (see Appendix for writing template). Make sure they state the option chosen as their main idea. Use the support information as reasons.

After students have engaged with the transfer activity on the Pilgrims, ask them to write a diary entry on traveling to the New World from a Pilgrim's point of view, explaining why one option is best. They can use the writing template for persuasive letters as a guide (see Appendix for writing template) and the graphic organizer of skillful decision making to construct their essay. Explain that the option chosen should appear as the topic sentence or main idea sentence. They can use the support information as supporting details.

#### ART/WRITING EXTENSION

Students can construct a scrapbook of what it would be like to be a pioneer who made the decision to travel West. They will use their options to decorate the front cover. Then, they can use the option they chose for the title page. On the other pages, have them include the consequences of the option and their value. Encourage them to use pictures or drawings.

Students can construct a patchwork quilt of what it would be like to be a pioneer who decided to travel West. They can use their options to make the corner squares of the quilt. The center square will be the option they chose. On the other squares, include the consequences of the option and their value, using pictures or drawings. Include a written description under each quilt square.

#### THINKING SKILL EXTENSION

Ask students to use the strategy for skillful prediction to predict, based on evidence in the text, what it is likely that Sarah will do. They should do this before they read ahead to find out what she actually does. (See the lesson on skillful prediction in this book.) After they make their predictions, they should compare what they think Sarah is likely to do with what they think is the best option for her in the present lesson. Once students have read ahead, they can compare their predictions to what she actually does in the book. If there is any difference, they should discuss why.

#### SUGGESTED SPECIAL NEEDS MODIFICATIONS

**Frontload:** For some students, engaging in a thinking strategy takes more time and teacher guidance through skillful questioning and modeling. The teacher's think-aloud can serve as a model of such sequenced thinking. In this case, the teacher might model thinking aloud about possibilities: *What decision might I make?* Let me see. *How many possible ways* can I think of? and / or about consequences: What if I did \_\_\_\_\_? *What might happen?* Questioning should be scaffolded in such a way as to direct students to such "what if" thinking.

Some students may need preliminary practice with generating many possibilities without having to think about whether or not they will work. If students can learn to suspend judgment until after they have investigated consequences of the options, they will be better able to make good decisions. Therefore, using multiple opportunities prior to the infusion lesson to guide student in generating options without judging would be beneficial. Student could brainstorm suggestions about what to do on a particular occasion, or they could generate all the ways to use a geometric figure for some constructive or aesthetic purpose. Be explicit that the rules are to generate ideas without comment.

In addition, use the language of thinking to label student contributions: That's an example of *flexible thinking*. That's some *original thinking*. You are *suspending your judgement* about whether that idea will work.

**Streamline:** The strategy of decision making is a complex one that may overwhelm some students at first. Such students may benefit by having their expected outcomes limited with regard to decision making. Limit the number of options to be analyzed to one for each student and ask the question "Is this a good option?" (rather than asking them the more complex and cognitively demanding question, which is the best option?) You can develop a special thinking map for decision making using the former question, rather than the latter, as its conclusion. These results can be shared in a group in which other students who have similar limited outcomes are exploring other options. Then another group of students can compare these options and judge which is best, sharing their results with the first group. Later, after these students have become quite familiar with this task, the more complex strategy can be phased in.

A variation on this approach is to break down the strategy into multiple parts and then introduce it part by part, adding one new component as students are ready. For example, the first time students use decision making, they should brainstorm options, choose an option, and think of the positive and negative consequences of that option. The next time they use the decision-making strategy, add the step of finding reasons to support the consequences. Last, add the final step of determining the importance of each consequence in order to choose the best option. Modifications can be made to the thinking map, adding these questions as the new outcomes are set.

These are just a few ways to allow students success by initially giving them manageable tasks and then adding tasks once they have mastered the initial ones.

**Clarify:** Color-coding the boxes to highlight different sections of the graphic organizer can help to clarify the different tasks involved in generating options, generating consequences, and then rating the consequences. These terms can be explained by the teacher using words or phrases that students are more familiar with like “alternatives,” “choices,” “results,” “what will happen,” “importance,” etc.

