

**UNIT 1**  
**IDENTITY**  
**Upper secondary level**

**Making choices**  
**We shape our lives,**  
**and other people's too**

**1.1 Views on choices and identity**

Whose view do I agree with?

**1.2 Looking back: what choices made me the person I am?**

What choices have had the strongest impact on my life?

**1.3 Looking forward: three choices that shape our future lives**

Liberty consists in the ability to choose – or not to choose

**1.4 Which job suits me?**

My criteria for choosing a job

**Extension: job shadowing**

# Unit 1

## Identity

### Making choices

## Introduction for teachers

**"Who will my partner be?"**

**"Do we want to have children?"**

**"Which job will I choose?"**


### The focus of this unit: choices shape identities

These are three of the most important choices we make in our lives. In our teens and twenties, we ourselves looked for answers to these questions – and so do our students. By making these choices, we shape our identities – we decide what our lives will be like. Reversing these choices is painful and difficult, and as far as children are concerned, impossible. Our decisions not only impact on our own lives, but other people's too.


### Identity – An intimate, very personal topic

More than any other unit in this volume, this unit on the concept of identity probably comes closer to the students' most intimate experiences and wishes. The tasks in this unit are designed as choices. The method reflects the students' experience.

### Outline of unit 1

Lesson 1 introduces the students to the importance of making choices. In lesson 2, the students look back: what choices have had the strongest impact on their lives and identities? In lesson 3, the students look into the future, addressing the three key questions above. In lesson 4, they focus on one of these questions – choosing a job. A job-shadowing project is suggested as an extension (see  student handout 1.4).

### Constructivist concept of identity

In this unit the concept of identity is understood in a constructivist way. Our identity is not just there, as something static and complete, but rather our self develops throughout our lives, in a process of learning, and it is shaped by choices. Some choices are irreversible; others can be changed and corrected if we so wish (see  materials for teachers 1.3).

## Competence development: links to other units in this volume

### What this table shows

The title of this manual, *Taking part in democracy* focuses on the competences of the active citizen in democracy. This matrix shows the potential for synergy effects between the units in this manual. The matrix shows what competences are developed in unit 1 (the shaded row in the table). The strongly framed column shows the competences of political decision making and action – strongly framed because of their close links to taking part in democracy. The rows below indicate links to other units in this manual: what competences are developed in these units that support the students in unit 1?

### How this matrix can be used

Teachers can use this matrix as a tool for planning their EDC/HRE classes in different ways.

- This matrix helps teachers who have only a few lessons to devote to EDC/HRE: a teacher can select only this unit and omit the others, as he/she knows that some key competences are also developed, to a certain extent, in this unit – for example, making choices, understanding the pluralism of identities, exercising rights of liberty, responsibility in making choices that affect others.
- The matrix makes teachers aware of synergy effects that help the students to be trained in important competences repeatedly, in different contexts that are linked in many ways.

Units	Dimensions of competence development			Attitudes and values
	Political analysis and judgment	Methods and skills	Taking part in democracy Political decision making and action	
1 Identity	Making choices and reflecting on their impact  Choosing a job and reflecting on the criteria	Using models as analytical tools  Presentations  Taking part in discussions	Making up one's mind – identifying criteria, goals and priorities	Responsibility – being aware of how my choices affect others  Willingness and ability to be aware of personal wants, needs, and obligations
2 Responsibility				Mutual recognition
3 Diversity and pluralism	Individual choices create a rich diversity of identities			
6 Government and politics	Political decision making corresponds to individual choices. The goal of individual happiness corresponds to the goal of the common good		Arguing and debating in public (taking part when the community "makes up its mind")	Willingness and ability to listen to people with different interests and points of view
8 Liberty			Exercising rights of liberty	

## UNIT 1: Identity – Making choices

### We shape our lives, and other people's too

Lesson topic	Competence training/learning objectives	Student tasks	Materials and resources	Method
Lesson 1 Views on choices and identity	Clarifying personal standpoints and choices.  Through our choices, we tell others something about who we are, about our identities.	The students choose a quotation and give reasons for their choices.	📄 Materials for teachers 1.1 (three copies, with quotations cut into separate strips before the lesson).	Group work. Plenary discussion.
Lesson 2 Looking back: what choices made me the person I am?	The autobiographic perspective.  Our choices, and those of others, have a decisive impact on our lives.	The students reflect on what choices had a strong impact on their lives.	✍ Student handout 1.1. Flipcharts and markers in different colours, strips of paper (A6), glue or tape.	Individual work. Plenary discussion.
Lesson 3 Looking forward: three choices that shape our future lives	Making decisions, setting priorities.  Human rights give us options how to shape our future lives – we decide whether to take them.	The students reflect on key choices that affect their future lives.	✍ Student handout 1.2. Flipchart, markers.	Individual work with a handout. Plenary discussion.
Lesson 4 Which job suits me?	Identifying, balancing and prioritising criteria for a decision.  Key criteria for choosing a job are, “Which job corresponds to my interests and strengths?”	The students choose or refuse a job and give reasons for their choice.	✍ Student handout 1.3. 📄 Materials for teachers 1.2 (cut up into a set of job cards, with approx. 10 more cards than students in class).	Individual work with a handout. Plenary discussion.
Extension: job shadowing	Interviewing an expert; planning a research project.  Clarification of job options	The students plan and carry out a research project.	✍ Student handout 1.4.	Project.

## Lesson 1

### Views on choices and identity

#### Whose view do I agree with?

This matrix sums up the information a teacher needs to plan and deliver the lesson.


**Competence training** refers directly to EDC/HRE.

The **learning objective** indicates what students know and understand.

The **student task(s)**, together with the **method**, form the core element of the learning process.

The **materials checklist** supports lesson preparation.

The **time budget** gives a rough guideline for the teacher's time management.

