

# HORTON AND THE HUNTERS

Language Arts

Grades K-1

## OBJECTIVES

### CONTENT

Students will interpret story characters in terms of their character traits and actions. They will also practice listening skills.

### THINKING SKILL/PROCESS

Students will learn to think about options and the consequences of those options in making decisions.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

### CONTENT

Read aloud *Horton Hatches the Egg* by Dr. Seuss. Students should repeat the refrain in the story. They will explain why the main character behaves as he does.

### THINKING SKILL/PROCESS

A thinking map, a graphic organizer, and structured questioning emphasize options and consequences in decision making. (See pp. 39–43 for reproducible diagrams.) Collaborative learning in groups enhances the thinking.

## LESSON

### INTRODUCTION TO CONTENT AND THINKING SKILL/PROCESS

- **I’m going to tell you about a time when I had to make a decision. I wanted to take a vacation away from home, and I had to choose between going skiing where it was cold or going to the beach where it was hot. I couldn’t go to both places, so I finally chose to go to the beach. Now, think about a time when you had to decide about something and weren’t sure what was best. Take turns and tell your partner what you were thinking about doing.** Give students enough time for both students in each pair to relate their decisions. If necessary, prompt the class to switch roles in order to give each partner a chance to relate his or her decision.
- **Let’s hear some of the examples you just discussed.** Ask for three or four examples from the class.
- **What kind of thinking helped you figure out what to do?** POSSIBLE ANSWERS: *Picking, choosing, deciding.* Write these words on the top of the board as a main heading.
- **The different things you were thinking about doing are called “choices” or “options.”** Write these words on the board under the main heading. **Let’s hear one of the choices or options you were thinking about when you were trying to decide.** ANSWERS VARY.
- **In order to pick the best thing to do, we usually think about what will happen if we do it. We do this to figure out the good and bad things that might happen. These are usually called “Results” or “Consequences” of our options.** Write these words on the board under options, and write “Pro” and “Con” after them. Explain that we use “pro” for things that are good, things we want to happen, and “con” for things that are bad, things we don’t want to happen.
- **Pick one of your options and discuss with your partner what might happen if you chose it. Which of these consequences would you want to happen and which would you not want to happen?**

- After we've thought about the consequences of our options, we can pick the best thing to do. The best thing will be the choice that has more pros and fewer cons than any of the other choices. Write "Choose the best thing to do" under "Consequences—pro and con." This thinking map shows what we need to think about when we make a decision. Show a copy of the chart at the right.

<p><b>CHOOSING</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are some things I can do?</li> <li>2. What will happen if I do these things?</li> <li>3. Which are good things to do?</li> </ol>
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- Now tell your partner what you decided to do. What did you think about in order to pick the best thing to do?
- When we read stories, we hear about many characters who make decisions. It's interesting to think about whether they picked the best thing to do. We're going to read part of a story. As we do, we're going to think about a decision that one of the characters makes and try to figure out the best thing to do.

**THINKING ACTIVELY**

- I'm going to read the first few pages of *Horton Hatches the Egg* by Dr. Seuss. Listen for the decisions that Horton the elephant makes. Let's try to understand why he makes them. Read the book to the students and, when you get to the refrain, ask them to join in and repeat

"I meant what I said  
 And I said what I meant...  
 An elephant's faithful  
 One hundred per cent!"

