

# Growing Minds in Social Studies #2

## Lessons for Stimulating Thinking

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# Teacher's Guide For "The Best Things In Life"

## ABOUT THE ACTIVITY

"The Best Things in Life" begins with an open-ended exercise. Students will have to be allowed to flounder when they can't come up with quick answers to the questions. Give them plenty of time. The responses require imagination and knowledge, and as such can be verified both logically and experimentally. But they call for some thinking. For example, what is powerful and not dangerous? There are many kinds of power, and so the student might think of a powerful but peaceful animal or a force such as magnetism or prayer.

### Level 1: Combining elements and seeing possibilities

There are so many ways to respond to the ten questions that an attempt to provide legitimate answers would be misleading. The questions are given in order of their perceived difficulty, with the easiest— what is expensive when it is uncommon?—coming first. (One thinks of gems, talent, collector's items, and animals for zoos rather readily.) It's a good idea for you to try to come up with at least one response per question before giving the activity to your students.

### Level 2: Making judgments about musicians

Almost all young people are interested in music. Your students are asked to name their favorite musicians and give the reasons for their choice. That task is not as difficult as listing their criteria for ranking performers. Your students won't be able to glibly name a musician without considering that there must be standards that underlie the choice, although they may not have been aware of them before.

### Level 3: Listing the criteria for making the judgments

The final task is for your students to list the criteria, giving at least three, for determining their favorite musicians. In almost all cases, they will have named their favorite musician without ever thinking of what criteria they were using in making that choice. They may have had some general idea of why the musician was favored, but it is extremely doubtful whether they set up any criteria in coming to the decision. Accordingly, this will force them to reconsider their choice and to justify it. This question is a good way to point out that formulating criteria is an excellent procedure in making judgments.

### **Targeted Learner Outcomes:** The student will:

- respond to ten questions about changes
- name a favorite musician
- list criteria for making that choice

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# The Best Things In Life

**A.** Here are ten items. Their natures change under different circumstances. See if you can come up with at least one or two answers to each question.

1. What is expensive when it is uncommon? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is dangerous when it is unchecked? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is unhappy when it is still? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is musical when it is free? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What returns when it isn't watched? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What is pure when it is liquefied? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is safe when it is isolated? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What is happy when it is unnoticed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What is powerful and not dangerous? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What rewards patience but not attention? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**B.** Some people think that music is one of the best things in life. Do you agree?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your favorite kind of music? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is your favorite musician? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**C.** What were the criteria (standards for judgment) you used in determining your favorite musician? Name at least three.

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