

Making Decisions

We'll learn about:

- What influences my decisions
- Ethical choices
- Making right decisions
- Should we obey the law?
- Political decisions
- The 'Golden Rule'
- Global ethics
- Makarrata



RAILS

Refugee and Immigration
Legal Service

rails.org.au
education@rails.org.au

Key Words

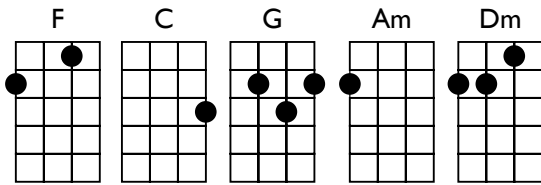
Word	Meaning	Write a sentence with the key word
belief	what a person regards as important in life	
culture	values and traditions learned through our community	
dilemma	difficult situation where you have to choose between alternatives	
ethical	expectations that our behaviour will be fair, honest and truthful; often linked to moral principle	
Golden Rule	the principle of treating others as you want to be treated	
identity	our personal characteristics we use to describe ourselves	
moral	about right and wrong behaviour	
moral compass	person's ability to judge right and wrong and act appropriately	
philosophy	a theory or attitude which is a guiding principle for behaviour	
religious	belief in a God or Gods; organised system of beliefs and rituals used to worship	
spirituality	about your 'soul' or inner life. 'Spirituality' is more individual than religions who have defined rules and rituals	
values	stable, long-lasting beliefs about what we think is most important in life which can guide our personal choices	
worldview	the way we see and understand the world	

Peace Keeper



Peace Keeper

Ukulele



_____ are made to keep things fair
Follow them to show you _____
In sport, at home or in the school
Follow rules and you'll be cool
_____ are rules for everyone
Keep the peace - we'll all have fun
If you mess up and do a crime
You could get _____ and do jail time

KEEP THE PEACE

I want to keep the peace
Want to know the law
Got to give and get respect
Make _____ not war

KEEP THE PEACE

Our families deserve _____
Parents, siblings and the pet
Every one of us has _____
So keep the peace let's not _____
_____ is the word

On the street, have you heard
You want rights and a voice
Show you care, it's a choice

KEEP THE PEACE

Song written by Getano Bann and Nikki Wynne with students from Milpera State School, Brisbane.

Listen closely to the song.

What are the key messages?
Analyse the music.

Learn to play it on ukulele.

www.rails.org.au/education

Laws

Rules

fight

respect

rights

caught

peace

care

Responsibility

What shapes my decisions?



When we make a choice or decision, we are influenced by our values and beliefs. We all carry with us our own 'Personal Backpack' which contains our culture, values, beliefs and our identity. It contains everything which makes up you! Your backpack will shape what choices and decisions you make.

My Personal Backpack

I was born in...	
My mother is from....	
My father is from...	
I have a large or small extended family...	
I have/don't have a religion...	
The language/s I speak...	
My interests are...	
My interests are important to me because...	
The biggest influences on my life are...	
Some things I value most highly are...	
A significant event/s that happened to me which helped shape my values...	

List as many 'values' as you can. Put a number 1 against the three values that seem most important to you, a number 2 against your second most important three values, and so on.

Ethical Choices

Ethical decision making is about trying to do what is 'right'. Ethics is about going beyond normal self-interest into care and compassion for others. It's about treating people well, doing things for others, respecting their rights so as to make the world better and safer.

Ethics is also about human virtue (goodness) and good character - being kind, courageous, patient and other positive values.

Our **moral compass** is our ability to judge right and wrong and act appropriately. This is developed firstly from parents, peers and culture and as we grow we hopefully learn from our own experiences and explorations to set our own moral compass or ethical foundations for life.



Directions Dance

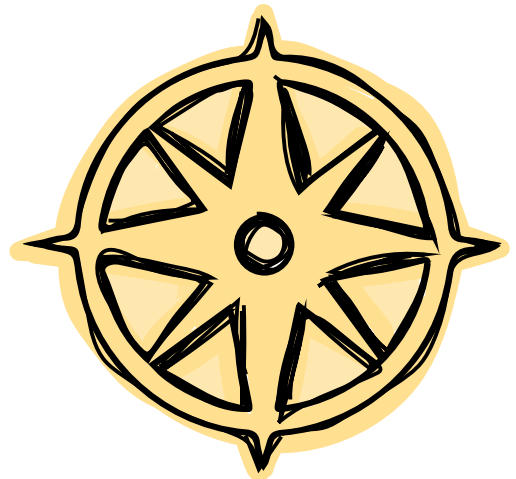
North, South East, West

Which way do I go? Which way's the best?