Competence training	Clarifying personal standpoints and choices.	
Learning objective	Through our choices, we tell others something about who we are, about our identities.	
Student tasks	The students choose a quotation and give reasons for their choices.	
Materials and resources	Three copies of  materials for teachers 1.1, with the quotations cut into separate strips before the lesson.	
Method	Group work. Plenary discussion.	
Time budget	1. The students make choices.	15 min
	2. The students give reasons for their choices.	15 min
	3. The students compare and reflect on their choices.	10 min

#### Information box

In this lesson, the students make choices, and are introduced to the topic of choices through their personal experience. This is a task-based approach to the complex concept of identity, rather than a theory or text-based approach, in order to help the students realise that the concept of identity is connected with their lives in a very practical way.

Communication among the students dominates the lesson. A frontal seating arrangement would be counter-productive; therefore, if possible, the tables and chairs should be arranged around the walls (in a horseshoe setting).

## Lesson description

### 1. The students make choices

#### The students set the context

The teacher introduces the topic. Every day, throughout our lives, we make choices and decisions – what examples come to the students’ minds? The students answer and give examples from their experience. The teacher makes sure that they talk about the decisions, but that they do not go into further detail to discuss problems or their reasons behind their decisions. As many students as possible should take the floor for the first five minutes. The teacher need not discuss these statements; he/she observes what the balance is between everyday choices (buying a sandwich or a hot snack for lunch) and key decisions (choosing a job). The teacher points out what tendencies became apparent in the students’ choices.

#### The students choose a quotation

The teacher explains to the students that they will hear some quotations by authors from different countries, and from both ancient and modern times. Their task is the following:

- The students choose a quotation that they either strongly agree or disagree with.
- The students who have chosen the same quotation form small groups (no more than six members) and share their reasons for their choice. The groups appoint a speaker.
- After five minutes, the speakers each make a brief statement on the choices in the plenary round. They read the quotation and give the main reasons why the students in their group agreed or disagreed with it. If the students in a group hold different views, then the difference of opinion should be reported.

The teacher distributes the sets of quotations, presented on separate strips of paper, on the students’ tables around the room. In turn, each student who has been given a quotation reads it aloud to the class. Then the students begin with their task. The teacher watches them. If a group is too big he/she intervenes and makes sure that the students split into smaller groups. Several copies of the quotations are available in case this happens. The teacher takes note of which quotations the students have chosen and which they haven’t. He/she will not hear much of the students’ discussions, as many students will be talking at the same time, so the noise level will be like that in a café full of customers.

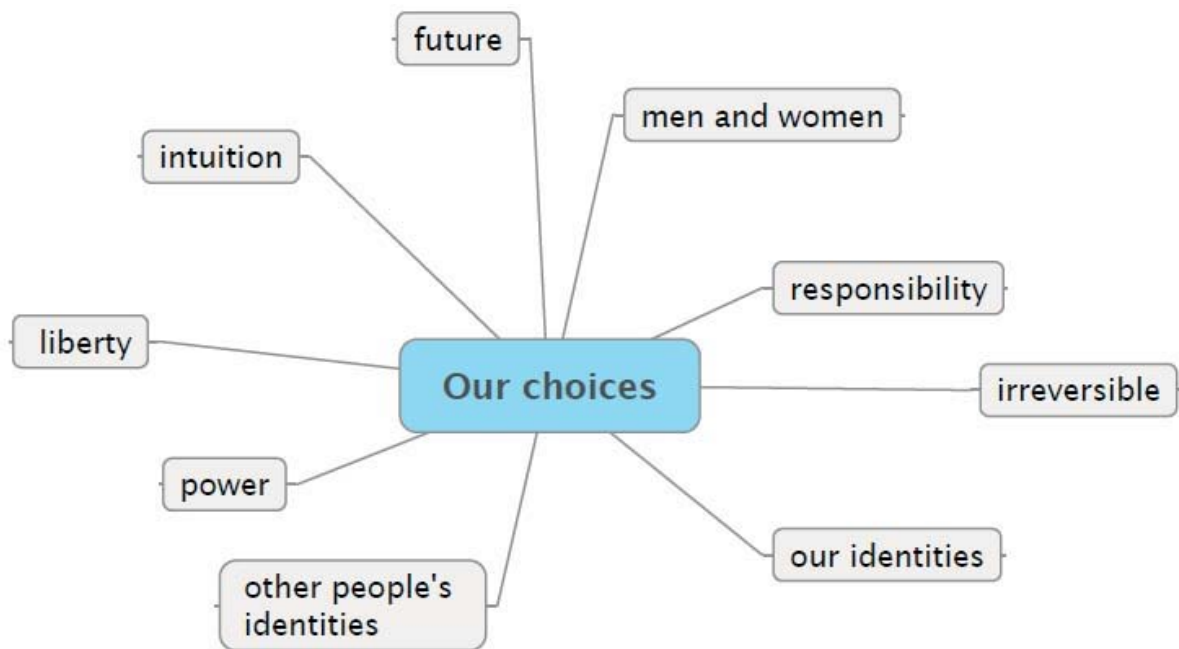
### 2. The students give reasons for their choices

#### The speakers make their statements

The teacher announces that discussion time in the groups is up and calls the students to attend the plenary round, chaired by the teacher. The students stay seated at their group tables. In turn, each speaker takes the floor. If necessary, the teacher reminds the speaker to report on the groups’ reasons for their choices, and the students may ask for more explanations. The teacher should make sure that no discussion starts before all speakers have spoken.

#### Teacher and students produce a mind map as a record

Before the next speaker takes the floor, the teacher asks the listeners to sum up the key statement that they have just heard, for example “Many of our choices are irreversible,” or “When making choices, we exercise rights of personal liberty.” The teacher – or a student – sums up the points in a simple mind map (see example below).



### 3. The students compare and reflect on their choices

#### The students read the mind map – a document of many choices

The mind map supports the concluding phase of reflection in this lesson.

