7 Steps to Decision-Making

Choosing a potential career path can be overwhelming. This exercise shows that a seven-step decision-making process works for an everyday decision, like deciding what to wear, as well as for bigger decisions, like choosing a career.

The 7 STEPS

1. Identify the decision to be made (What shall I wear to work today?)

2. Gather the information (What's the weather going to be like? Which clothes are clean?)

3. Identify the alternatives (Either my blue suit, my gray pants, or blue jeans and a t-shirt.)

4. Weigh the evidence (Blue suit is right for today's weather, but too dressy for my activities. I feel like wearing jeans and a t-shirt, but I have an appointment later and that would not be appropriate dress. My gray pants are a good compromise, but I must find a matching shirt.)

5. Choose among the alternatives (Gray pants and white shirt.)

6. Take action (Iron clothes and get dressed.)

7. Review and evaluate the decision (Look in the mirror, decide it looks good, but might need to change shoes.)

Directions: The worksheet on the next page uses the seven steps to help you make an education or career decision. Fill in your information for each of the steps.
1. **Identify the decision to be made** (Examples: Whether to go to a two- or four-year college; where I want to live; what major to choose; go into military, etc.)

2. **Gather the Information** (Gather facts about myself — interests, abilities, values; gather facts about career options — salary, work setting, education or training required; sources to get more information?)

3. **Identify the alternatives** (What college, training program or career options suit me best?)

4. **Weigh the evidence** (Consider the pros and cons; what are the short-term and long-term outcomes; recognize obstacles; what resources are available to meet my goals?)

5. **Choose among the alternatives** (From Step 4, generate a list of possible career or college choices.)

6. **Take action** (Make a definite plan — visit a work environment, visit schools or talk to college representatives.)

7. **Review and evaluate the decision** (Did I consider all the important factors? Are there new alternatives I need to consider?)