consequences of decisions

costs, benefits, and alternatives

personal interests

rules and government

9-12

The decisions of one generation both provide and limit the range of possibilities open to the next generation.

Peaceful efforts at social change are most successful when the affected people are included in the planning, when information is available from all relevant experts, and when the values and power struggles are clearly

It is difficult to compare potential benefits of social alternatives. One reason is that there is no common measure for different forms of good. Another reason is that different groups of people place greatly differing values on even

To various degrees, governments try to bring about social change or to impede it through policies, laws, incentives, or direct coercion. Sometimes such efforts achieve their intended results and sometimes they do not.

One generation may have to bear the costs or benefits of the decisions of another generation.

Benefits and costs of proposed choices include consequences that are long-term as well as short-term, and indirect as well as direct. The more remote the consequences of a personal or social decision, the harder it usually is to take them

Where a scientist's own personal, institutional, or community interests are at stake, he or she may be as biased as others are.

In deciding among alternatives, a major question is who will receive the benefits and who (not necessarily the same people) will bear the costs.

6-8

There are trade-offs that each person must consider in making choices--about personal popularity, health, family relations, and education, for example--that often have life-long consequences.

However they are formed, governments usually have most of the power to make, interpret, and enforce the rules and decisions that determine how a community, state, or nation will be run.

One common aspect of all social trade-offs pits personal benefit and rights of the individual, on one side, against the general social good, on the other.

3-5

Sometimes social decisions have unexpected consequences, no matter how carefully the decisions are made.

In making decisions, benefits and drawbacks of alternatives can be taken into account more effectively if the people who will be affected are involved.

Human beings tend to repeat behaviors that feel good or have pleasant consequences and avoid behaviors that feel bad or have unpleasant consequences.

One person's exercise of freedom may conflict with the freedom of others. Rules can help to resolve conflicting freedoms.

In making decisions, it helps to take time to consider the benefits and drawbacks of alternatives.

K-2

Choices have consequences, some of which are more serious than others.

Getting something one wants may mean giving up something in return.

Rules can help to make sure that everyone is treated fairly.

Sometimes people aren't sure what will happen because they don't know everything that might be having an effect.