

Name: _____

Smoke and Mirrors

1. Wrap eight gifts in wrapping paper and number them. The contents of each wrapped gift should be different, such as one with chocolate, another with a voucher, and another with an apple. The gifts should be wrapped and sealed so that students cannot see their contents.
2. Place the eight gifts in a row on a desk. Ask five or six students to approach the desk and choose a gift each. Ask students why they chose their particular gift, but tell them not to open it. Discuss with students why making choices with no information is not the best way to make a decision.
3. Ask the students to pick up their gift and feel its weight. Tell them that they can now trade gifts with each other or swap with one of the remaining gifts. Discuss how sometimes access to information can be limited and decisions have to be made without knowing exactly what the outcome will be.
4. Allow students to squeeze and shake the gift to try to figure out what is inside. Once they have done this, ask students to repeat the trading process with each other or with the remaining gifts. Explain that the more information you gain, the greater insight you have into the possible outcome of a decision. For example, if your gift is light, you can probably guess that it is not a can of beans. Ask selected students to volunteer what they think their gift might be and to explain to the class how they came to this conclusion.
5. Finally, allow students to open the gifts and see what is inside. Display the contents to the class. Allow the students to trade one final time. Explain that even after a decision has been made and the outcome reached, there are sometimes opportunities to change your mind.
6. Begin a discussion about the importance of students gathering information from a variety of sources before making a decision that affects their lives. Ask and explain where the students could gather such information from, such as past experiences, parents, teachers, pamphlets, or legitimate websites.