**Diversify:** Students who need help with their writing should be challenged to write on their graphic organizers along with the other students. Oral interaction with these students can help them articulate what they have written. However, after their group processes what its members have written, you can also provide them with a copy of the finished graphic organizer from their group to staple onto their own. They can then read the results to which they contributed. It is important that the thinking take precedence over the writing for these students.

The small groups can also be designed to reduce the reading-writing task load by including students of mixed abilities and assigning “jobs” to match student strengths.

Limiting the number of consequences that some students are responsible to analyze may also be a help to these students; perhaps one of their tasks can be to come up with one pro and one con which they share with other students who are doing the same to build a longer list of pros and cons.

Ask students to apply the decision-making strategy to simple decisions they face on a regular basis to prepare them for the main activity in this lesson. For example, you have homework to do, but it is a beautiful day and your friend is knocking on the door. There is a test to study for, but you would rather..., etc.

Writing assignments may be modified in three ways: 1) Allow students additional time to complete the regular assignment or 2) Reduce the length of the assignment, or 3) Have students dictate their answers on tape or to another student.

**Expand the Possibilities:** Assessments of written responses may be based upon the student’s thinking first, and expressive skills secondly. Oral responses may also reveal thinking beyond the student’s ability to express him- or herself in writing.

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#### ASSESSING STUDENT UNDERSTANDING OF DECISION MAKING

Any of the transfer activities is appropriate for assessment purposes. Ask students to write about a personal decision they have had to make. What would they do differently now that they have learned how to make careful decisions? What did they do well? Ask them to think about a decision they are facing right now. Have students use the thinking map and graphic organizer to help them through the decision making process. Watch to see that students are attending to and considering each step on the thinking map for decision making.

Sample Student Responses • What Should Sarah Do?

**SKILLFUL DECISION MAKING**

**OPTIONS**

What can Sarah do?

Go back to Maine.  
 Stay in Kansas with the Whitting family.  
 Move somewhere else in Kansas.  
 Live in Kansas and visit Maine.

Try to convince brother William and his wife to move to Kansas.  
 Move to some other state.  
 Write and ask another friend to come and visit.

**OPTION CONSIDERED**

Stay in Kansas with the Whitting family.

<b>CONSEQUENCES</b> What will happen if <u>Sarah</u> takes this option?	<b>SUPPORT</b> Why do you think the consequence will or will not occur?	<b>VALUE</b> How important is the consequence? Why?
- Sarah will not see her brother. ✓	William lives in Maine, which is far from Kansas.	<b>Important:</b> Sarah loves her brother.
+ Sarah will have a new life of her own in Kansas. ✓	Sarah will be without her family and on her own in Kansas, a new state.	<b>Very Important:</b> Sarah's life is very important. She can grow as a person.
+ Caleb and Anna will have a caretaker. ✓	Sarah lives with Caleb and Anna.	<b>Very Important:</b> The children need someone to care for them.
+ Sarah will learn more about the Midwest. ✓	There are new flowers and foods in the Midwest. People do things differently. Sarah is interested in learning.	<b>Important:</b> Learning about an area is interesting, but it is not necessary to live there in order to do so.
+ Sarah will become a member of the Whitting family. ✓	Sarah and Jacob like each other and do things together.	<b>Very Important:</b> It is valuable to belong to a family.
+ Sarah will miss the sea ✓	Sarah loves the sea. She will not be near it when she is in Kansas.	<b>Important:</b> She loves the sea, but people are more important than places, and Sarah can visit the sea.

Sample Student Responses • What Should Sarah Do?

**SKILLFUL DECISION MAKING**

**OPTIONS**

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Go back to Maine.  
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 Write and ask another friend to come and visit.

**OPTION CONSIDERED**

Go back to Maine.

<b>CONSEQUENCES</b> What will happen if <u>Sarah</u> takes this option?	<b>SUPPORT</b> Why do you think the consequence will or will not occur?	<b>VALUE</b> How important is the consequence? Why?
+ Sarah will see her brother. ✓	William lives in Maine.	<i>Important:</i> Sarah's family is important to her.
- Sarah will not have a new life of her own.	William is getting married and there are opportunities in Maine for a new life for Sarah.	
- Caleb and Anna will not have a caretaker. ✓	Sarah will not be living in the Midwest. She is their only caretaker.	<i>Very Important:</i> The children need someone to care for them.
- Sarah will not learn more about the Midwest. ✓	She will not be living in the Midwest.	<i>Important:</i> Learning about an area is interesting, but it is not necessary to live there in order to do so.
- Sarah will not become a member of the Whitting family. ✓	She will not be living in Kansas. Maine is a great distance from Kansas.	<i>Very Important:</i> It is valuable to belong to a loving family.
+ Sarah will enjoy being near the sea. ✓	Maine is on the sea.	<i>Important:</i> Sarah loves the sea. Being near what you love is important.