The teacher asks one question to provoke thought – many different answers are possible, as the students are addressed as experts on their own behalf: the speakers have just reported on what the students think about the different quotations on making choices. The groups themselves were formed by the students' choices – so what does this mind map tell us about the students?

The students may need some time to think. They should have it – what could be better than a class full of students thinking hard in silence? Therefore this productive phase should not be terminated too soon by immediately giving the floor to the first student who puts up his or her hand. Several students may then speak. Many different views are possible, and they will vary depending on the context that the students have created through their choices and as is recorded in the mind map.

#### Conclusion: key statements

The teacher's task is to conclude the lesson by summing up the key statements for the students. They may be expressed directly, or they may occur as a leitmotif in several statements. The teacher notes keywords on the board or flipchart to support the summary:

1. In this lesson, the students have *made choices* when *talking about* choices.
2. The students have made *different choices*, for different reasons (here are some examples):
  - personal experience;
  - values;
  - gender;
  - concern for others, responsibility;
  - human rights;
  - ...
3. The students' choices show that they are different personalities – their choices tell us something about who they are, about *their identities*.

## Lesson 2

### Looking back: what choices made me the person I am?

#### What choices have had the strongest impact on my life?

This matrix sums up the information a teacher needs to plan and deliver the lesson.

Competence training refers directly to EDC/HRE.

The learning objective indicates what students know and understand.

The student task(s), together with the method, form the core element of the learning process.

The materials checklist supports lesson preparation.

The time budget gives a rough guideline for the teacher's time management.

Competence training	The autobiographic perspective.	
Learning objective	Our choices, and those of others, have a decisive impact on our lives.	
Student tasks	The students reflect on what choices had a strong impact on their lives.	
Materials and resources	✍ Student handout 1.1. Flipcharts, strips of paper (A6), markers in different colours, glue or tape.	
Method	Individual work. Plenary discussion.	
Time budget	1. The students explore what choices affected their lives.	15 min
	2. The students share their findings.	10 min
	3. The students discuss and reflect on their findings.	15 min

#### Information box

To a considerable extent, choices shape our identities. In this lesson, the students look back on their lives. In the following lesson, they switch their perspective and look forward into the future. The key question remains the same – by making choices, how do we shape our lives, and each other's too?

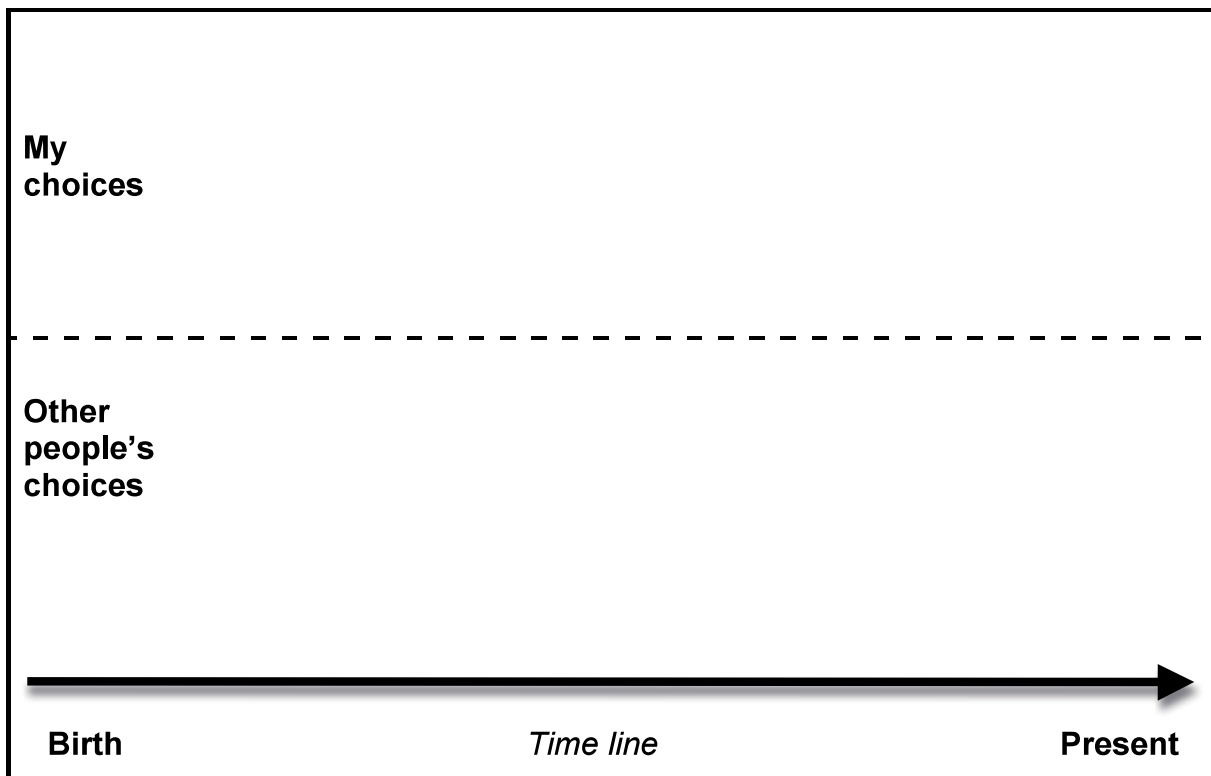
In this lesson, the students first reflect on their biographies in the context of this key question. Then they share some of their findings in the plenary session and compare them.



## Lesson description

### Preparations

Before the lesson begins, the teacher attaches a flipchart to the wall or the blackboard and copies the diagram from ↗ student handout 1.1.



### 1. The students explore what choices have affected their lives

#### The teacher introduces the task

The teacher introduces the key task of this lesson. The big version of the handout on the flipcharts serves as reference. The teacher recalls the last lesson: the students made choices, and this activity alone gave an insight into their different personalities. This lesson adopts a different perspective: what impact have choices had on our identities and our development in life? And who has made these choices? We ourselves? Or other people?

