

# Decision Education Foundation English Curriculum

## The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle

by Avi

### Unit Snapshot

<b><i>Designed For</i></b>	Middle School Students
<b><i>Essential Questions</i></b>	Who controls my life? How is what I want related to what I do? How does perspective affect my experience of the world?
<b><i>Content and Skill Focus</i></b>	<p>Decision Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Framing a decision well leads to finding the best alternatives and information for the situation.</li><li>• Feelings can be as important as logic in good decision making.</li><li>• Values help define alternatives.</li></ul> <p>English Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attention to detail makes analysis powerful.</li><li>• Clear writing includes pertinent detail not <i>all</i> information available.</li></ul>
<b><i>Expected Outcomes</i></b>	<p>Students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify different kinds of decision situations,</li><li>• explain how enlarging the frame affects a decision,</li><li>• evaluate characters' decisions in the story,</li><li>• recognize different roles in decision making,</li><li>• create a basic decision tree,</li><li>• apply the concepts of frame, values, information, head and heart to a decision situation.</li></ul>
<b><i>Kinds of Assessment</i></b>	Five in-class exercises Writing Assignment: If you were Charlotte, would you make the same decision to escape on the Seahawk? Decision Tree Activity
<b><i>Time Required</i></b>	Six class periods
<b><i>Comments</i></b>	A Newbery Honor Book with a gripping plot line, <i>The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle</i> is a first person narrative of a teenage girl's unusual experience crossing the Atlantic in the <i>Seahawk</i> —a two-masted brig. Many characters make important choices throughout this adventure, and as Charlotte tells her story, we see her makes significant, even life-threatening decisions.

(Version 7)

# Overview

**General Description:** In addition to helping students read and analyze *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*, this unit for students in grades 5-7 explores the role of frames, values, and information in decision situations. These exercises are intended to supplement an already existing unit plan for the novel. Lesson are divided into three parts and apply to what students read in Chapters 1-3, 4-10, and 11-12. Once the class finishes the novel, students apply what they have learned to a final exercise related to Chapter 22.

**Duration:** This unit is designed for six periods and additional time out of class for students to complete an essay assignment. Although presented as a sequence of 1 to 6 class periods, the Learning Plan can be easily adjusted to meet the needs of particular classes. It is expected that teachers will add class time, lesson plans, and exercises as needed.

**Summary:** A Newbery Honor Book with a gripping plot line, *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* is a first person narrative of a teenage girl's unusual experience crossing the Atlantic in the *Seahawk*—a two-masted sailboat (brig) one-hundred seven feet in length and weighing close to seven hundred tons. Charlotte, the narrator, follows her family from England, where she has just finished the school year, to her home in Providence, Rhode Island. Mystery and suspense arise almost immediately when the two families who were supposed to accompany Charlotte fail to appear for the voyage, and she finds herself, after having been warned by members of the crew not to take the trip, the sole passenger on the *Seahawk*. Two months of adventures on the ship change Charlotte's assumptions about the world and her place in it, and conflict continues even once the hardships at sea are over and she rejoins her family.

The novel provides a variety of exciting situations for students to examine as they explore and practice basic principles of good decision making. At the beginning of the story Charlotte tells the reader that her father gave her “a volume of blank pages” and instructed her to keep a daily journal of her experiences on the ship. Charlotte says, “Keeping that journal then is what enables me to relate now in perfect detail everything that transpired during that fateful voyage across the Atlantic Ocean in the summer of 1832” (page 3).<sup>1</sup>

The following lesson plans focus on four choices Charlotte makes:

- 1) her decision to take the journey on the *Seahawk* (Chapters 1-3);
- 2) her decision to reveal to Captain Jaggery the crew's plans for mutiny (Chapters 1-9);
- 3) her decision to join the crew (Chapters 10-12);
- 4) and her decision once safely back home with her family to sail away on the *Seahawk*.

There is an additional tree exercise that explores the choice Charlotte makes in her final confrontation with Captain Jaggery in Chapter 21. These decisions provide rich material for exploring how clear values and useful information influence the frame of a decision and ultimately help us choose well among alternatives. Teachers can easily choose among the topics that will most benefit their students.

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<sup>1</sup> Page numbers refer to the Avon Camelot edition of the novel published by Avon Books, Inc., New York, New York, 1997.

# *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*

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# 1. Learning Plan

## First Class: Kinds of Decisions and Decision Roles

Once students have read Chapters 1-3 (through page 34)

### Materials

Handout 1—Different Kinds of Decision Situations

Teacher Resource 1—Sample Responses for Teachers: Exercise 2

### Procedures

- Begin with a class discussion of the following question:

*Who controls your life?*

Once students have had time to share their thoughts, follow up with the question

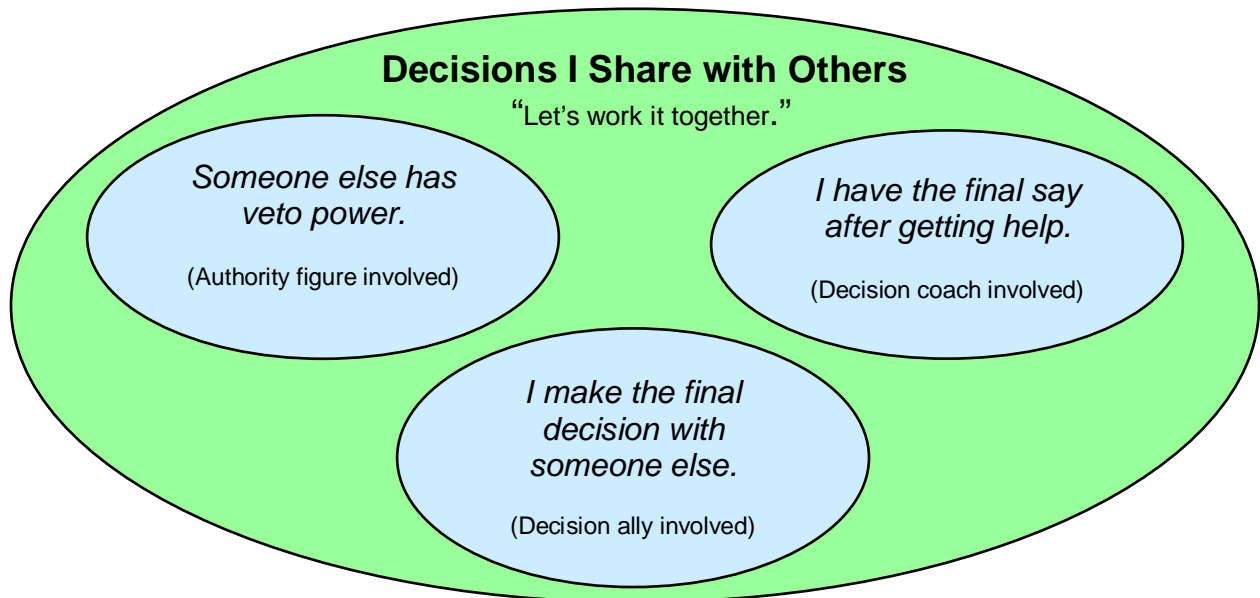
*What decisions do you make and what decisions do others make for you?*

- Give students the first page of **Handout 1** and discuss the various kinds of decision situations.
- Have students complete **Exercise 1** in class. Collect and discuss results.
- Hand out **Exercise 2** (second page of **Handout 1**) and explain homework assignment.