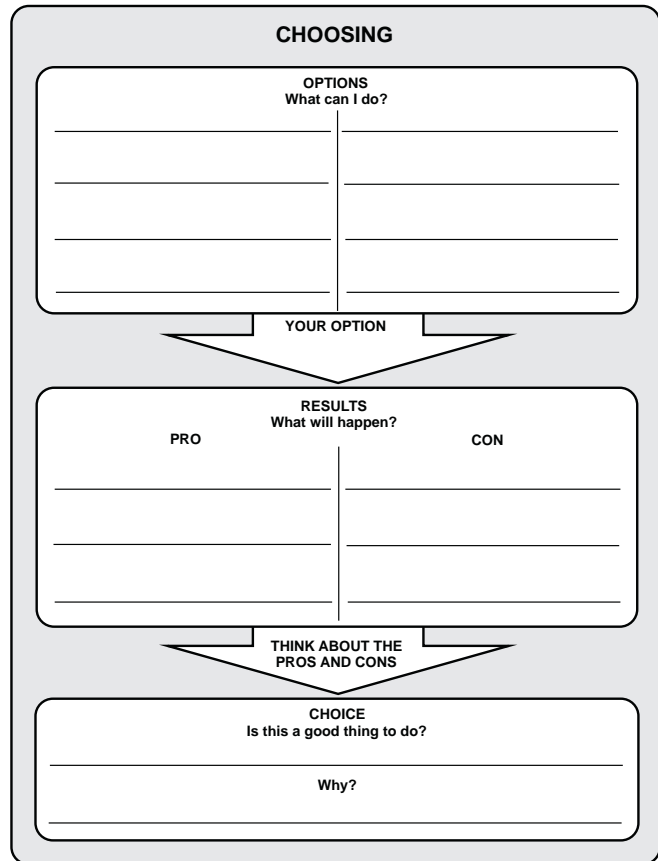
Show the pictures as you read. Continue reading up to the part where Horton's friends make fun of him.

- **What decision did Horton make at the beginning of the story?** ANSWER: *To take care of the egg for the bird.* **What does that tell you about Horton?** POSSIBLE ANSWERS: *He's a nice elephant. He's helpful. He wants to do good.* **What does Mayzie's decision tell you about the bird?** POSSIBLE ANSWERS: *Mayzie is lazy, doesn't care about Horton, and tricks people.*
- **Were there any consequences that Horton didn't think about when he decided to take care of the egg?** POSSIBLE ANSWERS: *He didn't think about how wet he would get when it rained or how cold he would get when winter came. He didn't think about what would happen if the mother bird didn't come back. He didn't think about how uncomfortable sitting on the egg would be.* If students have difficulty answering this question, ask them what things happened that Horton didn't expect.
- **Was it a good decision to take care of the egg? If you had thought about the consequences before agreeing, would you have decided to stay with the egg?** POSSIBLE ANSWERS: *I would have stayed because keeping the egg warm is important even if I get wet. I would have brought my raincoat and winter jacket, but would still have stayed on the egg so that it wouldn't die.*
- **Now let's read a little farther in the story.** Continue up to the part where the hunters approach the scene. Stop reading with the following:
 

"He heard the men's footsteps! He turned with a start!"
- **Let's think about the problem Horton now has. Getting wet and cold made Horton feel uncomfortable. Now what does Horton find?** *Some hunters with guns.* **What could be the**

**consequence?** *They could shoot Horton. Would that be a good thing? No, because Horton could die and then the egg would also die. Is that more serious than just getting wet and cold? Yes. Being alive is more important than being comfortable.*

- **Suppose that you were Horton. Let's use our plan to decide what Horton should do. Remember what comes first: What are Horton's options? What could Horton do? Talk to your partner and try to come up with three or four options.** After a few minutes, ask the students to report. Get as many options as possible, one at a time, from different groups. Write the options on a transparency or drawing of the graphic organizer. **POSSIBLE ANSWERS:** *Fight the hunters, run away without the egg, run away with the egg, stay on the egg, talk to the hunters and tell them what he's doing and ask them to go away, hide, make himself look like a tree, give them something nice in trade for not hurting him.*



- **Now let's figure out which option is the best thing to do. Let's think about the consequences and list them as pros or cons. Let's try this first with the option "Horton runs away without the egg." What do you think might happen?** **POSSIBLE ANSWERS:** *Pros: Horton would escape. The hunters would be unhappy. Horton wouldn't have to be cold again. Cons: Horton would feel guilty because he had broken his promise. Mayzie would be angry when she returned. The egg would die.*