North, South East, West

How will I choose. Uhhh. What's best?

Learn some dance moves for this rap



Ethical decision-making means that you're weighing up your values and principles to point you to the right direction. Some people use the 'sunlight test' to check if their decision is ethical. This test is: 'What if my decision was broadcast on a major news network? How would I feel?'

In some cases our values and principles might clash and there's not always a clear right answer. This is called a 'dilemma'.

If there's no clear right answer then we can be satisfied we're acting ethically if we at least sincerely think about and weigh up the issues, try to ask ourselves the right questions, and talk with wise others. We don't want to make decisions which in the end we regret because of who it shows us to be. That can lead to mental stress.

If we realise there's not always ethical perfection, not always one right answer, we can reduce pressure on ourselves to have a perfect answer all the time. We can learn to live with uncertainty.

What's right?



What is the right thing to do? Discuss these examples. Write a story about an ethical dilemma.

You highly value truth and also compassion and caring for others. But what if telling the truth will hurt a friend? What do you do? Think up examples.

You're reversing out of a parking area and scratch the car next to you. No-one sees you. Do you leave a note for the owner of the other car?

A workmate, who you don't like because he's a bully, puts in great ideas and work into a joint project you're doing together. He quits the job before the project is finished. When you then present the project to your boss do you claim the bully's great ideas as your own?

You love chicken. A friend points out that the chickens you're buying spend their whole lives in a cage unable to move and are just fed to be fattened up. What do you do?

Jobs are hard to get, but you have a great job which you got because the boss is a good friend of your family. You discover later that the reason the boss can pay you so well is because the boss has been cheating the government by not paying tax. What do you do?

You and other family members work in the coal industry. You also highly value the natural environment and believe it is under great strain from air pollution. What position do you take on whether a large new coal mine should go ahead knowing it creates pollution and damages the environment?

You've just fallen madly in love, and then a pandemic strikes. Your new love lives in the next suburb but it's a pandemic hot spot cluster and goes into total lockdown. The new love says you'll win their heart forever if you can visit... and bring chocolates. You know a way to sneak in to the suburb. Another person is also romantically pursuing your new love. What would you do?

Obey the law?



Jay is walking quickly with friends, late for a car racing event. They see a Porsche parked with the window open, keys in it and no-one around. Jay and friends love fast cars, the thrill of speed and danger. Jay is the only one with a licence. His friends dare him to drive them to the event on time.

Why might Jay be tempted? What benefits and thrills might Jay get from taking the car?
What decision would you make?

You're with the 'cool group' in a secluded park. Someone shares around a marijuana joint. You've tried it before and it made you feel good. You're wanting to decide whether to keep doing it and you also want to be accepted into the group.

- What are some of the health, legal, social and long term lifestyle issues involved here?
- What things could you say and do to persuade yourself not to keep taking drugs?
- How would you justify your decision to the 'cool group' in a way that still shows them respect even though they're taking the drug and you're not?
- What values and lifestyle choices are involved here?
- What if it was alcohol and you didn't mind a couple of drinks but your cool friends wanted to 'get smashed' on spirits? What would you say and do?

Some people obey law to avoid punishment or because they believe that laws can help the society run better, and can lead to less people being hurt and less property damaged.

Some people believe we should be totally free and able to organise ourselves without any laws or control.

What if people disagree with laws because they think the laws are unfair or wrong or limit their freedom too much?

Should we obey the law?

Political decisions



Democracy is government of the people, by the people and for the people, it's often said. Decisions are made by politicians voted in by the majority of adult citizens to represent them - our members of parliament. Politicians bring policies to the people before the election to say what they stand for and what way they will decide on issues.

After being elected, politicians should keep listening to the people they represent to guide their decisions. Politicians make decisions and vote (either independently or as part of a political party) in parliament whether to pass laws. The government, through Ministers and Departments, then implement the laws and policies passed in parliament. The courts provide a check that the government acts according to the law.

Politicians decisions are made from a complex mix of social, economic, political, party and personal interests. At the heart of any decision by a politician in a democracy should be a genuine weighing up of the key values at the foundation of our democracy (see over)

Discuss:

You are a politician. The government is wanting to make laws to allow logging and mining in a place of great natural value. You love nature and place a very high value of preserving the shrinking natural environment . As a politician, you also have to weigh up values of providing employment, energy and resources to the community.

What things will influence politicians to make a decision?

Research the process of decision-making within the major political parties in Australia?