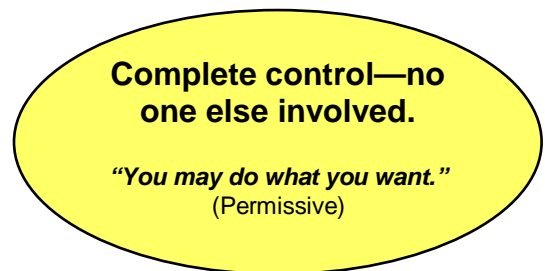
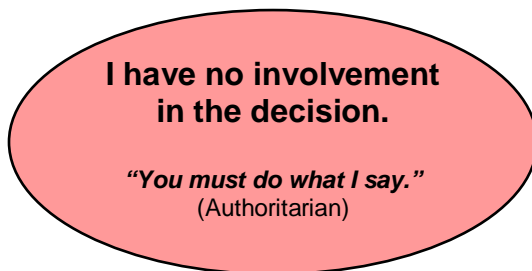
### Next Steps

- **Homework:** Students complete **Handout 1, Exercise 2: How much control does Charlotte have in the decision to set sail on the Seahawk?**  
**Note:** Teachers can choose to have students complete any of the homework assignments in class. These exercises can also be adapted for groups.
- Discuss results during the next meeting with the group. Use **Teacher Resource 1** for sample responses.

## Handout 1. Different Kinds of Decision Situations



### Decision Situations without Collaboration

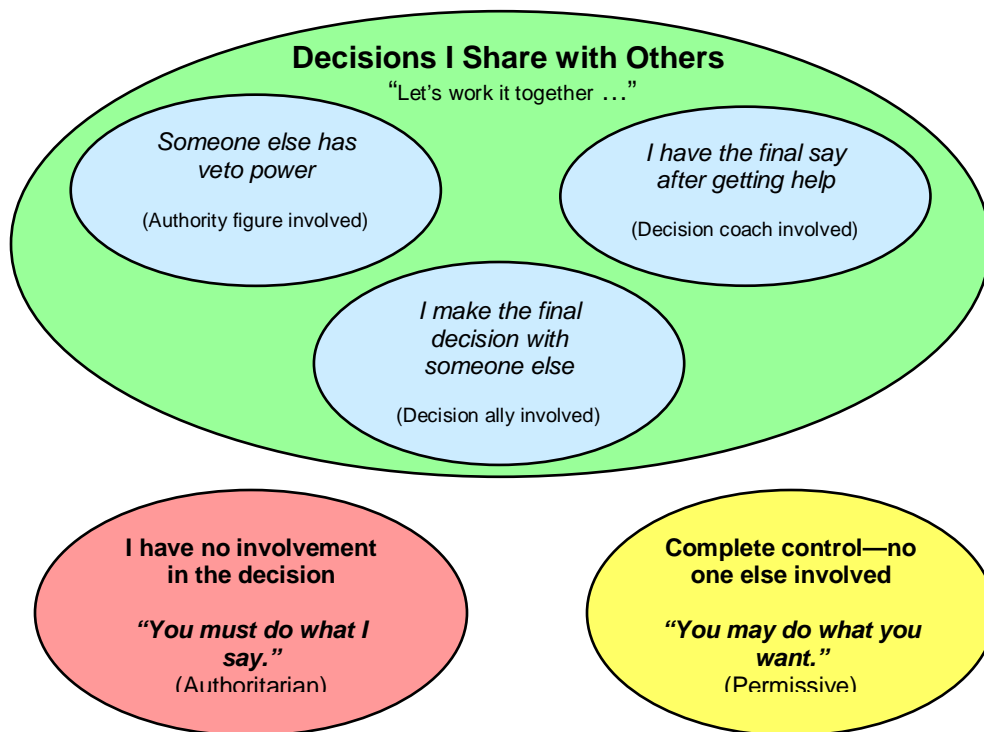


**Exercise 1:** Give examples from your own life or ones you have observed (from books, TV, movies) of the five decision situations described above. See if you can describe one example for each kind.

**For example:** Think about characters and their decisions in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Where would you place Augustus Gloop, Veruca Salt, and Mike Teavee? How about Charlie?

## Exercise 2: *How much control does Charlotte have in the decision to set sail on the Seahawk?*

**First Step:** Check one of the five smaller circles below that you think best describes Charlotte's decision situation.

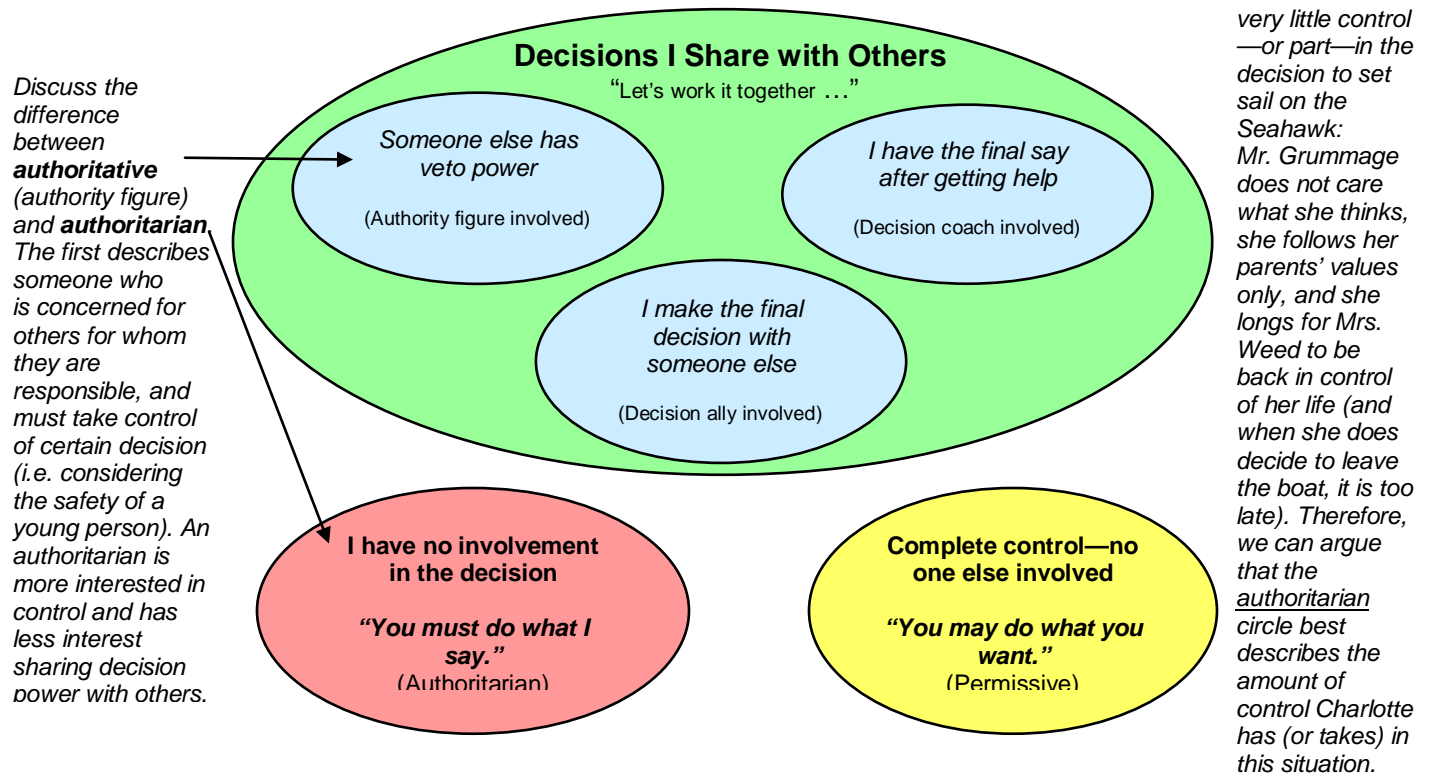


**Second Step:** Fill in the table below with evidence that supports your choice.  
 (*Hint:* Begin with a look at Charlotte's conversation with Mr. Grummage on page 15.)

