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Scholastic Press
Lesson by Helen Roberts

Economics: **Decision Making, Opportunity Cost**

Language Arts: Read with Understanding, Making Inferences

Synopsis: Aspiring filmmaker Steve Harmon (age 16) is on trial for murder of a convenience-store owner.

Materials: Transparency of Decision Grid, Copy of Decision Grid for each student

- Procedure: 1.** After reading *Monster*, choose one of the suggested decisions to analyze. (Page numbers are from Scholastic Library Binding ISBN 1439-202 183.)
- ?? Defense attorney: Is Steve innocent, how to defend whether or not he is innocent
 - ?? Prosecutor: Which charges, whom to charge, order of witnesses
 - ?? Witnesses: What to say, whether to testify
 - ?? Steve: Participate in robbery, conduct during trial, actions afterward
 - ?? Jury: guilty or not guilty
 - ?? Harmon family: support during trial, after trial
2. Discuss:
- a. Who makes the decision? (*Answers will vary.*)
 - b. Why does he/she have to make a choice? (*Scarcity—Can't have everything.*)
 - c. What are the alternatives? (*Answers will vary.*)

- d. What are the criteria for making the decision?
3. Display **Decision Grid transparency** and distribute **Decision Grids** to each student. Write the alternatives and criteria on the transparency and have students write them also on their decision cards.
4. Ask students if one of the criteria is more important than the others. If so, weight the criteria. For example, X2 weight means 2 plusses or minuses for that criterion.
5. Discuss the alternatives and criteria, giving each either +, -, or 0 ratings or numbers on scale of 1 to 5 or 1 to 10 (and negative numbers). Use the larger numbers for more-important criteria.
6. Identify the top two alternatives. Tell students one will be the **Economics Choice** and the other the **Opportunity Cost**. Define the Economics Choice as the top pick. Define the Opportunity Cost as the second choice, the next-best alternative.
7. Discuss whether the class Economics Choice is the same as that chosen by the book character. Why or why not? *(Answers will vary. Criteria or weights may differ among characters or between the book characters and the class, so the decisions may be different.)*
8. Optional: Have students analyze the decisions individually or in small groups. Have each group report the results to the class. Have each group explain why they come to the same or different conclusions as the class. *(Different weights, different criteria can lead to different answers.)*

Decision Grid

Alternatives	Criteria					Net Values