



LEADING THROUGH CRISIS

CIVIC LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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SUPPORTING RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Use this sequence of one pre-sim activity, one between-episodes activity, and one post-sim activity to help students reflect on and assess their decision-making behaviors in *Leading Through Crisis*.

THE 25TH AMENDMENT: WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Use this activity to help students think critically about how the 25th Amendment might be applied and misapplied. Optionally, students can create their own version of the amendment.

To view a black and white, printer-friendly version of this packet, click [here](#).



OBJECTIVE

Students will get familiar with the [iThrive Sim Decision-Making Framework and Scoring Rubric](#). They will map quotations from presidents to the sections of the rubric to support critical thinking about decision-making approaches.

TIME

30 minutes

SEQUENCE

Use this activity before the simulation, in class, or as homework.

MATERIALS

- [iThrive Sim Decision-Making Framework and Scoring Rubric](#) for reference (an abbreviated version is in the worksheet)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Share [this editable version of the worksheet](#) with your students and have them complete it.

CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE PRESIDENTIAL
DECISION-MAKING WORKSHEET (GOOGLE DOC VERSION)

OPTIONAL

- Show or have students watch on their own the 4-minute video, [Why Is Making Decisions So Hard?](#) Ask students to reflect and journal or collectively discuss: What's one of my greatest challenges when it comes to making decisions? Why?



PRESIDENTIAL DECISION-MAKING

ITHRIVE SIM: LEADING THROUGH CRISIS 

***"No one makes the right decision every time, but a structured approach can improve the odds."** - [John Coleman on presidential decision-making](#).*

1. Review the steps of the decision-making process in the rubric on **Page 2** and the presidential quotes on **Page 3**.
2. Next, plot any five of the quotes below (your choice) onto the rubric by filling in the table below. Number the quote clearly next to the corresponding step of the decision-making process.
3. Finally, briefly describe why you placed the quote where you did.
4. **OPTIONAL:** If doing this activity in class, compare your responses with a partner or in a small group. Why were they similar or different?

Notes:

- There's no one right or wrong answer. The important thing is to describe why you placed the quote where you did.
- More than one quote may correspond with the same step of the decision-making process, and that's fine. List the numbers for each quote together next to that step and describe your reasoning for including each one. You don't have to choose a quote for each step of the process, just 5 quotes total.

DECISION-MAKING STEP When I made decisions, I..	QUOTE #	WHY I PLACED THIS QUOTE/THESE QUOTES HERE:
EXAMPLE: Identified the main issue or question	8	Obama is talking about making sure he actually understands the issue he is being asked to decide about. He wants to make sure he is clear on the issue before taking action.
Clarified the main issue or question		
Examined my options		
Found and evaluated relevant information		
Predicted the impact or consequences for myself, others, and the world		
Channeled emotions in a helpful way		
Advocated for my point of view while considering others' perspectives		
Made and communicated my decision and the thinking behind it		

QUOTE #1

"The most dangerous course a president can follow in a time of crisis is to defer making decisions until they are forced on him and thereupon become inevitable decisions."

- Former President Harry S. Truman

QUOTE #2

"If I had set up a good process in which I could get all the information, all the data, all perspectives, if I knew that I had around the table all the angles...then I could feel confident that even if I didn't get a perfect answer, that I was making the best decision that anybody in my situation could make."

- Former President Barack Obama, as quoted in [Business Insider](#)

QUOTE #3

"A president ought not to worry whether a decision he knows he has to make will prove to be popular. The question is not whether his actions are going to be popular at the time but whether what he does is right. And if it is right in the long run it will come out all right."

- Former President Harry S. Truman

QUOTE #4

"Do not worry about the politics. Do the right thing. I will take the heat."

- Former President George W. Bush, as quoted by a former staffer in [Forbes](#)

QUOTE #5

"As a leader, your instincts matter a lot. But if the goal is to have people around to make you look good, you will fail. If your goal is to have experts there to lend their knowledge, then you'll make good choices."

- Former President George W. Bush, as quoted in [Forbes](#)

QUOTE #6

"Your judgment is only as good as your facts."

- Former President Lyndon B. Johnson, see [Forbes](#)

QUOTE #7

"In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing."

- Former President Theodore Roosevelt

QUOTE #8

"I always would say to somebody, if they're talking about a really complicated issue, 'I don't understand what you're saying. Explain it to me in English.' I think one of the problems with people who are in big jobs is they start feeling as if they have to project that 'I have every answer' when, in fact, most of the time, you may not."