Page #	Passage Description	Explanation

## Teacher Resource 1. Sample Responses for Teachers: **Exercise 2:** How much control does Charlotte have in the decision to set sail on the Seahawk?

**First Step:** Check one of the five smaller circles below that you think best describes Charlotte's decision situation.



Page #	Passage Description	Explanation
15	Charlotte expresses her concerns to Mr. Grummage about being the only girl on board.	In challenging Mr. Grummage, Charlotte uses her parents’ values—she is sure they would not want her to set sail because there are only men on board. Mr. Grummage takes complete control by calling her a girl unfit to make the judgment.
18	Using her trunk as a reason to leave the boat, Charlotte is frustrated when she gives in to Mr. Keetch’s decision to deliver the trunk to her.	Charlotte admits her upbringing leads her to obey adults unconditionally: “What could I do? All my life I had been trained to obey, educated to accept. I could hardly change in a moment.”
20-21	Barlow delivers the trunk and tells Charlotte he has been deputized by the rest of the crew to tell her to get off the ship.	She rejects Barlow’s warning citing her father’s control of the situation. Then she admits to herself how much she wants to leave the ship. Conflict between Charlotte and her father’s (or what she thinks are her father’s) values.
27	Charlotte awakes and decides to leave the ship before she sails.	Here Charlotte views the trip back to Mrs. Weed—who will “make the necessary decisions”—as a better alternative to setting sail on the Seahawk, and she resolves to leave the boat.
29, 33	Charlotte approaches Captain Jaggery to ask him to let her off the ship before it sets sail.	Sees Jaggery as a gentleman and, therefore, trustworthy. Will have same values as her parents. She approaches him with the comment that her father would not want her on the ship—again, father’s view is important to her. Jaggery laughs—it is too late.

**Note:** During the course of the novel, Charlotte changes **from** an innocent, protected girl who prefers relying on adults to make decisions for her **to** a thoughtful and careful decision maker who recognizes her own limited perspective.

## Second Class: Framing

Once students have read UP TO Chapter 10 (page 87)

### Materials

Handout 2—Frames

### Procedures

- Introduce framing with the first page of **Handout 2, Part a**.
- Once a few volunteers have a chance to share their stories, handout page 2 and discuss the changes. Have a few volunteers revise their stories.
- Give students **Handout 2, Part b**. Use the basketball story to explore the effect of a narrow frame.  
**Note:** Tom's basketball decision is included as a simple example to introduce framing before students work with Charlotte's decision frame in her choice to tell on the crew. The basketball story appears again in Handout 4 to help demonstrate how information and values affect the frame of a decision and to prepare students to analyze Charlotte's choice to change allegiance to the crew.
- Review directions for **Handout 2, Part c** with the class.

### Next Steps

**Homework:** Students should complete Student **Handout 2, Part c: What information, issues, and feelings define Charlotte's FRAME for the decision to tell on the crew?**



## Handout 2

### Part a. What's happening in the pictures below?

On the lines provided, write a brief story about what you see in the pictures.



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*What happens to the stories when we change the frames?*



***The FRAME defines the way we look at a decision.***

**Just like a border determines what we see in a photograph, a FRAME defines what we see in a decision situation.**

Part b. If a decision frame is too limited, it is hard make the best choice.

**Example:** *Tom is trying to decide whether or not to let Jerry, the new kid who is an excellent basketball player, join the pick-up game.*

### ***Narrow Frame***

I have a reputation as one of the best players in the school. My friends are watching the game, and I don't want to look foolish. He might be better than I am. What if he dunks over me? I don't want to lose my friends and their respect.

### ***More Helpful Frame***

- I love basketball and want to continue improving my skills so I can eventually play on the varsity team. Being challenged by a new, talented kid will make me a better player and might help me achieve that future goal.
- I remember what it is like to be the new kid in school—I longed to be included.
- Jerry seems to have a lot of the same interests I do—it might be fun to make a new friend and add him to the group.

***Tom's decision frame will determine the choice he makes.***

***Now consider one of Charlotte's decision frames...***

### ***Definitions:***

- A decision is a choice between alternatives which results in an action.
- We define good decisions by how we make them—not by the outcome.
- To be effective decision makers, we need to use helpful frames.

***While at the beginning of the voyage Charlotte clearly identifies with Captain Jaggery, throughout most of Part One her loyalty wavers between him and Zachariah. However, when Charlotte sees the round robin and the pistol in the crew's quarters, she chooses sides and reports the information to the captain (see pages 82-87). This choice has serious results and causes a major conflict in the story.***

***Use the table and question on the next page to explore Charlotte's FRAME for this decision.***

**Part c. What information, issues, and feelings define Charlotte's FRAME for the decision to tell on the crew?**

Reread the passages cited to find out. Write your responses in the spaces provided.

**pages 29-32:** Charlotte's reaction to seeing the captain for the first time.

**pages 37-41:** Charlotte's reactions to Zachariah's story about the crew.

**pages 42-51:** Charlotte's first visit to Captain Jaggery's cabin.

**pages 63-65:** Charlotte's conclusion about the "head" she saw in the cargo area.

**pages 68-69:** Charlotte's description of life on the boat and her relationship with the crew. **pages 71-73:** Charlotte's reaction to trying on the clothes Zachariah gives her.

**pages 82-87:** Charlotte's thoughts on why she tells Captain Jaggery.

## **Third Class: Elements of a Good Decision**

### **Materials**

Teacher Resource 2—Sample Responses for Handout 2, Part c  
Handout 3—Decision Quality

### **Procedures**

- Discuss homework. Use **Teacher Resource 2** for sample responses.
- Use **Handout 3** to discuss the place of framing within the elements of a good decision. In addition to the point at the bottom of the page, emphasize the questions relate to each element.
- Students can begin the next reading assignment.

### **Next Steps**

**Homework:** Students read Chapters 10-12.

## Teacher Resource 2. Sample Responses for Teachers: Handout 2, Part c

What information, issues, and feelings define Charlotte's FRAME for the decision to "tell on" the crew?

Reread the passages cited to find out. Write your responses in the spaces provided.

**pages 29-32:** Charlotte's reaction to seeing the captain for the first time.

*Views crew as "sorry a group of men as" she had ever seen. In contrast Jaggery is a "gentleman"—the kind of person Charlotte is used to. His fine coat, clean look impress her. In fact, she says just seeing him made her heart "leap joyously with recognition and relief." A familiar upper class face. She immediately assumes she can trust him and rely on him (before even meeting him).*

**pages 37-41:** Charlotte's reactions to Zachariah's story about the crew.

*It is too hard for Charlotte to believe that this gentleman Jaggery could be so cruel. She tells Zachariah that the captain is a "fine man." Perhaps most telling is her use of her father's phrase "I don't believe you!...Justice is poorly served when you speak ill of your betters." Charlotte's assumption that the upper class is inherently good defines her frame here. Father's influence.*

**pages 42-51:** Charlotte's first visit to Captain Jaggery's cabin.

*Charlotte is "charmed" by the elegance of the cabin, Jaggery's fine clothes, the fact that he is reading the Bible, and his good manners. Again, she is relieved to be in a setting that is more familiar to her. When Jaggery says, "people of our class—we understand the better things of life," Charlotte "blushes with pleasure" (p.44). Superiority of class is another way she defines her frame in this decision.*

**pages 63-65:** Charlotte's conclusion about the "head" she saw in the cargo area.

*As she dismisses what she experienced as the "foolishness of a "schoolgirl," we can hear her use the perspective of a scolding adult. Charlotte defines her decision frame using her father's views. Also time with Captain Jaggery is much more pleasant to her than the time with Zachariah—who told her unpleasant information. She chooses Jaggery's frame of the situation over Zachariah's.*

**pages 68-69:** Charlotte's description of life on the boat and her relationship with the crew. **pages 71-73:** Charlotte's reaction to trying on the clothes Zachariah gives her.

