

Analyzing a Situation

This modelling tool is incorporated into critical challenges at grade 11, however, it can be adapted for use at all grade levels.

Overview

These activities help students analyze a situation by identifying the relevant stakeholders, implied interests and underlying issues. First, they analyze a familiar scenario, one involving a pair of friends who hope to convince their parents or guardians to let them go to a movie. Students then research a topic and identify the stakeholders, interests and significant issues at the heart of their assigned topic.

Session One

Introduce analyzing situations

- Invite students to role play reporters for this activity. Suggest that an important skill of reporters is the ability to identify the different people involved in a situation, how they may be affected by it and what are the underlying issues that need to be addressed. Explain to students that they will practise by analyzing an everyday situation—two friends trying to convince their parents or guardians to let them go to a movie. Display a transparency/slide of [Going to the Movie](#) or distribute a print copy to each pair of students. Read the scenario aloud.

Identify stakeholders

- Ask students to name all individuals who seem to be significantly affected by this situation. Explain that people who are likely to be affected or, in other words, have a stake in a situation, are sometimes called “stakeholders.” You may want to invite students to suggest other individuals who have a less significant stake in the situation; e.g., the owner of the theatre, popcorn vendors, makers of the movie, police if there was an accident.

Identify stakeholders’ interests

- Invite individuals to identify the relevant facts and list them on the overhead or on a sheet of paper. As suggested in the Sample Issue Analysis chart below, the relevant facts in this situation are largely the various desires and concerns of the people involved. Explain to students that the above-mentioned people are stakeholders in this situation because they have something to gain or lose, depending upon how the situation is resolved. For each relevant fact, invite students to identify the individual or individuals affected and the values at stake. In doing this, help students distinguish the specific desire or concern (go to the movie, not pay for the movie) and the implied value or interest that will be affected

if this result materializes (be entertained, save money). It may help to ask students what basic value will be promoted/reduced if the individual's desire/concern comes about.

Sample Issue Analysis

Relevant Facts	Main Stakeholders	Implied Interests or Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George wants to attend the movie because he loves special effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fun/entertainment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill wants to attend the movie because he enjoys doing things with his friend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill • George 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fun/entertainment • friendship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George's parents are concerned about what will happen if he goes to the movie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George's parents • George 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safety • responsibility/maturity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George's parents are worried about the cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George's parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • money
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill's parents feel Bill is old enough to go to the movie with a friend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill's parents • Bill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill's parents are too busy to drive the boys to the movie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill's parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill's parents want Bill to complete his household chores before going to the movie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill's parents • Bill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responsibility/maturity • fairness to family

Determine issues

- Once the interests have been identified, invite students to look for issues that emerge from these competing values. Direct students to look over the class chart or their copies of **Going to the Movie** to uncover possible issues. Invite students to frame their issues in question form—as issue-based questions. Issue-based questions often begin with the following stems:

- Should people be . . . ? (Should George and Bill be expected to pay for their own movie? Should Bill be allowed to go to the movie if his chores are not completed?)
- Is it fair . . . ? (Is it fair to expect parents or guardians to give up their own time to drive their children to the movies?)
- What can be done to . . . ? (What can be done to make sure that George and Bill are safe if they go to the movie? What can be done to make sure that George and Bill will behave properly while at the movie?)
- Would it be better to . . . ? (Would it be better to teach Bill to be responsible by making him do his chores before he goes to the movie or by letting him go if he promises to finish them afterward?)

Invite students to identify the many issues raised by this situation. Briefly discuss students' opinions on each issue. Encourage students to suggest courses of action that promote as many of the stakeholders' interests as possible (e.g., If the boys did the household chores for Bill and his parents, they could show their maturity, earn money to pay for their movie and free up Bill's parents so they might drive the boys to the movie).

Review terminology

- Before moving to a practice example, review the following elements in the analysis of a situation:
 - stakeholders: the main individuals or groups who are or will be affected by the situation
 - interests: the basic values that may be affected positively or negatively depending on the outcome of the situation
 - issues: the contested matters or disagreements that lie at the heart of the situation.