What is the process of the federal parliament making a decision and passing a law?

What would you decide in this case if you were a politician? What could and would you do if you were a citizen and had strong views about the matter?

Democratic Values



At the heart of any decision by a politician in a democracy should be a genuine weighing up of the key values at the foundation of our democracy.

Australia's key democratic values according to the government are parliamentary democracy; rule of law; peace; respect for all; help those in need; freedom and equality. All Australians are expected to support these values. Governments should uphold these values. Permanent residents applying to become citizens must know these values to pass the Citizenship Test.

Freedom of speech

Freedom of religion

Peacefulness

Freedom of the individual

Equality under the law

Equality of men and women

Freedom of association

Equality of opportunity

Egalitarianism

Value	What the value mean
	Every individual should be treated with respect whatever their background, sexuality, age or ability.
	We can say and write what we think, within the law.
	We can follow any religion so long as it doesn't break any Australian law. Australia does not have a state religion. Only laws made by parliament apply.
	We can gather together and join groups.
	All Australians should be equal under the law
	Men and women have equal rights.
	You achieve because of your talents, work and effort rather than because of birth or favouritism.
	Change should happen by dialogue, peaceful persuasion and the democratic process.
	Equality – we should be treated the same whatever our status. No one is above anyone else

The Golden Rule

The Golden Rule means that you **treat others the way you want to be treated**. For example, if you want to be treated with kindness and respect, then you need to treat other people with kindness and respect too.

The 'Golden Rule' is a philosophy found in many religions and cultures around the world throughout history. It can be an important principle to guide our actions and decision-making, and help build a peaceful world.



In **Christianity** the Golden Rule is stated as 'love thy neighbour' and 'do unto others as you would have them do to you'.

In **Islam**, the Prophet Muhammed stated 'Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself'.

In **Hinduism** the Mahabharata states that 'One should never do that to another which one regards as injurious to one's own self'.

The **Buddha** stated 'treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful'. Buddhists believe 'good deeds, good words and good thoughts' create good karma and better world.

In **Judaism** the scripture states 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself'.

Confucius stated 'One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct... loving-kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself'.

In the **Bahai Faith** the rule states 'Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself.'

Australian **Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander** core beliefs are that all parts of the Earth are connected: the people, plants animals, land forms and celestial bodies. Many indigenous peoples around the world have strong spiritual beliefs connecting the earth and its living things. The Golden Rule of being treated with respect could be seen to apply here in an even broader sense as it includes respect for the earth and other living things as well as between each human.

The Golden rule is often linked with religion, but it can still guide our actions even if we don't hold religious or spiritual beliefs.

Living the Golden Rule

Our world views are how we see the world and what we believe and expect in life. They influence our decisions and what we do. They are also the foundation for our values and our moral compass.

Having the 'Golden Rule' as part of our world view can help us to make ethical decisions and guide our 'moral compass' to treat all others, and the world, with consideration and respect.

Discuss:

How would the 'Golden Rule' guide your actions in these situations?

- You see litter on the ground
- You see someone being bullied
- You're standing in a slow queue at the supermarket checkout
- On a crowded bus or train
- You're angry with your friend for letting you down
- A shop keeper undercharges you for an item you're buying

Discuss:

- In October 2019, Uluru-Kata-Tjuta National Park Board closed the climb to Uluru, a place of great sacred importance to the local Anangu people and Australian First Nations people generally.
- Some Australians opposed the closure to the public with arguments such as: *'We should be free to enjoy these wonderful natural spaces on our own terms without being fettered by petty bureaucracy and the religious views of others'*. (Koori Mail 429, p 37)



Questions:

- Which terms in the above quote show a lack of respect?
- Put yourself in the shoes of an Anangu person. What response would you have to the above view?
- How would the Golden Rule be applied in such a case?

Global Ethic

A 'Global Ethic' is urgently needed to address ongoing world problems of racism, poverty, violence and environmental destruction.

As 'global citizens' we all have rights and responsibilities to our 'global village' which go beyond just focusing on our own needs and desires.

The Golden Rule can be a guide for relationships among nations, cultures, races, sexes, economies and religions, and even the earth. It can be a global standard for the 'human family' to work together to build a peaceful, just and sustainable world society.

The Golden Rule can also be seen as the basis of global human rights. Everyone has rights because we are human. You must respect the rights of each person as you expect your rights to be respected by all others.

Discuss:

What would the world be like if every person followed the Golden Rule?

Could the Golden Rule be used to combat racism and address inequality in the world? Respect and recognition are the key for achieving equality and justice for all peoples.