The chart on the flipcharts is the same as that on the handout that the students will receive. In the top half, the students note choices that they themselves have made, in the bottom half they note choices made by others. The timeline, running from left to right, covers their lifespan from birth to the present. The students can therefore indicate when a certain choice affected their identities.

#### The students adopt an autobiographic perspective

The students receive their copies of ↗ student handout 1.1 and work on their own in silence (10-15 minutes). They reflect on their personal experience from an autobiographic perspective. They are experts on their own behalf. Because of its intimate nature, the topic and the information is extremely important for each student, and they should decide what to share with the class in the following phase of the lesson.

## 2. Comparing the students' experience

### Introduction to the task

The teacher introduces the next step. Now the students may share some of their findings. Each student receives two pieces of A6 size paper and markers (these can be shared, if necessary). Only one piece of information – one choice – is to be noted on each strip of paper, as the strips are to be linked to other student's notes.

The teacher adds years to the timeline, beginning with the birth year of the oldest student, and ending with the present.

Now the students select one or two points from their autobiographic reflections, using the following criteria:

- What choice has had a particularly strong impact on my identity?
- What piece of information am I willing to present in class?

The students should indicate who made the choice ("I", "mother", "friend" ...), and when it was made, but they should not add their own names.

### The students produce a general survey of key choices

The students fill in one or two sheets of paper, as instructed by the teacher, and put them face down on their tables. A team of four students collects them and brings them to the flipcharts.

The students gather round the flipchart in a semicircle – in two rows, if necessary. One student from the team reads the entries to the class. A team member suggests where to attach it on the charts. If repetitions occur, the entry on the flipchart stands for all the others; these are counted, the amount is recorded, and the text on the flipchart is framed to emphasise its importance. The team co-operates with the class, so that all students take part in the emergence of their shared records, and participate in creating them.

## 3. The students discuss and reflect on their findings

### Looking for patterns and significant elements

The material is new to all, so the content can hardly be anticipated. Quite often the students need no guidance or starting point, but begin to make comments immediately.

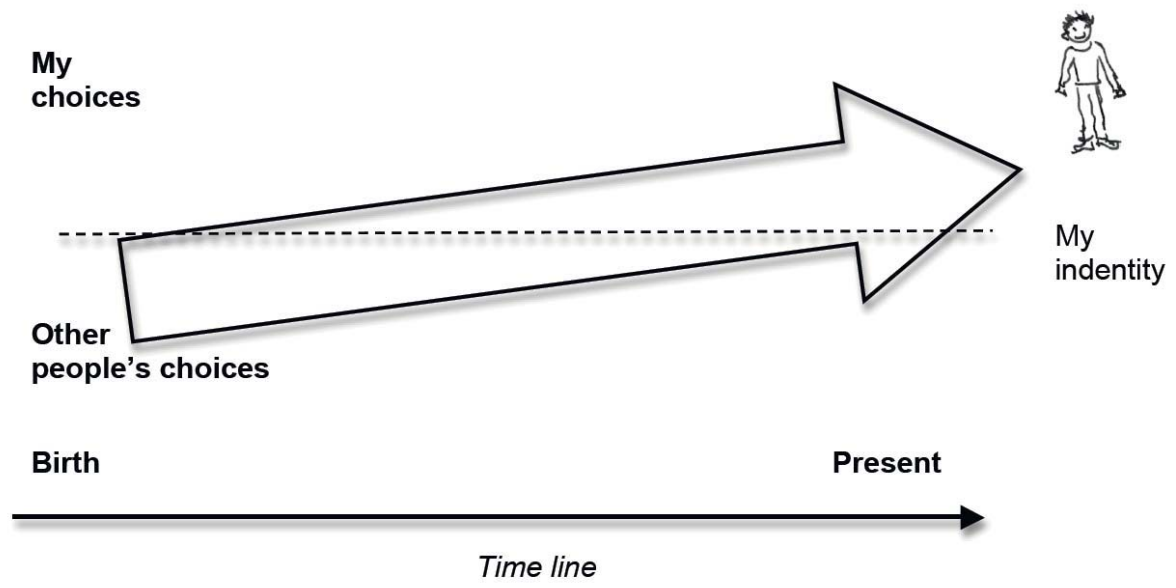
If necessary, the teacher points out that the next step is to identify striking patterns or details.

A few patterns are likely to appear:

*Adolescence – increasing autonomy:* In early childhood, others make choices (parents, family, teachers, doctors). As we grow older, we make more choices ourselves. Thus, there are likely to be clusters of entries on the flipchart, and these may be highlighted by the symbol of an arrow pointing upwards – the shift towards more autonomy and personal responsibility as we grow older. A student may add the arrow to the chart (see below).

*"I owe my existence to my parents":* This is the starting point in our biographies that we all share. It is as elementary as it is obvious. We have our roots in our families.

*Diversity and pluralism:* Perhaps no pattern can be detected. This points to the phenomenon of pluralism – we differ in our development, and our choices have made us become individual personalities.



*As children grow up, their autonomy of choice increases.*

## Lesson 3

### Looking forward: three choices that shape our future lives

#### Liberty consists in the ability to choose – or not to choose

This matrix sums up the information a teacher needs to plan and deliver the lesson.

Competence training refers directly to EDC/HRE.

The learning objective indicates what students know and understand.

The student task(s), together with the method, form the core element of the learning process.

The materials checklist supports lesson preparation.

The time budget gives a rough guideline for the teacher's time management.

Competence training	Making decisions, setting priorities.	
Learning objective	Human rights give us options how to shape our future lives – we decide whether to take them.	
Student tasks	The students reflect on key choices that affect their future lives.	
Materials and resources	☞ Student handout 1.2. Flipchart, markers.	
Method	Individual work with a handout. Plenary discussion.	
Time budget	1. Introduction to the topic and the task.	10 min
	2. The students reflect on key choices.	10 min
	3. Presentation and reflection.	20 min

#### Information box

“Who will my partner be?” – “Do we want to have children?” – “Which job will I choose?”

