

Lesson Title: Decision-Making Scenarios  
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11<sup>th</sup> Grade, American History  
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**Teaching Traditional American History Program**

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Lesson Overview: These scenarios allow students to demonstrate both convergent and divergent thinking skills. They also provide a way for students to participate in activities that introduce historical empathy as an instructional means for building student understanding. The students will be given three scenarios to choose from and then respond in a written paragraph.

Objective: After completing this lesson the student will be able to:

- Exchange information, questions and ideas while recognizing the perspective of others. (2.3)
- Plan and make written oral and visual presentations for a variety of purposes and audiences. (2.1)
- Examine problems and proposed solutions from multiple perspectives. (3.6)
- Explain reasoning and identify information used to support decisions. (4.1)
- Recognize continuity and change in the history of the United States. (GLE 2a & SS.2)

Materials:

- Decision-Making Scenario Prompt Sheet
- Scoring Guide
- Response Sheet

Class Time: This lesson should only take one 50 minute class period.

### Teacher Input:

- Review and discuss with students what they have learned so far about pioneers, the “Gold Rush” and the Native Americans on the Plains during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Ask them if they could be involved in any three of these adventures what would it be?
- Tell them they now have the opportunity to do just that.
- Distribute the Decision-Making Scenario prompt sheets with scoring guides and response sheet.
- Tell them that they are going to choose only one of the scenarios and write their opinions, yet must back them up with historical details from notes taken in class and/or from their textbooks.
- Remind them of the scoring guide specifications.
- Answer any questions they may have.

Activities: The students will work independently using their notes, textbooks, and response sheets to complete the lesson.

Closure: When class time is drawing to a close, ask the students how it felt to put themselves in the place of the people that changed the west. If any of the students would like to share their responses this would be a great time to do so.

Assessment: The provided scoring guide will be used to assess their responses.

Extension: There are two other response format templates that can be used for this lesson. They are included.

- Student can respond to all three scenarios.
- Student can respond in a chart format.

### Reference:

- Cantu, D. Antonio. *Reflective and Critical Thinking Activities*. Teacher Created Materials, Inc. 2002.
- <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index>
- [www.dese.mo.us/divimprove/curriculum/GLEDocuments](http://www.dese.mo.us/divimprove/curriculum/GLEDocuments)

## DECISION-MAKING SCENARIOS

Choose one of the scenarios below. Use specific examples from your notes or textbook to include as many details as you can to write a complete paragraph.

- ★ If you were a pioneer making your westward trek, what would you write in your journal the day you depart from your original home?
  
- ★ If you were a young person who traveled west during the “Gold Rush” and came up empty-handed, would you remain in California or go back home? Explain.
  
- ★ If you were a young Native American living in the west during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, what would you do when you spotted a wagon train on pioneers who were attempting to settle on your land?

### SCORING GUIDE

Category	4	3	2	1
Focus on Assigned Topic	The entire paragraph is related to the assigned topic.	Most of the paragraph is related to the assigned topic.	Part of the paragraph is related to the assigned topic.	No attempt have been made to relate the paragraph to the assigned topic.
Accuracy of Details	All details presented in the paragraph are accurate.	Almost all the details presented in the paragraph are accurate.	Most details presented in the paragraph are accurate.	There are several detail errors or lack of detail altogether.
Writing Process	Student devotes a lot of time and effort to the writing process.	Student devotes sufficient time and effort to the writing process.	Student devotes some time and effort to the writing process but was not very thorough. Does enough to get by.	Student devotes little time and effort to the writing process. Doesn't seem to care.
TOTAL				



**Decision-Making Scenario** (cont.)  
Template

Decision-Making Scenario # 1

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Decision-Making Scenario # 2

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Decision-Making Scenario # 3

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# Decision-Making Scenario (Chart Form)

## Template

Historical Question/Dilemma



Option # 1

Option # 2



Positive Consequences

Negative Consequences



Positive Consequences

Negative Consequences



Decision