



TRAINING MATERIAL

You Decide!

Materials

- You Decide playing cards

Graphic files are available from www.nisenet.org.

Notes to the presenter

There is no right or wrong way for visitors to sort the cards. To help learners think about how to prioritize the technologies, you can ask them to think about which ones might be most useful or important and explain why they think so. After they chose a character card, you can ask them which technologies they think that person would find important, suggesting some factors the character might consider.

You can adjust this game to work for different audiences. For families with young children, try starting with 3-5 technologies. (Good choices include the space elevator, the teabag water filter, or the invisibility cloak.) Young children may have a hard time understanding the different perspectives represented by the character cards, but they often can recognize that they would sort the cards differently from other people in their family.

This activity is easy to facilitate with a little practice—but before doing it with visitors, become familiar with the cards and try it out a few times with a friendly audience.

Staff training resources

Video: *You Decide*, vimeo.com/album/3636993

Credits and Rights

This activity is a modified version of the NISE Network's educational product *Exploring Nano and Society—You Decide*, available on www.nisenet.org. The original version of this activity was created as a collaboration of the NISE Network and the Center for Nanotechnology in Society at Arizona State University. Photo of thin-film solar cell, Konarka Technologies. Photo of teabag water filter, Stellenbosch University, www.sun.ac.za.



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Tips for leading hands-on science activities

Greet your guests

Say “hello,” make eye contact, and smile. People will come over if you look welcoming, available, and friendly.

Let them do the activity

As much as possible, let your guests do the hands-on parts of the activity, and let them discover what happens. (If your activity has a surprise, don't give it away!)

Encourage exploration

Provide positive feedback and assistance when people need it, but let them experiment and learn for themselves. Don't insist people do things the “right” way—sometimes learning how something doesn't work is just as valuable as learning how it does work.

Ask questions

Help people observe and think about the activity. Try to use questions that have more than one answer, such as: “What do you see happening?” “Why do you think that happened?” “What surprised you about what you saw?” “Does this remind you of anything you've seen before?”

Be a good listener

Be interested in what your guests tell you, and let their curiosity and responses drive your conversation forward.

Share what you know

Use clear, simple language. Focus on one main idea—you don't need to explain everything at once! Keep the information basic for starters, and share more with interested learners.

Use examples from everyday life

Familiar examples can help explain abstract concepts. Be aware of different abilities, keeping in mind that children do not have the same skills or vocabulary as adults.

Offer positive responses

If people haven't quite grasped a concept, you might say, “That's a good guess,” or “Very close, any other ideas?” Never say, “No” or “Wrong.” You can offer hints or suggestions for things to think about or watch carefully.

Share accurate information

If you aren't sure about something, it's ok to say, “I don't know. That's a great question!” Suggest ways that people can learn more, by trying another activity or looking up information at the library or online.

Remain positive

Maintain an inviting facial expression, positive tone, and open body language throughout the interaction.

Thank your guests

As your interaction ends, suggest other activities that you think your guests might enjoy.

Have fun!

A positive experience will encourage learning.