- **Is it a good option to run away without the egg? Why or why not?** **POSSIBLE ANSWERS:** *No, because the egg would die and that's important. Horton would be breaking his promise and, even though he'd escape, he might feel guilty.*
- **Discuss another option with your partner. Think of some things that might happen if Horton did that. Decide whether these results are pro or con.** Assign each group a different option. On a transparency or on the board, write the consequences the students generate.
- **Let me summarize the pros and cons of each option. Discuss with your partner what you think the best option is.** Ask the students to vote on the best option. Check the one that gets the most votes. Then ask students why they voted for their option.
- **Now we are going to read the rest of the story. Let's see what Horton decides to do. Let's think about why he decides what he does.** Finish reading the story, and ask students why Horton decides to stay with the egg. Coach them by prompting them to repeat the refrain. Ask them what Horton's decision tells them about him. **POSSIBLE ANSWERS:** *He's brave. He loves the bird in the egg. He cares a lot about the bird in the egg. He keeps his promises no matter what.*
- **Is Horton's decision better than yours? Why?** Ask this question only if what Horton decides is different from what the class decides.

**THINKING ABOUT THINKING**

- When you were making your decision, you thought about Horton's options when the hunters arrived. Were Horton's options important to think about? Why or why not?
- Was it a good idea to think about the consequences of Horton's options the way we did? Why?
- If Horton had to make another decision, what would you tell him to think about? Draw a picture that can help Horton make better decisions. Accept any diagram that emphasizes options and consequences.

**APPLYING THINKING****Immediate Transfer**

- Use your plan for decision making to figure out what you can do next weekend.
- In the story of *Peter Rabbit*, Peter makes lots of decisions. Use your plan for decision making to decide what Peter should do when he gets to Mr. McGregor's garden.

**Reinforcement Later**

Later on in the school year, introduce this additional transfer activity by saying the following:

- In science we're studying what animals need in order to stay alive. Pick an animal. Use your plan for making decisions to choose something you can do to help one of these animals to live and grow.

**ART EXTENSION**

After your students have brainstormed options for Horton, ask them to select one option and draw a picture of Horton doing it.

**ASSESSING STUDENT THINKING ABOUT DECISIONS**

To assess student thinking about decisions, use a decision problem, such as what to do for the weekend or during recess. Ask students to identify each step of decision making as they think about the problem. Prompt students to use the right terms for their thinking. Determine whether they are attending to each of the steps in the thinking map for decision making that you developed. Because students in first and second grade may not write easily, you may conduct this assessment orally, either individually or in small groups.

SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES • HORTON AND THE HUNTERS

**CHOOSING**

**OPTIONS**

What can Horton do?

Run away without the egg.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Run away with the egg.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ignore the hunters.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Talk to the hunters. Tell them what he's doing and ask them to go away.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Fight the hunters.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Give the hunters something nice in exchange for not hurting him.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Make himself look like a tree.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hide from the hunters.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**YOUR OPTION**  
 Run away without the egg

**RESULTS**

What will happen?

**PRO**

**CON**

Horton may escape.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Horton won't be afraid anymore.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Horton won't have to get cold anymore sitting on the egg.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Horton will feel bad because he broke his promise to Mayzie.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 If Horton falls down, the hunters would get him.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 The egg will die.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mayzie will get upset when she returns and finds her egg dead.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**CHOICE**  
 Is this a good thing to do?

No

**Why?**

Because it's very important to keep the egg alive and Horton made a promise to Mayzie to take care of the egg.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES • HORTON AND THE HUNTERS

**CHOOSING**

**OPTIONS**  
What can Horton do?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Run away without the egg.   | Fight the hunters.   |
| Run away with the egg.  | Give the hunters something nice in exchange for not hurting him. |
| Stay and faces the hunters.   | Make himself look like a tree.                                   |
| Talk to the hunters. Tell them what he's doing and ask them to go away. | Hide from the hunters.   |

**YOUR OPTION**  
Stay and face the hunters

**RESULTS**  
What will happen?

- | PRO  | CON  |
|--|--|
| The hunters might not shoot because Horton is brave. | The hunters might shoot Horton.                                  |
| Horton keeps his word to Mayzie.                     | The hunters might capture Horton and take him away from the egg. |
| The hunters might miss.                              | The hunters might steal the egg and sell it.                     |

**CHOICE**  
Is this a good thing to do?

Maybe if the hunters are nice and don't hurt Horton.

**Why?**

Because Horton made a promise to Mayzie to take care of the egg and that's important.