In this lesson, the students will address these choices. In doing so, they switch their perspectives from the past to the future. In the lesson before, they looked back, dealing with the question of what choices were made (and by whom) that decisively affected their lives and shaped their identities during their childhood and adolescence. In this lesson they are going to look into the future. They will be making the key choices – on partnership, family and their profession – that probably have the strongest impact on their identities.

The students will become aware of the gender issue involved: the traditional role of women was to choose partnership and family – without a profession, while men focused on their role as income earners (profession) and partnership, with a reduced responsibility for family life. Today, young women exercise their right to education much more extensively, with the intention of choosing their profession. So while women attempt to find a way to balance all three options – profession, partnership, and family – many, but not all, men continue to adhere to their traditional understanding of their role.

## Lesson description

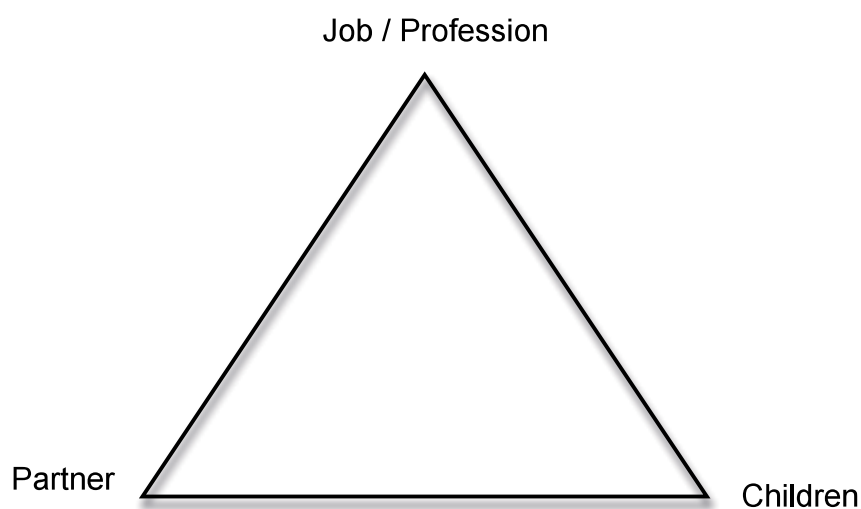
### 1. Introduction to the topic and the task

#### The teacher gets the students involved (inductive approach)

The teacher begins the lesson by asking a question that every student can answer, and that comes directly to the point: why do you attend school at upper secondary level?

The students, male and female alike, will surely answer that they wish to choose a profession. They also want to have access to advanced levels of study and training, such as university study.

The teacher lets several students take the floor, until a clear picture emerges. Then he/she sums up the students' responses by drawing the diagram on *≈* student handout 1.2 onto the blackboard or flipchart and adding the first choice – job.



The teacher explains that this is one choice that the students have just given top priority to, and it is clear how important it is for their identities. In doing so, they are exercising human rights – the liberty to make choices in general, and the liberty to choose a profession. Students may rightly point out that this liberty is restricted by the limited access to certain jobs, by unemployment or strong competition for example. This topic need not be followed up here, as it will be addressed in the following lesson.

The teacher addresses the other key choices: do I want to live with a partner, and if so, who will my partner be? (Or have I made that choice already?) And do I, or do we want to have children? The teacher adds the terms “Partner” and “Children” to the diagram, so that it resembles *≈* student handout 1.2.

The teacher explains that we all have to answer these questions one way or the other. We may choose to combine all three options, or to combine only two and leave one out. We will be leading completely different lives, depending on the choices we make or don't make. We exercise human rights, but we also carry responsibility for our lives, and the lives of others (our partners, our children).

#### The teacher introduces the task

The teacher distributes *≈* student handout 1.2. He/she makes the students aware of the human rights that grant the key options of choosing a job, a life with a partner, and having children (*≈* student handout 1.2, part 1). The students' task is to think about their choices, and to record their decision in the matrix in part 2 of the handout.

If they wish, they can compare their choices with the choices their parents made. This additional information will not be shared in class. The information on their choices will remain anonymous.

## 2. The students reflect on their key choices

The students work by themselves in silence. The teacher does not look at any handout, as discretion is important when such delicate matters are addressed.

The teacher prepares the follow-up phase. He/she attaches a flipchart to the blackboard or the wall. Ideally the students should be protected from view when writing on it. The flipchart shows a modified version of the matrix on *≈* student handout 1.2.

The text can be reduced to letters, as the students know the matrix. The following legend is sufficient:

**J**ob – **P**artnership – **C**hildren

Options for our futures		Women	Men
All three	P + C + J		
Two out of three	P + C		
	P + J		
	J + C		
One out of three	P		
	J		
	C		

The teacher leaves the marker for the students.

## 3. Presentation and reflection

### The students present their choices

The teacher explains how the students may add their choice discretely. In turn, each student comes to the flipchart and marks his/her choice by a simple “one” symbol (1).

Female and male students use separate columns.

The students come forward to the flipchart in turn and mark their choices. When they have finished, two students count up the marks per section and add the figures.

### The students comment on and discuss the results

The result can hardly be anticipated. It is interesting to see how many young men and women intend to combine all three options, and how many are going for two, and which two.

“Partner+Job”: The traditional male model “breadwinner+housewife”. The students should become aware of the implications if both partners make this choice – this is the “dink” model (double income, no kids).

“Job+Children”: An unlikely choice, as it means single parenthood, but as the students will know, a significant number of families have one parent – not as a matter of choice, but through divorce or death.

“Partner+Children”: The traditional female model if it lasts for a lifetime. Many young mothers, and to a lesser extent young fathers, accept this option for a while to care for their children when they are very small. It is understood that they will return to their jobs as soon as possible.