- Former President Barack Obama, as quoted in [Business Insider](#)

QUOTE #9

"You always put yourself in the other person's position, and then also to understand where they're coming from, whether it's a major foreign leader or a friend whom you have a disagreement with."

- President Joseph Biden, as quoted in [inc.com](https://www.inc.com)

QUOTE #10

"Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate."

- Former President John F. Kennedy, 1961 inaugural address



OBJECTIVE	Students reflect on how they approached making decisions in the first session of <i>iThrive Sim: Leading Through Crisis</i> , then make predictions and strategize about decision-making in the next session.
TIME	30 minutes, in class and/or as homework
SEQUENCE	Use this activity between Episode 1 and Episode 2.
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iThrive Sim Decision-Making Framework and Scoring Rubric • iThrive Sim Decision-Making Map • iThrive Sim: Leading Through Crisis Synopsis and Decisions Part 1
INSTRUCTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say something like: “I’d like us to take some time to think more deeply about how you all made decisions while you played <i>Leading Through Crisis</i>. We’re going to be playing a new section of this game soon, so there will be opportunities to do things differently next time.” • Orient students to the Decision-Making Framework and Scoring Rubric, Decision-Making Map, and Synopsis and Decisions Part 1. • Have students engage in the individual work and discussions outlined in the worksheet on the next page. <div data-bbox="651 1535 1495 1633"> <p>CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE DECISION-MAKING: REFLECT, PREDICT, STRATEGIZE WORKSHEET (GOOGLE DOC VERSION)</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure students keep their work; they’ll revisit it after the next play session. <div data-bbox="625 1812 834 1866"> <p>OPTIONAL</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show students the 4-minute video, Why Is Making Decisions So Hard?



DECISION-MAKING: REFLECT, PREDICT, STRATEGIZE

ITHRIVE SIM: LEADING THROUGH CRISIS 

STEP ONE: Look over the [Decision-Making Framework and Scoring Rubric](#) and the *Leading Through Crisis* Decisions Summary from the part(s) of the game you just played.

STEP TWO: Choose one of the decisions you had to make that you remember well. Score your decision-making approach using the [Decision-Making Framework and Scoring Rubric](#). Copy your scores into the table below. Also share your reasoning for choosing each score. Remember, this isn't for a grade, just for your own reflection.

DECISION-MAKING STEP <i>When I made decisions, I...</i>	SCORE I GAVE MYSELF (0-2)	WHY I GAVE MYSELF THIS SCORE:
Clarified the main issue or question		
Examined my options		
Found and evaluated relevant information		
Predicted the impact or consequences for myself, others, and the world		
Channeled emotions in a helpful way		
Advocated for my point of view while considering others' perspectives		

Communicated my decision and the thinking behind it		
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Now, discuss with a partner or in a small group:

- What were your strengths and challenges in making decisions during this section of *Leading Through Crisis*?
- What do you think you'll try or do differently next time?

STEP THREE: Think about how much weight you put on other people's approval while you made decisions and answer the following questions:

- How did your teammates' opinions impact your decisions? Why?
- How much did you pay attention to the public approval rating while you played? Why?
- What's one example of a time that the public's reaction surprised you? How did that change your behavior or thinking process going forward?
- In general, how much do you let others' opinions influence your behavior? Why?

STEP FOUR (PREDICT): Now, make a prediction about a challenge you think you'll face in the next session you play then discuss your responses with a partner or in a small group.

- I predict that one of my biggest challenges in making decisions in the next session of *Leading Through Crisis* will be:
- I predict this because:

STEP FIVE (STRATEGIZE): Now, look over the [Decision-Making Map](#). Pay special attention to the strategies at each section on the map. Consider the challenges and predictions you identified in Steps 1-2 above. Knowing what these are, what's one

relevant strategy that you'll try to use when you're facing a tough decision in the next session? Pick one from the map or come up with your own.

- One specific behavior I'll try when I feel challenged by a decision I have to make is:
- This strategy will help because:

Discuss your responses with a partner or in a small group.