What actions could you personally take to help address these global issues?

- Plastic pollution in the environment that adversely affects wildlife, habitats and humans.
- Workers in sweatshops with poor working conditions, child labour and unfair wages. Products that commonly come from sweatshops include clothing, cotton, bricks, cocoa and coffee.
- Deforestation that causes soil erosion, increased greenhouse gases and problems for indigenous peoples homelands and the planet.

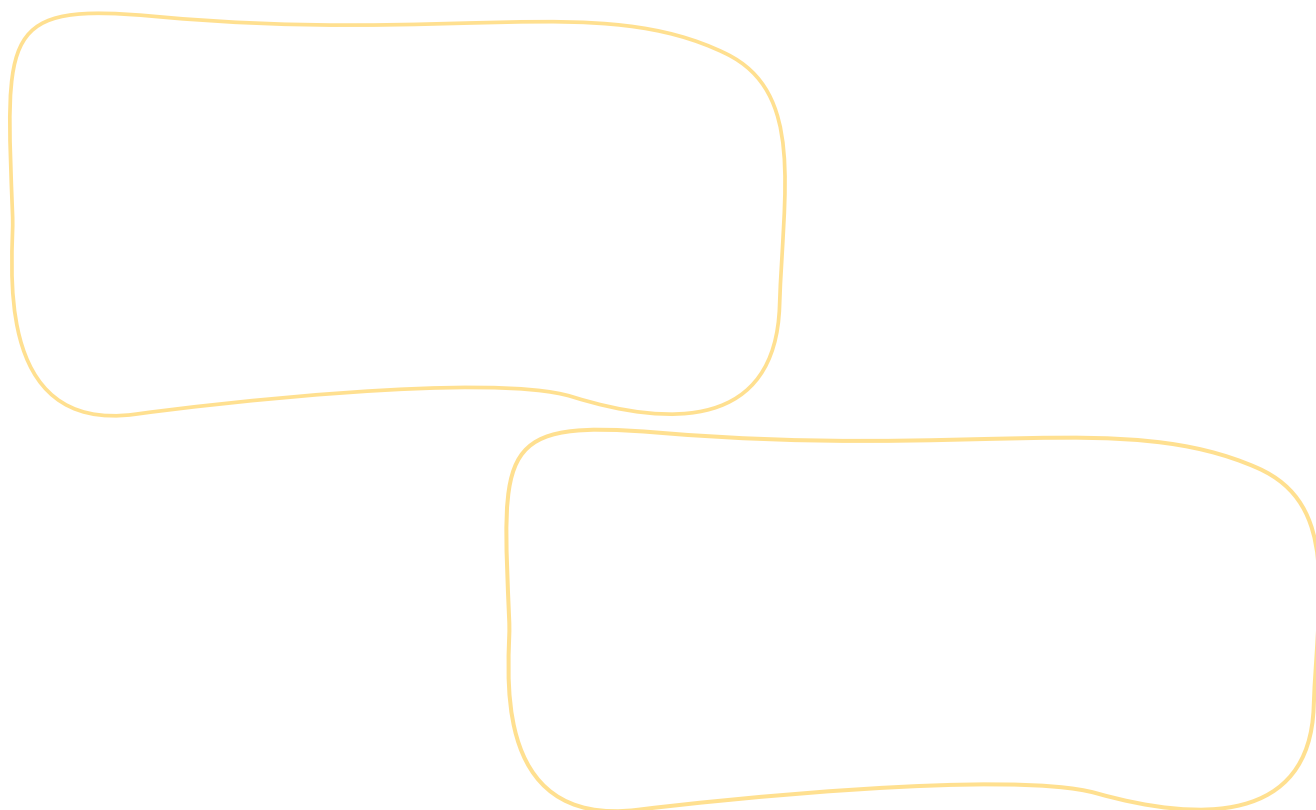
Makarrata

At the foundation of global social and environmental justice is healing with first peoples. 'Makarrata', from the Yolgnu people of north-eastern Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, is a complex word about peacemaking and the coming together after a struggle. It is used in the 2017 'Uluru Statement of the Heart' to describe the hope of First Nations peoples of this land for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia.

Rap a Snapshot

Rap, tap, drum, hum, sing out a tune. Write a rap message, get on to it soon as you can, form an 'air band' plan a play, show and say, give a way we all can recall, what we learnt today.

Write / sketch your ideas



Play with the key messages from the Module. Say them out loud, put a rhythm to the sentences, add beatbox, dance and rhyme sometime!