“Job+Partner+Children”: The students will know that this option is a challenge. Is there a difference in the choices made by each gender? Presumably more young women than men will choose this

option. If so, what are the reasons for this? The teacher should not press the students if they are unwilling to talk about the reasons for their choices. The teacher can point out, however, that this is an example of how individual choices may affect society as a whole: if many choose not to have children then the birth rate will fall. No moral pressure should be added, but the students should be made aware of the long-term effects that their individual choices will inevitably have (see extension below).

With these possible lines of thought in mind, the teacher awaits the results, and then responds – improvising, if necessary. Reflection beforehand, as outlined here, helps; and so does an evaluation of the lesson afterwards, to develop capacities and confidence in improvisation.

**Extension**

The problem of falling birth rates and ageing or shrinking populations besets many industrialised and developed countries around the world, including China, Germany and Italy. Serious problems for the economy and old age pension systems may arise. With statistical data, the students can investigate the situation in their country. They can analyse and judge solutions.

## Lesson 4

### Which job suits me?

#### My criteria for choosing a job

This matrix sums up the information a teacher needs to plan and deliver the lesson.

Competence training refers directly to EDC/HRE.

The learning objective indicates what students know and understand.

The student task(s), together with the method, form the core element of the learning process.

The materials checklist supports lesson preparation.

The time budget gives a rough guideline for the teacher's time management.

Competence training	Identifying, balancing and prioritising criteria for a decision.
Learning objective	Key criteria for choosing a job are, "Which job corresponds to my interests and strengths?"
Student tasks	The students choose or refuse a job and give reasons for their choice.
Materials and resources	<p>✍ Student handout 1.3.</p> <p>📄 Materials for teachers 1.2 (cut up into a set of job cards, with approx. 10 more cards than students in class).</p>
Method	<p>Individual work with a handout.</p> <p>Plenary discussion.</p>
Time budget	1. The students accept or refuse a job offer. <span style="float: right;">20 min</span>
	2. The students share their criteria for choosing a job. <span style="float: right;">20 min</span>

#### Information box

In lesson 1.3, the students addressed three key questions that will profoundly affect their future lives – making choices concerning their jobs, partnership, and family (parenthood). In this lesson, the students explore the criteria involved in one of these choices – choosing a job – in somewhat more depth.

Two criteria are of outstanding importance: which job interests me? Which job can I do best?

The relevance of these questions is obvious, but so are the difficulties in answering them, particularly the second one. Concrete information is necessary; the job-shadowing project is suggested to enable the students to overcome this problem.



## Lesson description

### 1. The students accept or refuse a job offer

#### The teacher introduces the topic

The teacher introduces the topic, referring to the flipchart showing the triangle of key choices. Last lesson, the students discussed the complexity involved in making three key choices concerning their jobs, partnership and family.

In this lesson, the students will focus on one of these three choices – their future jobs.

The teacher explains that to get started, the students should simply imagine that they will now be offered a job. The teacher will present them their job offer on a card. They are free to decide whether to accept this offer or not.

#### The teacher introduces the method – a simple simulation of the job market

The teacher distributes *sc* student handout 1.3 and asks the students to fill in the first line: do they already have a job of their choice, or have they made their choice? If not, they wait for the next step.

The teacher explains the rules. When the students receive their job offer on a card, they decide whether to accept it or not. They note down their reasons in the handout.

Then they may look for another job. The students can swap their jobs with each other, or exchange their cards for one of the cards on the teacher's desk. They record all the jobs offered to them, and give their reasons for accepting or refusing them.

If they find a job that they like, then they just keep the job card. If they just put their card down without taking another, then they are unemployed.

Before the simulation of the job market begins, the students should have a clear idea of the rules and their roles.

The teacher distributes a job card to each student. Many will probably protest, and may wish to get rid of their job offers immediately. If necessary, the teacher reminds them of their task – to record in the handout their reasons for not wanting a particular job.

#### The students participate in the job market simulation – looking for a job

Once the students have been given the job cards, they are left to themselves. The teacher observes how many students accept their job offers, and reminds students to make short notes before swapping jobs.

### 2. The students share their criteria for choosing a job

#### The students identify key criteria for their job choices

The students are seated in an open square or a circle so as to support communication.

The teacher asks for a show of hands. Who has accepted a job offer? Who hasn't?

In a second step, the teacher asks the students to form groups of four to six and share their criteria. Their task is to present a list of three key criteria that they all agree on.

After five minutes, the group speakers present their results and a second team member notes their points on the blackboard or flipchart. Points that are addressed by successive groups are marked accordingly to emphasise their importance. The result may look like this:

**Which job suits me? Criteria for choosing a job**

Personal interests

Qualifications – job requirements

Good income

Working hours

Flexibility

Job security

...

### **The students identify key criteria for choosing a job**

If the groups have repeatedly mentioned certain criteria for choosing a job, the students now consider whether these are particularly important. They share their opinions and give reasons.

On the one hand, the students are free to follow their personal preferences, so it is not necessary for them to agree. For example, a high income may be more important for one student, while another insists on free weekends and flexible working hours. There is one point, however, that the teacher should make the students aware of.

We all want to avoid being unemployed, so quite understandably, job security is often a top priority. However, business developments are hardly predictable, and the students will meet competition everywhere. Students must choose a job, or at least a job category (“law” – “doctor of medicine”) when they leave school, and they will apply for this job after having finished their studies or training. No one can reliably predict what their chances will be like in four or five years’ time.

Therefore the students should include two criteria:

1. What interests me, and what would I enjoy doing?
2. What am I good at? Where are my strengths? What can I do best when facing competition?

The teacher gives the students some time to think about these points and to respond.