DECISION-MAKING DEBRIEF

OBJECTIVE	Students reflect on the decisions they made in <i>iThrive Sim: Leading Through Crisis</i> and how that relates to their decision-making approach in other areas of their lives.
TIME	30 minutes
SEQUENCE	Use this activity after the simulation.
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iThrive Sim Decision-Making Framework and Scoring Rubric • iThrive Sim Decision-Making Map • iThrive Sim: Leading Through Crisis Synopsis and Decisions Part 2
INSTRUCTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students complete the worksheet on the next page in class or as homework. <div>CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE DECISION-MAKING DEBRIEF WORKSHEET (GOOGLE DOC VERSION)</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss responses and learnings as a class. <div>OPTIONAL</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For classes with multiple people playing the same role across different games, have classmates who played the same role pair up and compare the decisions they made. Why were their choices the same or different? What factors influenced each of them in selecting these options?



DECISION-MAKING DEBRIEF

ITHRIVE SIM: LEADING THROUGH CRISIS 

STEP ONE: Review one of the (individual or group) decisions you just made using the Synopsis and Decisions Summary from the part of the game you played most recently. Why did you make that decision?

STEP TWO: Score your decision-making approach from your most recent play session using the [Decision-Making Framework and Scoring Rubric](#). Copy your scores into the table below. Also share your reasoning for choosing each score. Remember, this isn't for a grade, just for your own reflection.

DECISION-MAKING STEP When I made decisions, I...	SCORE I GAVE MYSELF (0-2)	WHY I GAVE MYSELF THIS SCORE:
Clarified the main issue or question		
Examined my options		
Found and evaluated relevant information		
Predicted the impact or consequences for myself, others, and the world		
Channeled emotions in a helpful way		

Advocated for my point of view while considering others' perspectives		
Communicated my decision and the thinking behind it		

- Do you think your classmates would have rated you differently than you did in any of the categories above? Why or why not?
- Were there times during the simulation when you felt misunderstood? Describe your experience.

STEP THREE: Think about how much weight you put on other people's approval while you made decisions and answer the following questions:

- How did your teammates' opinions impact your decisions? Why?
- How much did you pay attention to the public approval rating while you played? Why?
- What's one example of a time that the public's reaction surprised you? How did that change your behavior or thinking process going forward?
- In general, how much do you let others' opinions influence your behavior? Why?

STEP FOUR: Review your work from the decision-making exercises we did between simulation sessions ([Decision-Making: Reflect, Predict, Strategize](#)) and answer the following questions:

- You made a prediction about what would be challenging about making decisions in the next session. Looking at your prediction now, how does it compare with the experience you just had?
- You chose a strategy that you planned to use when facing a challenging decision in the next session. How did your plan play out? Why?

STEP FIVE: Answer these two questions.

- What's one primary aspect of making decisions that you discovered or deepened your knowledge about through the process of playing *iThrive Sim: Leading Through Crisis*?
- Think about a decision you have to make in your own life, big or small. What's one decision-making strategy from the framework or map that you can try? How do you think it will help you?



THE 25TH AMENDMENT: WHO'S IN CHARGE?

OBJECTIVE	<p>Students review and analyze a historical example of (mis)interpreting the 25th Amendment. As an optional extension, students create their own brief amendment to the Constitution to guide others in replacing the country's leaders in case of a dire crisis.</p>
TIME	<p>Homework time and 30 minutes for volunteers to share.</p>
SEQUENCE	<p>Use this optional activity after the simulation.</p>
INSTRUCTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students complete the worksheet on the next page in class or as homework. <p>CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE WHO'S IN CHARGE? WORKSHEET (GOOGLE DOC VERSION)</p> <p>OPTIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before students complete the assignments, show this PowerPoint from the Reagan Library's Situation Room Experience: What Really Happened? • Have student complete the extension activity on page 19. <p>CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE YOUR AMENDMENT EXTENSION ACTIVITY (GOOGLE DOC VERSION)</p>



WHO'S IN CHARGE?

ITHRIVE SIM: LEADING THROUGH CRISIS 

STEP ONE: Review [this video](#) of the Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, speaking to the press on March 30, 1981, the day President Reagan was shot and rushed to George Washington University Hospital for immediate care. (If you want more context, watch the longer version of the video [here](#).)

STEP TWO: Answer the following questions:

1. Where is the Secretary of State during this press conference?
2. Who did the Secretary of State say was in charge at the White House at the time of the press conference?