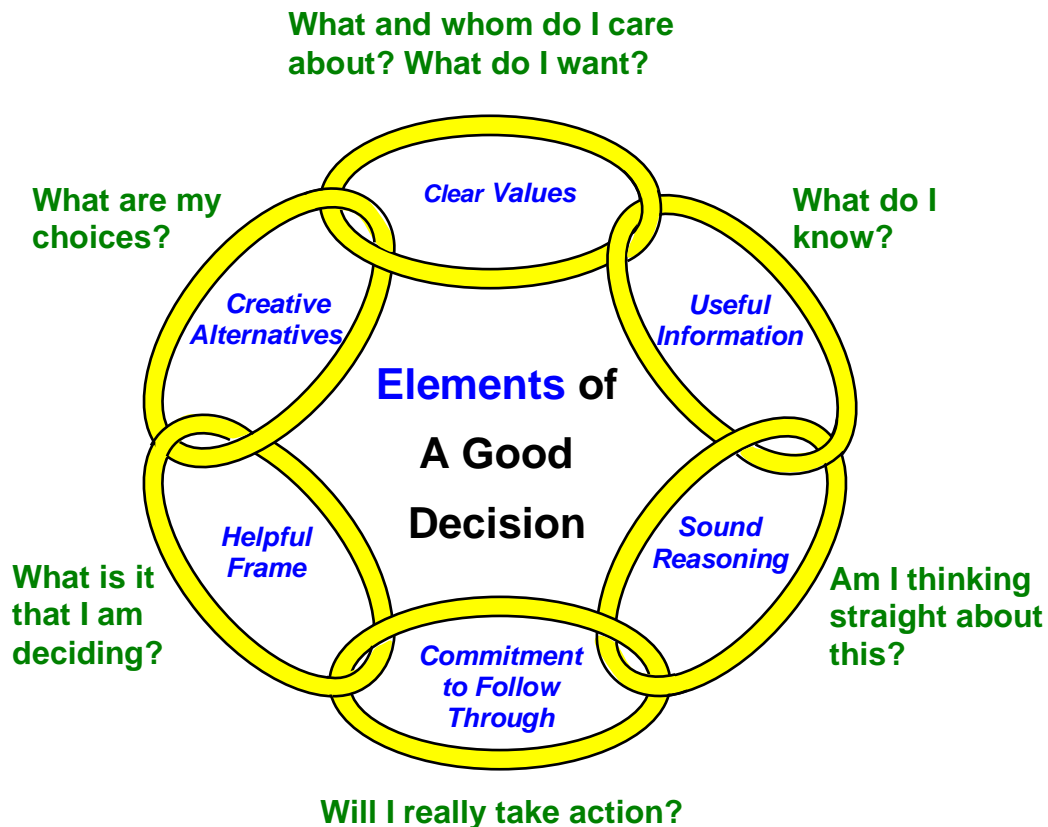
*Cherishes tea times with the captain because they are a reminder of the world as she knew it. Feels flattered by captain's attentions and looks down on crew as he does. Finds herself stooping (puts on clothes Z gave her), and resolves to maintain her distance: writes about the conduct of young woman and is pleased with Jaggery's commendation because she thinks his approval represents that of her father (p.71): using father's perspective in the frame.*

**pages 82-87:** Charlotte's thoughts on why she tells Captain Jaggery.

*Motivated by guilt at not having revealed all to Jaggery. Custom is also a way she defines the frame: it is what she should do because that is what is expected of someone of her upbringing and station.*

### Handout 3. Decision Quality

*We can improve decisions by carefully answering the questions related to the six links below.*



**Useful Information** and **Clear Values** help us build the best **Frame** for a Decision.

## **Fourth Class: Values and Information Influence the Frame**

### **Materials**

Handout 4—Tom’s Two Frames

Teacher Resource 3—Sample Responses for Handout 4

Handout 5—Charlotte’s Decision to Join the Crew

### **Procedures**

- Answer questions and review plot details in Chapters 10-12.
- Use **Handout 4** to return to Tom’s basketball decision example. Discuss how information and values influence a decision frame.
- Have students complete the exercise in small groups or individually.
- Discuss results. Use Teacher **Resource 3** for reference.
- Give students **Handout 5**. Review directions.

### **Next Steps**

**Homework:** Students complete **Handout 5**.



## Handout 4. Tom's Two Frames

### Frame 1

I have a reputation as one of the best players in the school. My friends are watching the game, and I don't want to look foolish. He might be better than I am. What if he dunks over me? I don't want to lose my friends and their respect.

### Frame 2

-- I love basketball and want to continue improving my skills so I can eventually play on the varsity team. Being challenged by a new, talented kid will make me a better player and might help me achieve that future goal.

-- I remember what it is like to be the new kid in school—I longed to be included.

-- Jerry seems to have a lot of the same interests I do—it might be fun to make a new friend and add him to the group.

Explore these two frames for Tom's decision by answering the questions below.

### FRAME 1

### FRAME 2

Clear  
Values

*What does Tom want?*

*What does Tom want?*

*What/Whom does Tom care about?*

*What/Whom does Tom care about?*

Useful  
Information

*What information does Tom consider?*

*What information does Tom consider?*

**Teacher Resource 3 Sample Responses for Handout 4: *Explore these two frames for Tom's decision by answering the questions below.***

	<b>FRAME 1</b>	<b>FRAME 2</b>
<b>Clear Values</b>	<p><b><i>What does Tom want?</i></b> Tom wants: to be popular; to be seen as the best basketball player in school; to keep current friends.</p> <p><b><i>What and whom does Tom care about?</i></b> He cares about his reputation—how others view him. He does not want to be shown up on the court.</p>	<p><b><i>What does Tom want?</i></b> Tom wants: to improve basketball skills; to make the varsity team; to make a new friend; to have fun.</p> <p><b><i>What and whom does Tom care about?</i></b> Tom puts himself in Jerry's place and now cares about Jerry as well as himself.</p>
<b>Useful Information</b>	<p><b><i>What information does Tom consider?</i></b> Friends are watching the game. Jerry could be a better player. Possibility of looking foolish and losing friends.</p>	<p><b><i>What information does Tom consider?</i></b> His own love of basketball. Jerry's basketball ability. Jerry's other interests. Memory of what it felt like to be new. Possibility of Jerry improving his (Sam's) game.</p>

**Note:** Point out to students that Tom's first frame is stuck in the present moment—a problem that we all face in decision situations. In the second frame, he considers information both from his past (what it felt like to be new) and the future (what it takes to become a varsity player). We can also argue that Tom clarifies his values in the second frame by considering an additional point of view (what it is like to be new). By stretching his decision frame, Tom is more likely to make the best choice in this situation.

Next, explain to students that they will use what they have learned in Tom's decision example to explore how new information and changed values affect Charlotte's decisions as the story progresses.