**Sample Student Persuasive Writing • What Should Sarah Do?**

*Dear Diary,*

*I've been thinking about what to do because this is the end of the month I gave myself to find out whether I wanted to stay and be a part of the Whitting's home in Kansas. What should I do?*

*It really is important to me to make a decision about this now. Caleb and Anna, Jacob's children, and Jacob himself, have been asking me what I want to do. They will need to find someone else if I decide to leave. Also, I want to be sure in my own mind so I can get myself settled somewhere. After thinking about it, I think that I want to stay here in Kansas with the Whittings. I'm going to review the pros and cons of some of the main options so that I can be sure that this is the right choice.*

*I know that if I go back to Maine I will be near the sea, which I love. And that has always been my home up to when I moved to Kansas, so I will feel at home again, and I will be able to see my brother William.*

*But there are some cons of going back to Maine. I will be leaving Caleb and Anna, who I have come to love, and they will have to find someone else to take care of them. I will really miss them. And Jacob will be without a friend. He and I have gotten to know each other and we have done lots together, even like enjoying sliding down the hay pile. Finally, my brother William is married now and he has his own life, so I won't be able to live with him like I used to. I will have to make a new life for myself there.*

*If I decide to stay in Kansas, my other big option, I will be able to be with Caleb, Anna, and Jacob. I will really like that. They are my friends. That is really important. And I can learn a lot of new things about the part of the country in which they live. I've gotten interested in that. Finally, I will be able to build a new life for myself by continuing what I have done over this past month.*

*But there are some cons here, too. I will miss William and I really love the sea, which I will not be close to.*

*In thinking about all of this, dear diary, I am now much more sure that staying in Kansas is the right choice. William has his own life with his wife, and the people I have grown to like here in Kansas are more important to me than the sea, which I will still miss. But maybe I will find things in the Midwest that I love as much as the sea.*

*That's why I know that staying in Kansas with Caleb, Anna, and Jacob is the right thing for me to do!*

**Sample Student Persuasive Writing • Pilgrim Voyage**

*Dear Diary,*

*I've been thinking about what to do because lots of my friends are sailing to the New World. Should I take my family as well?*

*It is very important for us to make a decision whether or not to sail to the New World because the ships are filling up fast, and if we decide to go, we need to have a spot on the ship. We can either sail to the New World, stay in England, wait till later to sail, or go to some other country. I think it is important for us to stay in England because we could lose our lives if we sailed to the New World.*

*Of course, if we sail to the New World we may make it safely and be free from the religious wars people wage against us. We can practice our own religion.*

*But there are many negative consequences of sailing to the New World. We will be with the same people for a long time, and many of us hate being in crowds. Also, the ocean can be a dangerous and rough place, and we might not be prepared to handle its dangers. Lastly, the food supply will be rationed and may spoil from the heat and the sailing conditions, and we might use up all of our water supply. All these reasons could cause lives to be lost. So the possible negative consequences pose grave dangers.*

*If we decide to stay in England—the other main option—we will have to abide by the rules of England. That may mean that we have to learn the ways of the Church of England. So we might not be able to worship the way that we want. Also, we might not get the farmland we want for farming and making a living. Farmers would have to farm on someone else's land if they want to continue to farm. Other farmers would have to find other jobs to earn a living if they don't want to farm on other's land. This would mean that farmers would have to learn a new trade and not have money for a while to live until a new trade is learned.*

*Even though staying in England means that we have to change the way we live, we will still be alive. But if we sail to the New World, we may lose our lives.*

*That's why we should stay in England. Sailing is too dangerous and our lives may be lost. Although we will have to follow the rules of England, we can still have jobs and support our families. All our parents and grandparents live in England, and we can enjoy family life so that our families can continue to grow.*