### **The students problematise the application of the criteria**

When reflecting on how to apply these two key criteria for choosing a job, the students will probably become aware of the difficulties involved. The second question above is the easier one for them to answer. With the help of their parents and friends, and also their teachers, they can explore their specific profile of competences.

The first question poses more problems, as the students need information on job requirements and job developments. Teachers are not professional career experts, so school is at its limits here, and the students must find information for themselves. They now experience liberty of choice and identity building as a demanding business indeed.

In many countries, schools support their students through job-shadowing schemes. This model is suggested as an extension that students, parents, and business managers will appreciate and support.

## **Extension: job-shadowing project**

### **The problems that students face, and how job-shadowing projects can help**

The students know how important their choice of a suitable job is for their future lives. They have understood what criteria are crucial when making their choices, but they have also realised that they cannot judge which job requirements meet their talents, competences and interests without reliable, up-to-date information. A job-shadowing project can give the students valuable support in obtaining that information.

### **The students' task**

The students research a job that they believe meets their criteria. They spend several working days with a professional. They watch what he/she does and with whom they co-operate. Guided by a questionnaire (see *≈* student handout 1.4) they interview their job partner. If possible, they perform tasks to acquire first-hand experience (such as in an internship). The school schedule is replaced by the working hours of the job. So if a surgeon begins to operate at 6 a.m., the student should be next to him in the operating theatre (to find out, for example, if he/she can bear to watch an operation).

The students write a report, based on the questionnaire. The report can be handed in and marked, which creates a further incentive for the students to undertake their task properly. The students are advised to take notes daily and write their report during their week of work rather than later – an exercise in efficient time management.

The report should be a systematic account rather than a personal diary, to ensure that the students focus on the key criteria for their choice of a job.

The students must find their job partners themselves, with support from their parents, families and friends of the family. Ideally, they should not visit their parents or relatives at their workplace.

### **Support by the school and teachers**

The student performs the main role, and is responsible for the result. The school provides the opportunity, sets the framework, authorises the project and clarifies legal matters (consent by a relevant ministry, insurances). At an early stage, the school also contacts the parents, who have an important role to play (see below).

On request, the students can be given a letter of authorisation when applying for a job-shadowing opportunity. After the project has ended, the principal writes a letter of thanks to all the partners that hosted their students.

If possible, the teacher should visit the students during their project. During the whole project, a teacher must be available on the phone to react quickly in case of an emergency.

### **Follow-up work**

We recommend marking the reports to emphasise their importance. The teacher should treat the reports respectfully, as they are personal documents. He/she should realise that he/she was not present during the project and the interviews, so the students are experts here rather than the teacher. So assessment should focus on aspects such as clarity, coherence, care and completeness. From the student's point of view, this kind of task is much more rewarding than any test paper, and the teacher should be prepared to award more grades at the top of the scale than usual.

The students should have the opportunity to share their experiences. This requires more time than can be provided within regular EDC or social studies lessons. A useful platform is a job-shadowing event within the school. This is of particular interest for younger students who will carry out this project a year later, as well as their parents. The job partners or the local press, and local business representatives could also be invited.

## Support by parents

First, parents can support their children in finding out what their strengths and interests are. Parents know their children from their very first day, and can recall their development from a perspective that differs from that of a professional at school. Parents generally welcome this kind of project, as they appreciate any kind of support for their children in finding a job. For very understandable reasons, parents tend to overemphasise job security. In a rapidly changing economy, parents are therefore less suitable as advisors in career planning.

## How to find a job partner for the students

Usually the students are required to find a mentor for their job-shadowing project. Their parents, and in some cases other relatives or friends, can provide valuable help by providing links to potential partners. The students should not compromise too soon if the search proves difficult. They are looking for a job-shadowing opportunity, not a job. If no one who performs a particular job can be found, e.g. a broadcasting journalist, then a compromise would be to look for an alternative within the same job category, for instance a journalist working for the local newspaper.

## Support by local businesses and institutions

For any professional, hosting a student for a working week takes a lot of effort, and this should be appreciated. However, many employers are interested in attracting qualified and well-informed job applicants, and from their point of view, job shadowing is an opportunity to test the students and perhaps even approach them with a follow-up offer.

The students need a mentor or supervisor. This could be their job partner, or someone else. The students have been given leave from school, so they must not be paid while carrying out their project. They are not there to do regular work, but to follow their own agenda, as outlined by the questionnaire (see student handout 1.4).

## Long-term learning effects for the students

Experience has shown that this project will help many students to adopt a more serious, more mature approach to their final years at school. They have become aware of their interests, and can appreciate certain subjects more now that they can link them to their future after school. It also makes a difference if someone outside school has told them that “spelling and handwriting *do* matter.” And it is a rewarding and thrilling experience if students discover that they can actually already cope with quite a lot of tasks in the professional world.

The students may come back to school with a clear answer. Perhaps they now know what their job will be, and they can take the next steps in planning their studies or training after leaving school. On the other hand, if their project has showed them that they must look for a different job, this is also a valuable step forward, as they have got rid of some illusions and can now ask more precisely what kind of job would suit them.

## Information on job-shadowing schemes

United Kingdom: [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)

Baden-Württemberg, Germany: [www.schule-bw.de/schularten/gymnasium/bogy](http://www.schule-bw.de/schularten/gymnasium/bogy)