## Handout 5: Charlotte's Decision to Join the Crew

**What causes Charlotte to switch her allegiance from Captain Jaggery to the crew?**

**Step 1:** Early in the story Charlotte tells us that the crew were

*as sorry a group of men as I had ever seen: glum in expression, defeated in posture, with no character in any eye save sullenness. They were like men recruited from the doormat of Hell. (page 29)*

Why, later on, does she decide to join their ranks? Spend a few minutes listing below all the reasons you can think of for why Charlotte puts on the pants and shirt Zachariah gave her and asks to work as a crew member.

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## **Fifth Class: Charlotte's Decision Continued**

### **Materials**

Handout 6—Charlotte's Decision Part 2  
Teacher Resource 4—Sample Responses for Handout 6

### **Procedures**

- Discuss student responses to **Handout 5**.
- Have the class complete the dramatic reading exercise described in **Handout 6**.
- Class regroups for discussion of the students responses. See specific instructions for discussion in the handout. Use **Teacher Resource 4** for reference.

### **Next Steps**

**Homework:** Students finish reading the novel. Time will vary according to reading skills, and teachers can add additional comprehension exercises.

## Handout 6. Charlotte's Decision Part 2

**Four Scenes.** Complete the following dramatic reading exercise.

a. Your teacher will assign each group one of the following scenes:

***Cranick's Death*** (pages 90-95)

Speaking Parts: Narrator, Cranick, Jaggery, Charlotte, Hollybrass, Zachariah

***Zachariah's Punishment*** (pages 96-101)

Speaking Parts: Narrator, Jaggery, Charlotte, Hollybrass, Zachariah

***In Jaggery's Cabin and Zachariah's Funeral*** (pages 102-107)

Speaking Parts: Narrator, Jaggery, Charlotte, Fisk

***Conversation with Mr. Fisk*** (pages 108-112)

Speaking Parts: Narrator, Jaggery, Morgan, Charlotte, Fisk

b. Assign parts and read aloud together (twice—first time for practice) as if the scene were from a play or movie script.

c. Discuss the scene. Make a list below of the specific reasons your group sees in this passage for why Charlotte decides to join the crew.

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d. Review your list and decide whether your reasons are related to new *information* or *clear values*. Label each item accordingly with an "I" for *information* or a "V" for *values*.

e. Share your findings with the class.

**Directions for teachers:** Draw or project the following table on the board (give students blank copies), and fill it in during class discussion as groups report on their findings. (Sample responses included on next page.)

	INFORMATION	VALUES
Cranick's Death		
Zachariah's Punishment		
Jaggery's Cabin/ Zachariah's Funeral		
Conversation with Mr. Fisk		

## Teacher Resource 4--Sample responses for Handout 6

### Cranick's Death (pages 90-95)

### Zachariah's Punishment (pages 96-101)

### Jaggery's Cabin/ Zachariah's Funeral (pages 102-107)

### Conversation with Mr. Fisk (pages 108-112)

INFORMATION	VALUES
<p>--Jaggery shoots Cranick in cold blood—captain's cruelty revealed</p> <p>--Jaggery refuses burial rights</p> <p>--Captain keeps his cruel actions out of ship's log—reveals his deceitfulness</p> <p>--Jaggery mistreats Charlotte by asking her to pick a crew member to punish</p>	<p>--Zachariah "wonderfully calm" in the midst of chaos—Charlotte values this quality more than Jaggery's violence and deceitfulness.</p> <p>--Charlotte realizes she cares about the crew (page 95)</p>
<p>--Zachariah forgives Charlotte and the crew (acts like a <i>true</i> gentleman) page 97</p> <p>--Jaggery's cold heart is evident as he baits the crew</p> <p>--Jaggery forces Charlotte to watch the whipping (not the actions of a gentleman and protector): uses her as witness</p> <p>--In a fit of anger Jaggery beats Zachariah (opposite of Z.'s calm control)</p>	<p>--Charlotte sees situation is not fair (page 99)</p> <p>--As Jaggery criticizes her, Charlotte breaks from Captain's view of logic for right and wrong (page 99)</p> <p>--Charlotte finds herself alone desiring connection with others (page 101)</p>
<p>--In his heated rejection of her, Charlotte learns Jaggery is two-faced—has only been using her as an unwitting spy</p> <p>--Charlotte sees crew's care for Zachariah</p> <p>--Crew loathes Charlotte because of her friendship with the Captain</p> <p>--Charlotte is further isolated</p>	<p>--Charlotte realizes Jaggery has been unspeakably cruel (page 102)</p> <p>--In contrast to Jaggery, Charlotte understands and accepts responsibility for her actions—she wants to be honest and connected to others, and that is why she seeks the Captain's forgiveness (Captain values revenge, Charlotte prefers harmony &amp; honesty) (page 103)</p>
<p>--Captain's restructuring of the jobs for the crew creates more unnecessary suffering (page 108-9)</p> <p>--Charlotte seeks understanding from Fisk about Captain's assignments.</p>	<p>--Charlotte feels guilt and remorse (page 111)</p> <p>--Charlotte wants to convince the crew that she accepts her responsibility in all the trouble: she values their acceptance</p> <p>--Admits her "head" (logic) was wrong, not her "heart"—she cares about the crew and her own mistakes (page 111)</p>

**Important Note:** Point out to students that while struggling with this complicated situation, Charlotte exhibits two good decision making habits: 1) she makes herself imagine what people she respects would do in her situation (see page 105); 2) she also pays attention to BOTH her head (logic) AND her heart (how she feels about the situation) as she decides (see page 112).

## Sixth Class: Charlotte Leaves Home

### Materials

Handout 7—New Information and Clear Values  
Writing Assignment  
Decision Trees: Additional Activity for Understanding Choices

### Procedures

- Class discussion: Review plot details and questions from the reading.
- Give students **Handout 7** and use it to review both the novel and the decision elements.
- Students work on the three question individually or in groups as a pre-writing exercise for the final essay.
- Discuss responses and welcome disagreement.
- Discuss the **Writing Assignment** (see **Assessment** for specific directions).

### Next Steps

- **Homework:** Complete writing assignment. Again, amount of time needed will vary according to how teachers plan the various writing steps both in and out of class.
- Use **Additional Activity for Understanding Choices** to explore both the use of decision trees and Chapter 21.



## Handout 7. New Information and Clear Values

As she wrestles with the problem of what to do after she reveals the crew's plan to Captain Jaggery...

### *...new information and clear values help Charlotte*

- better understand the issues at hand: *Jaggery's real character*
- see clear choices: *Stick with Jaggery; hide in her room; join the crew*
- know where to focus her effort in deciding: *Be responsible for her actions*
- change her mind and commit to the best choice: *Crew more honorable than Captain*

The added information and values she considers lead to a brand new FRAME for the situation:

- In the beginning of the voyage, Charlotte focuses mostly on her own safety; now she includes concern for others.
- Understanding that Zachariah acts like a true gentleman and that Jaggery is a gentleman in name and station only, changes Charlotte's perspective of the situation.

Now consider Charlotte's decision (Chapter 22) to leave her home and family in order to sail away on the *Seahawk*.

1. List the information she uses to make this decision:

2. What values does she think about as she wrestles with the situation?

3. Think about Charlotte's view of her father at the beginning of the story and at the end. How has her frame changed in her decision to return to the *Seahawk*?