Effective issue-based questions often identify the stakeholders and the competing interests that are at stake.

Apply to skateboarder situation

- Provide students with additional practice in analyzing a situation by inviting them to identify significant stakeholders, implied interests and underlying issues raised by a hypothetical set of facts involving skateboarders. Ask students to work individually or with a partner using the facts presented in [Skateboarders](#). Review the two sample answers before students embark on the activity.

Discuss criteria for stakeholder

- To assist in identifying the key stakeholders, invite students to consider the following criteria:
 - those for whom the situation has the greatest impact
 - those for whom the results will have the longest lasting effect

- o others who may not be directly affected but have a significant responsibility in the situation; e.g., government officials who establish the rules.

Session Two

Review issue analysis

- Invite students to share their responses to the skateboarder situation recorded in **Skateboarders**. Discuss any difficulties students encountered and explore possible solutions to the issues raised by the competing interests. As above, encourage students to suggest courses of action that promote as many of the stakeholders' interests as possible; e.g., many of the interests would be met if the merchants agreed to help turn the spare lot into a skateboard centre and if, in exchange, the skateboarders promised to wear helmets and not skateboard near the stores.

Introduce critical task

- When students understand how to analyze a situation for the stakeholders, interests and underlying issues, explain that they will research a particular aspect of the selected issue in anticipation of addressing the following critical challenge:

Identify the stakeholders, interests and issues involved in _____.

Assign topics

- Organize the class into groups, each focusing on a different topic or on a different aspect of the same topic; e.g., economic, environmental or political. Provide students with briefing sheets or appropriate references from textbooks or library resources as a basis for researching their assigned topic. Explain to students that they are to use the facts they will gather to identify the various stakeholders, interests and issues involved in their assigned topic. This analysis will be shared with the rest of the class.

Conduct research

- Suggest that students begin by reading the briefing sheets or other material that you have supplied. This material should provide sufficient information to complete the information aspect of the poster. Invite students to add new information. Indicate how much class time will be made available to them for gathering additional information. You may wish to assign some research for homework.

Session Three

Analyze information

- When students have completed their independent research, distribute a copy of **Uncovering the Issues** to each student. To use this chart, students:

- record their topic at the top of the page
- list 15 key facts about their topic in the left-hand column, using their briefing sheets and additional research as a source of ideas—suggest that students briefly summarize the key facts in their own words.
- per the class examples, list the stakeholders affected by the events or situations implied by these facts in the middle column
- record the implied interests in the right-hand column
- identify five issues that emerge from their analysis and record them in the box at the bottom of the page.

When framing their issues, encourage students to consider both the criteria for an issue-based question (e.g., raises important and interesting questions involving competing interests) and the question stems (e.g., Should people . . . ? Is it fair . . . ? What can be done to . . . ? Would it be better to . . . ?).

Share analysis with team members

- When all the students have completed **Uncovering the Issues**, explain that they are to work with one or two other students who researched the same topic to produce a common report. Direct each team of two or three students to compare their analyses. Based on these discussions, invite students to add any stakeholders, interests and issues that they had not already identified.

Present the reports

- Arrange for students to share their analysis with the rest of the class. Discuss any patterns that emerge across topics, for example, common stakeholders, different clusters of interests and interrelated issues.

Assessment

Assess the issue analysis

- Assess students' identification of the significant stakeholders, interests and issues as recorded in **Skateboarders** and in **Uncovering the Issues**. You may wish to use the rubric [Assessing the Analysis](#). According to this rubric, the assignment is assessed on three criteria:
 - key stakeholders
 - important interests
 - significant issues.

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Documents

The following documents are referenced in the above modelling the tools.
They can be adapted for your needs and re-saved.

Graphic Organizers

- [Going to the Movie](#) 
- [Skateboarders](#) 
- [Uncovering the Issues](#) 

Assessment

- [Assessing the Analysis](#) 