## Materials for teachers 1.1: Quotes on choices and identity



<p>By the choices and acts of our lives, we create the person that we are and the faces that we wear.</p> <p>Kenneth Patton</p>
<p>Decision is a risk rooted in the courage of being free.</p> <p>Paul Tillich</p>
<p>Everything you now do is something you have chosen to do. Some people don't want to believe that. But if you're over age twenty-one, your life is what you're making of it. To change your life, you need to change your priorities.</p> <p>John C. Maxwell</p>
<p>I believe that we are solely responsible for our choices, and we have to accept the consequences of every deed, word, and thought throughout our lifetime.</p> <p>Elisabeth Kubler-Ross</p>
<p>If you want anything said, ask a man. If you want something done, ask a woman.</p> <p>Margaret Thatcher</p>
<p>Liberty, taking the word in its concrete sense, consists in the ability to choose.</p> <p>Simone Weil</p>
<p>The greatest minds are capable of the greatest vices as well as of the greatest virtues.</p> <p>Rene Descartes</p>
<p>The main thing history can teach us is that human actions have consequences and that certain choices, once made, cannot be undone. They foreclose the possibility of making other choices and thus they determine future events.</p> <p>Gerda Lerner</p>
<p>The power of choosing good and evil is within the reach of all.</p> <p>Origen</p>
<p>The self is not something ready-made, but something in continuous formation through choice of action.</p> <p>John Dewey</p>
<p>The thing women have yet to learn is nobody gives you power. You just take it.</p> <p>Roseanne Barr</p>
<p>When choosing between two evils, I always like to try the one I've never tried before.</p> <p>Mae West</p>
<p>Women and cats will do as they please, and men and dogs should relax and get used to the idea.</p> <p>Robert A. Henlein</p>
<p>You must train your intuition – you must trust the small voice inside you which tells you exactly what to say, what to decide.</p> <p>Ingrid Bergman</p>

One ship sails East,  
And another West,  
By the self-same winds that blow,  
'Tis the set of the sails  
And not the gales,  
That tells the way we go.  
Like the winds of the sea  
Are the waves of time,  
As we journey along through life,  
'Tis the set of the soul,  
That determines the goal,  
And not the calm or the strife.  
Ella Wheeler Wilcox

[www.wisdomquotes.com](http://www.wisdomquotes.com)

 **Materials for teachers 1.2: Job cards**



Civil servant (local municipal administration)	Advertising copywriter	Veterinary surgeon
Architect	Fashion photographer	Primary school teacher
Mechanical engineer	Water operations manager	Banker
Hospital doctor	Fast food restaurant manager	Public librarian
IT sales professional	Police officer	Solicitor

Tourist guide	-	+	Shop assistant	-	+	Hospital nurse	-	+
Economist	-	+	Cartographer	-	+	Hairdresser	-	+
Dancer	-	+	Newspaper journalist	-	+	Bookseller	-	+
Meteorologist	-	+	Psychotherapist	-	+	Airline pilot	-	+
Room cleaner	-	+	Bus driver	-	+	Electrician	-	+

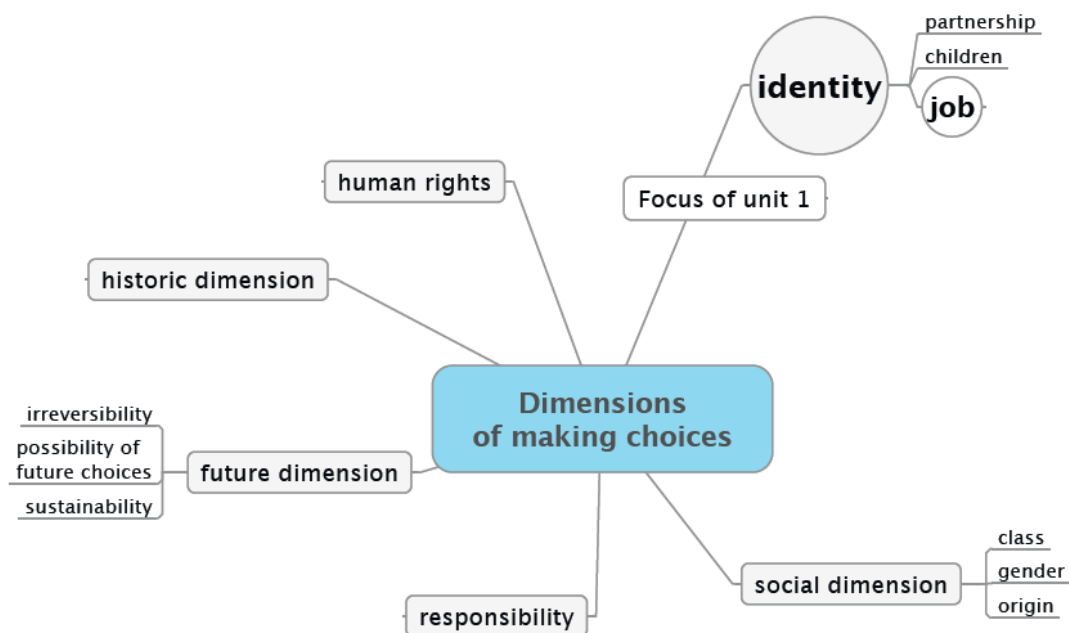
Source: [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)



## Unit 1.3 Background information for teachers

### The constructivist concept of identity

Linked to the concept of identity, constructivism means that we shape our identities by the choices and decisions that we make. Constructivism emphasises the active role of the individual, and points to the element of learning involved. In life, we make mistakes, and so we also become aware of mistakes in the choices we made. We may be able to undo some choices (deconstruct them), and correct them, but some choices are irreversible. Time, above all things, can only be spent once in life. Constructivism links the dynamics of making choices to the result, our identity, which becomes static and stable to a certain extent.



This unit focuses on the active role we perform in shaping our own identities – and each other’s, in which we also have a passive role. Of course, identity development is far more complex, and depends on many other factors (variables) that define or limit our chances to shape our lives and identities. These include origin, class, gender, economic and cultural conditions, and the natural environment.

There are two reasons why this unit focuses on the constructivist dimension of shaping our identity by making choices. First, this approach links identity to human rights. Making choices is an act of liberty. Second, the students understand this approach best, as it corresponds to their experience and the questions they are asking themselves.

Not only the concept of identity is much more complex than it appears in this unit; the same applies to the concept of choices. The diagram above describes the didactic approach of this unit: the students explore the links between two complex concepts, but neither of the concepts in its entirety.