## Decision Trees: Additional Activity for Understanding Choices: Chapter 21

### **Part 1.** *Decision Trees help us understand a problem.*

**Imagine a tree with a number of branches.**



**1. What are the different parts of the tree? List them below.**

**2. How does the tree grow?**

**3. Look at the list you made in number 1 above. What does each part play in the tree's growth and health? Which part is most important?**

**Notes for teachers:** As you discuss responses with your students, emphasize the following points.

***1. What are the different parts of the tree? List them below.***

roots, trunk, branches, leaves, fruit

***2. How does the tree grow?***

Rain waters a seed and sun warms the earth around it causing roots to sprout and a sapling to appear. With the continued influence of nutrients from the earth, rain, and sun, the tree grows a trunk with branches spreading from it. Eventually the branches sprout leaves, and if it is a fruit tree, blossoms appear and then fruit.

***3. Look at the list you made in number 1 above. What does each part play in the tree's growth and health? Which part is most important?***

The roots provide water and nutrients for the rest of the tree.

The trunk supports the branches, the branches sprout leaves and support the blossoms and fruit.

When the time is right, we pick the fruit and enjoy it!

Once students have had a chance to defend their positions on which part is most important, point out that each part serves a unique and essential function in the tree's growth and health. The tree needs all parts to thrive.

## Part 2. A DECISION TREE is like a real tree turned on its side.

Now imagine the tree turned on its side.

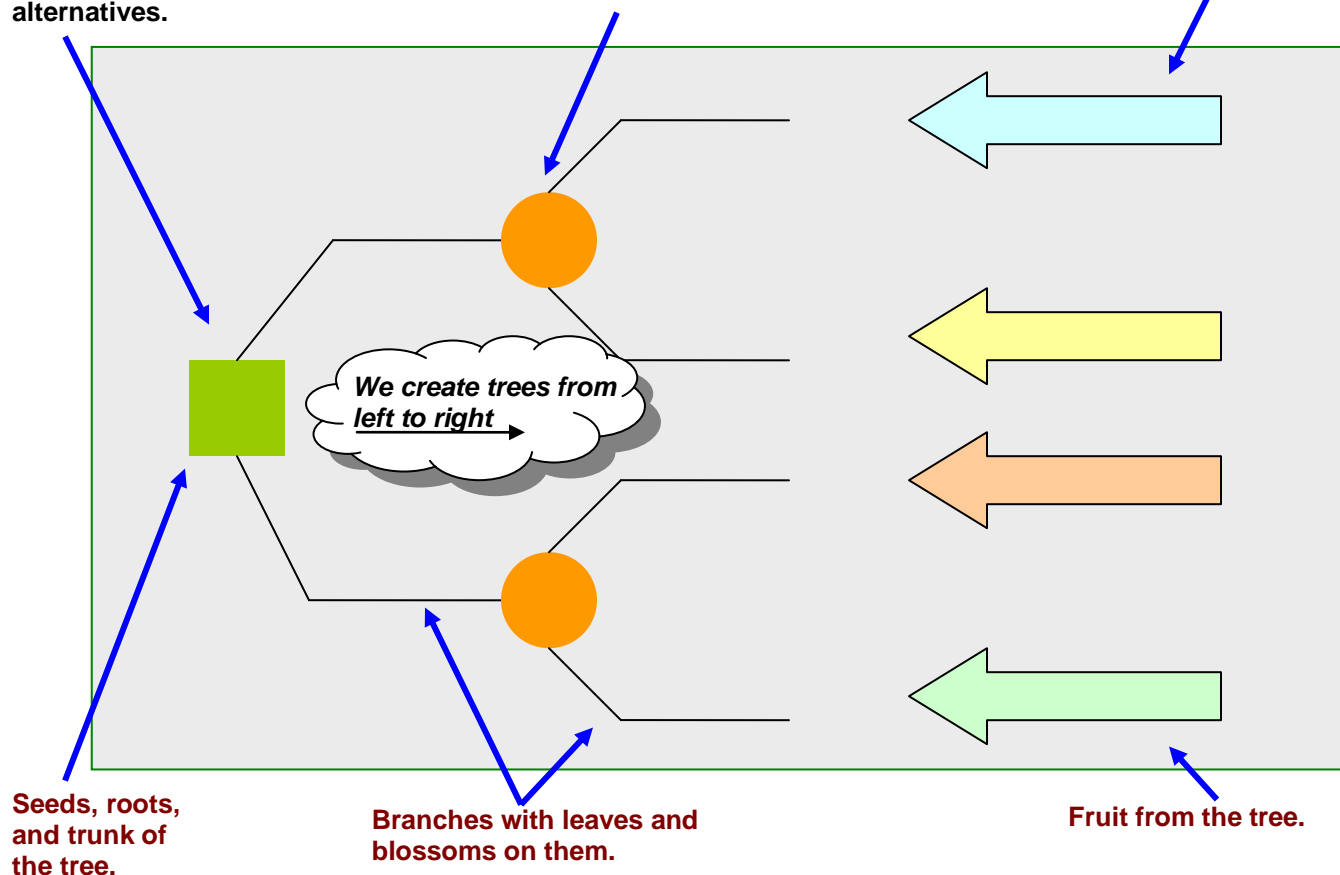


Here's what a decision tree looks like...