STEP THREE: Now read the text of the 25th Amendment below and review the infographic that follows:

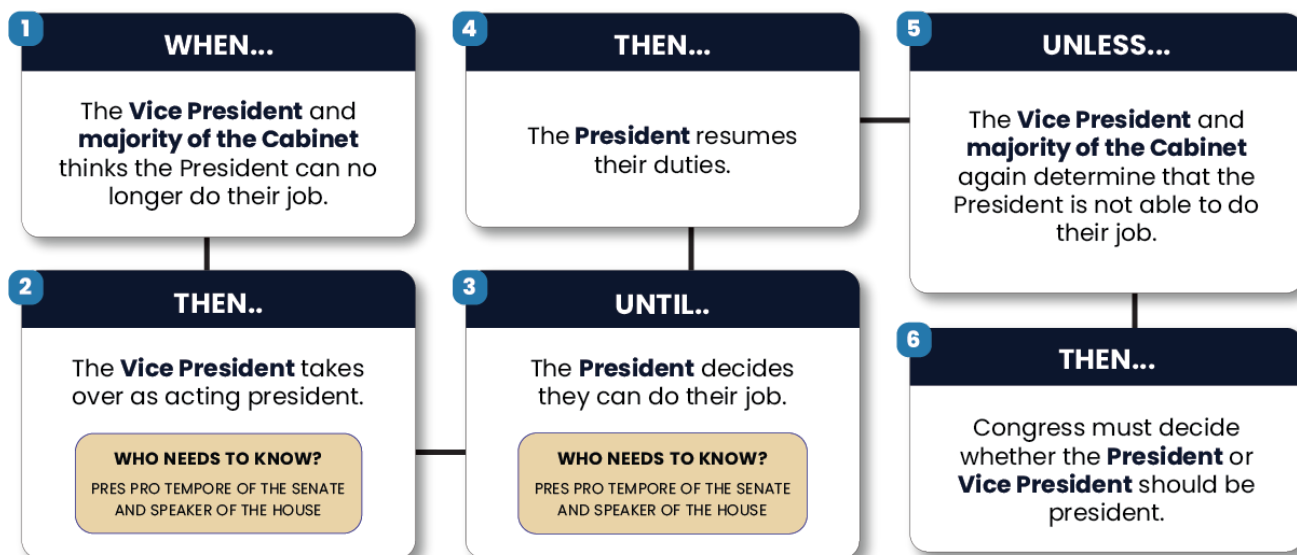
DOCUMENT #1: THE 25TH AMENDMENT

- **Section 1:** In case of the removal of the President from office or of his death or resignation, the Vice President shall become President.
- **Section 2:** Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the President shall nominate a Vice President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both Houses of Congress.
- **Section 3:** Whenever the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that he is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, and until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the Vice President as Acting President.
- **Section 4:** Whenever the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the

powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.

DOCUMENT #2: SECTION 4 OF THE 25TH AMENDMENT

25TH AMENDMENT, SECTION 4



STEP FOUR: Answer the following question based on careful review of the text of the 25th Amendment and the infographic describing Section 4 of the 25th Amendment.

1. Did Secretary of State Alexander Haig correctly answer the question regarding who should be in charge at the White House given that the president had been shot and rushed to George Washington University hospital for immediate care? Explain.
2. Some people believe Haig was saying he was “in charge” as Acting President. Others believe he was saying he was “in charge” of what was happening in the White House as the team there dealt with the crisis. In your opinion, which of these perspectives is more likely to be true, and why?



YOUR AMENDMENT

ITHRIVE SIM: LEADING THROUGH CRISIS 

The first time presidential succession was addressed in the Constitution was in Article II, Section I. Presidential succession was then re-visited in the 25th Amendment.

Based on your experience playing *iThrive Sim: Leading Through Crisis*, create a new constitutional amendment that gives guidelines for who should take the place of the President of the United States and under what circumstances. Also, describe how your guidelines will be effectively implemented.

Create and deliver this new amendment in the format of your choice. You can choose to:

- **OPTION A: Write a press briefing.** Write a statement to the press that includes 3 short paragraphs: (1) Your new amendment; (2) how it will be implemented; and (3) why it's a good plan.
- **OPTION B: Draw and annotate a diagram of your plan.** First, create a diagram (a visual representation) of the succession plan. Next, write short notes on the diagram to describe its components and benefits. Or, you can create a short video of yourself showing and describing the elements of the diagram and why it's a good plan.
- **OPTION C: Act it out.** Deliver a 3-minute press briefing to your role-play group or class that (1) describes your new amendment and (2) describes how it will be implemented. Also (3) be sure to make a case for why it's a good plan. You may also share this press briefing via voice or video recording.