



Speaking

1 Work with a partner and discuss the questions.

- 1 Which of these photos would you choose to represent the way you feel about making decisions? Why?
- 2 Approximately how many small decisions do you think you make in the first two hours after waking up? What are they?
- 3 How do you make small decisions? Do you weigh up each possibility and then choose the most appropriate? Or do you use intuition?

2 Work with a different partner. Discuss these questions.

- 1 What do you consider to be important decisions that people have to make in life?
- 2 How do you make important decisions? Do you ask for advice?
- 3 How hard do you think it is for most people to change their mind if they realise they've made the wrong decision?

Reading and Writing

1 Read the magazine article about making decisions and discuss these questions.

- 1 Did the article change your mind about how you think decisions are made?
- 2 What is the main idea of each paragraph?
- 3 What conclusion does the writer infer from her personal experience in the last paragraph?

2 Write a letter to the magazine.

- 1 You are going to write a letter to the magazine commenting on the views expressed in the article. What style do you think is appropriate?
- 2 What do you think should be included in the first paragraph?
- 3 You should write your letter in 220–260 words in an appropriate style. Make a plan of your letter.

3 Write your letter.

How do we make decisions?

In cafés, there's a wide range of coffees to choose from, from skinny latte to triple caramel frappuccino (that's coffee blended with caramel, milk and ice topped with a layer of dark caramel sauce, whipped cream, caramel drizzle and crunchy sugar topping, if you're wondering). How do you decide which coffee to have? Do you analyse or even know how much caffeine you'd like or need? Do you know or care how many calories are in the drink? Most people think the best option is the most expensive and if they can afford it, will choose it. There have been a number of studies where price tags have been switched and people's choices switch to the most expensive as a result. This would suggest that decision-making is not all rational.

Have you ever considered whether your decisions are influenced by the power of suggestion? If you were handed a warm drink on a cold winter's day and then asked your opinion of someone you'd recently met, the chances are you'd have a favourable opinion of the person. Conversely, if you were given a cold drink, your description of the person would be 'colder'. You would have literally been influenced by the warmth or cold of the drink and your judgement would have been clouded.

Our decisions are influenced in many different ways. We all know that the answers to questions in surveys depend largely on the wording of the question. A positively worded question will probably elicit a positive response. The human brain plays tricks on us too. In many cases, when we ask for advice, we don't really listen to and consider all of the advice, we just hear the parts that confirm what we wanted to hear. Our decision-making may also largely depend on our personality. An optimistic person may overestimate the positive outcomes of making a decision whereas a pessimistic person may decide against doing something for fear of a negative result.

Even when we believe we are making a rational decision based on previous experience, this may not be the case. If you went on holiday to a particular resort last year and had a great time, it does not necessarily follow that you will have a great time this year. The place may have changed, the weather might not be the same and your expectations will have been raised because of your previous positive experience. To help us make balanced and rational decisions, we are advised to make two columns and write down all the reasons for a decision in one column and all the reasons against in the other. But I don't know about you, but when I tried this, when I saw the 'against' column getting longer, I stopped trying to find negatives and found more positives. At least it made me realise that I really did want to do whatever it was but I still couldn't explain why. It was just a gut feeling and I was willing to manipulate the 'system' to get the outcome I wanted.

In my view, much of the discussion about how we make decisions is not very scientific at all. However, there do seem to be ways of explaining why we make certain decisions, if we look below the surface. For example, maybe we want to aspire to make more money, or maybe the power of suggestion plays a huge role, or maybe we always just go with our instincts. What do you think?



Vocabulary

1 Match these phrases to their definitions.

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|--------------------------|--|
| 1 a gut feeling | a to happen as a result |
| 2 to raise expectations | b to deceive or cheat |
| 3 a favourable opinion | c to feel that good things will happen |
| 4 as a result | d a good result |
| 5 a wide range | e an instinct |
| 6 to follow | f a large selection |
| 7 play tricks on someone | g because of something |
| 8 positive outcome | h a positive view |

2 Complete these sentences with words/expressions from exercise 1.

- I don't really know why I think Linda will be a good engineer; it's just a I have.
- There is such a of courses on offer at the community college, it's hard to make my mind up which one to choose.
- Although you enjoyed reading his last book, it doesn't necessarily that you'll like his latest one just as much.
- If you meet someone when you're in very comfortable surroundings, there's a high chance that you'll have a of them.
- Because of the positive testimonials by students at the college, my had been regarding the quality of the tuition.
- My memory seems to be me – I'm sure I sent the email last night.
- I find it hard to make decisions and, I prefer to ask for advice from trusted friends.
- The meeting had a – everyone was satisfied with the decision.

Listening

1 You are going to listen to Jane Hurley, talking about how companies decide who to employ. How do you think employers choose the right job candidate?

2  Listen and check your ideas.

Exam spot

In Part 2 of the Listening test, use the time before the recording starts to think about the type of information that is missing. The questions focus on concrete pieces of information that are usually not more than three words. Write down the actual words you hear on the recording that answer the question.

3 Listen again and complete these sentences.

- Jane explains that employers read a candidate's before anything else.
- Jane now finds jobs in for many students who graduate in arts subjects.
- According to Jane, globalisation has resulted in a need for in employees.
- Jane expresses concern about the level of required by some employers.
- Jane recommends doing a because it may result in a job offer.
- Jane quotes an engineering company where was an important part of being on their staff.
- In Jane's experience, keeping to is crucial in all jobs.

4 Complete these phrases with *job* or *work*. What do the phrases mean?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 <i>job</i> seeker | 6 find the right |
| 2 vacancy | 7 the market |
| 3 application | 8 voluntary |
| 4 placement | 9 description |
| 5 team | 10 learn on the |