**SQUARES** represent the decision: a choice between two or more alternatives.

**CIRCLES** represent the uncertainties about each alternative.

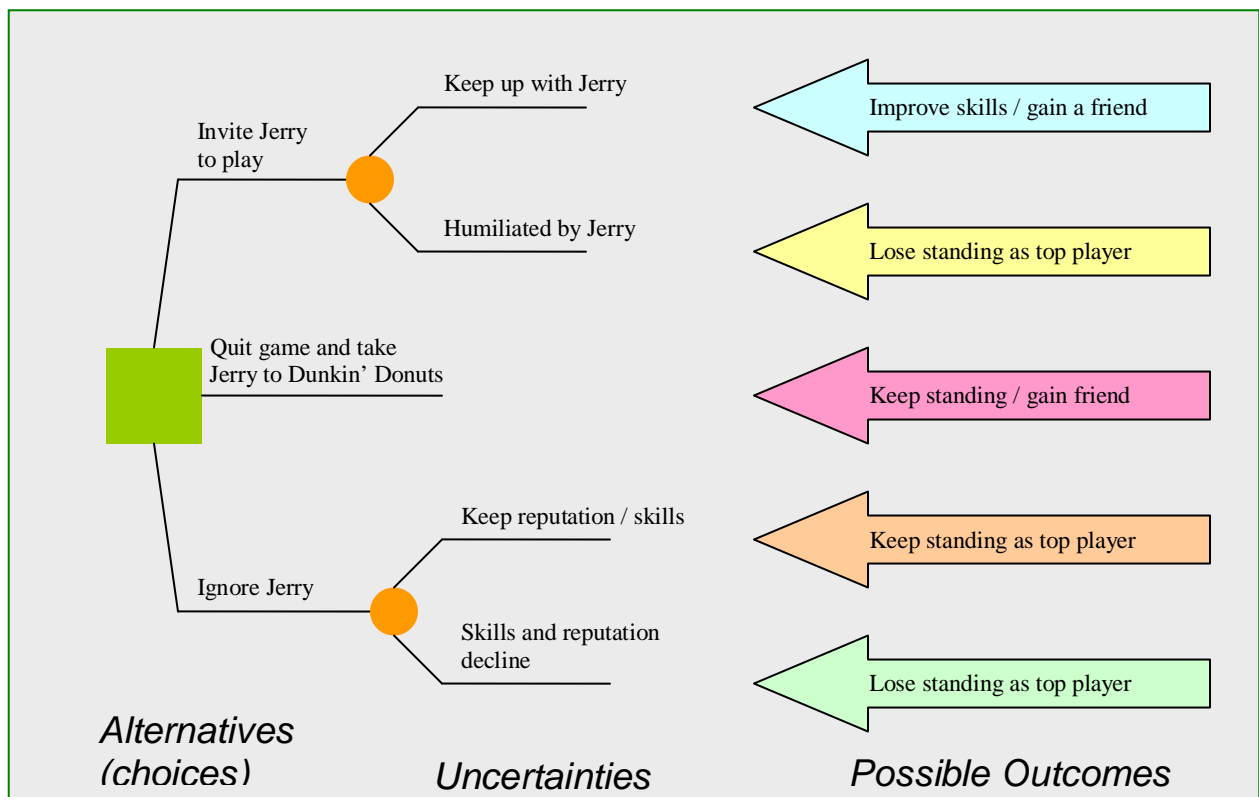
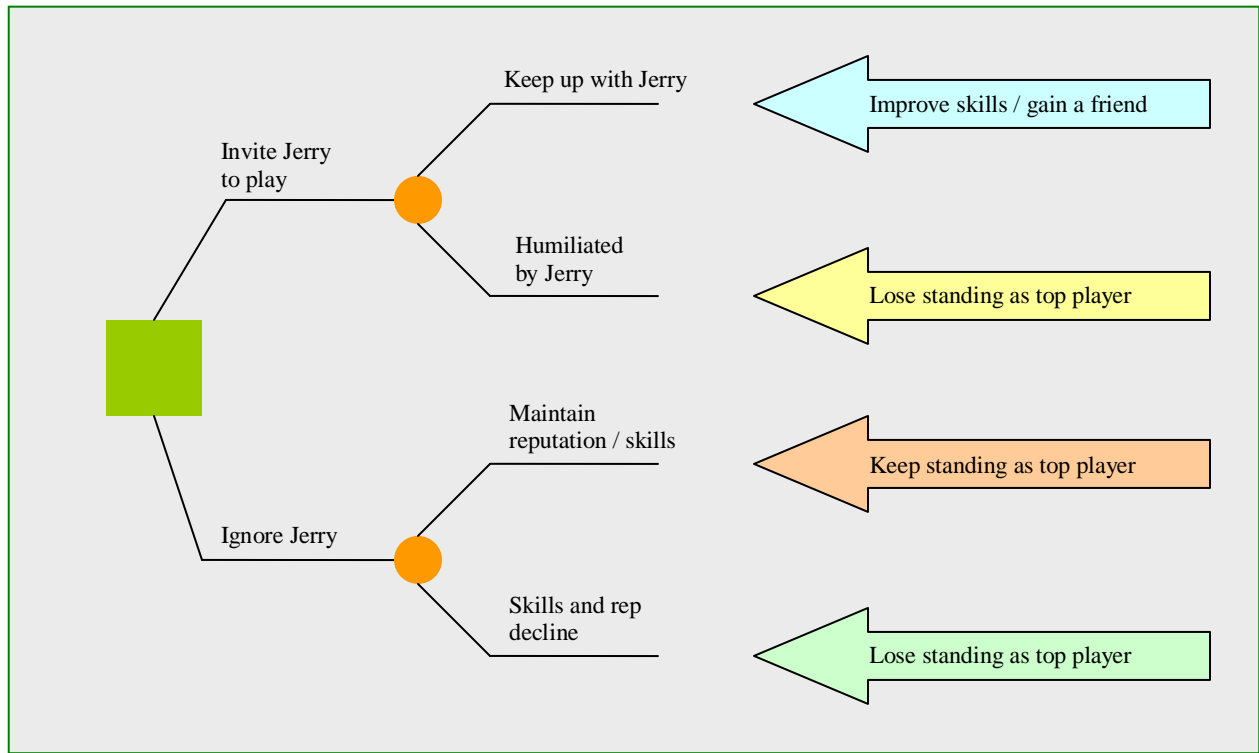
Each branch of the tree has a different **OUTCOME**.



### Some comparisons between real trees and decision trees...

- Just as the earth, water, and sun make a tree grow, we use our minds, hearts, and imaginations to create and solve decision trees.
- Like real trees, decisions come in many varieties: some are easy and quick and others are complicated and take longer to solve.
- Getting the best fruit takes time and effort (pruning, feeding, spraying). Does the farmer's time and effort guarantee a good outcome?

**A Decision Tree in Action--**Let's return to Tom's decision whether or not to include Jerry in a pick-up basketball game. Below are two examples of trees that describe Tom's decision problem. The first has two choices and the second has three.



**Part 3. Now use a tree to describe Charlotte's decision situation when she seeks Jaggery's forgiveness for whipping him in the face. Reread Chapter 21, pages 200-202.**

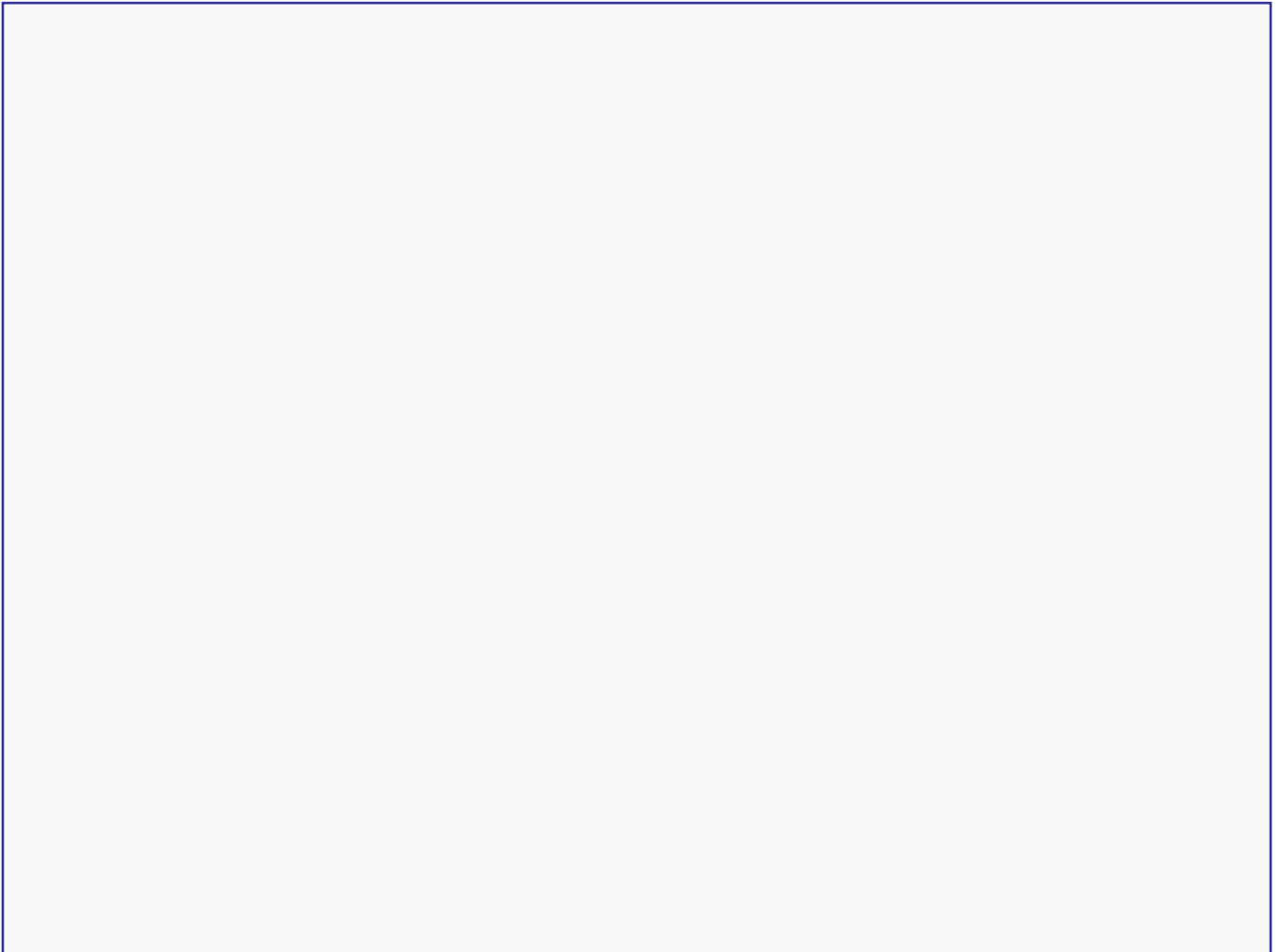
When Charlotte calls Captain Jaggery "mad," he responds with the following statement:

*On the contrary, Miss Doyle, I am the soul of reason. And to prove my reasonableness I'm going to give you some choices.*

- a. List the choices Jaggery gives Charlotte and next to each one describe the possible outcomes.

Alternatives (choices)	Possible Outcomes

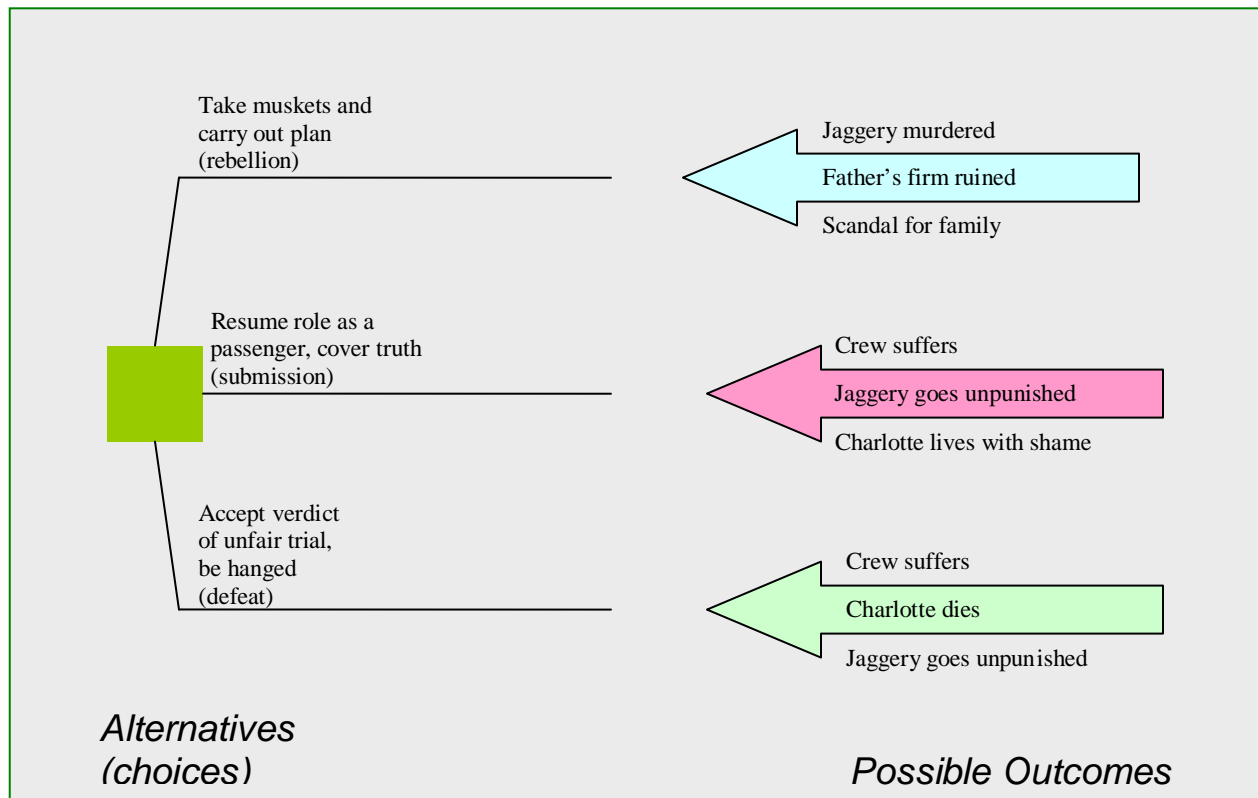
- b. Draw a decision tree that includes on the left the choices (alternatives) Jaggery gives Charlotte. Next to each choice, write the possible outcomes.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for drawing a decision tree. The box is light gray and occupies the central portion of the page.

- c. What choice does Charlotte end up making? Why? What are the outcomes you think she imagines happening?**

## Sample decision tree for teachers (Part 3, b above)

### Choices Jaggery offers Charlotte



### Important note to discuss with Students:

In this dramatic, split second situation, Charlotte exhibits good decision-making skills by refusing to confine her thinking to someone else's frame (Jaggery's) and discovering a new creative alternative:

'Now, what shall it be?' he clasped his hands, sat again in his chair and waited.  
'What if I don't accept any of them?'  
He hesitated. 'Miss Doyle, I thought I made it clear. There are no other choices.'  
'You are wrong,' [she] said. And so saying [she] turned and rushed out of his cabin, along steerage and into the waist of the ship. (page 202)

Here we see Charlotte's growth, for instead of listening uncritically to the adult figure who is in charge of her (as she does numerous times in the beginning of the story), she now makes her own choice—using her own values and judgment. The decision signifies her new freedom from narrow thinking and feeling, and the outcome of her choice is that she saves her own life and brings justice to the all aboard ship.



## 2. Assessment

### Writing Exercise

Put yourself in Charlotte's place at the end of the novel, and use the information you gathered in Student Handout 6 to answer the following question:

*If you were Charlotte, would you make the same decision to escape on the Seahawk?*

**More specific directions:** Write a five paragraph response according to the guidelines below.

**Paragraph 1.** Describe the **information** that Charlotte gathers and uses for this decision once she returns home. What is it like for her to be home? What happens to her? What surprises her?

**Paragraph 2.** Describe Charlotte's **values** in making the choice. What exactly does she care about now that she has returned home? What doesn't she want? How is what she values (cares about) different from what her parents want?

**Paragraph 3.** Describe Charlotte's **frame** (view of the problem) for making this decision. How has her journey on the *Seahawk* changed her view of the world? Look back at her comments at the beginning of the novel about her father, Captain Jaggery, and the crew.

**Paragraph 4.** Conclude your essay with a discussion of your opinion of Charlotte's decision. Begin the paragraph with one of the following sentences:

*I would make the same decision Charlotte made because...*

*I would make a different decision because...*

Complete the paragraph with three of four sentences that explain your view as specifically as possible.

### 3. Resources on the Web

#### **Author's Official Website**

<http://www.avi-writer.com/index.html>

Includes biography, list of books, and some background on novel.

#### **Glencoe Library Literature Guide**

<http://www.avi-writer.com/index.html>

Specific activities for studying and understanding the novel.

#### **Class Zone—McDougal Littell**

<http://www.classzone.com/novelguides/litcons/true/guide.cfm>

Research and opening activities

#### **eThemes from eMints National Center**

<http://www.classzone.com/novelguides/litcons/true/guide.cfm>

Wealth of links to websites on the novel