

The decision line

Purpose

Making the students interact with each other in new constellations making it more likely and that they may therefore talk to some classmates with whom they have not spoken before. In this activity, students should discuss and hear each other's different attitudes to a topic.

Description

- The decision line is a line between two sides. The line is either physical (eg a string), or you can use what is in the room (eg a line in the floor, division of the room, etc.)
- When standing on one side, your decision has not yet been made (side A). If you are on the other side, you have made a decision (side B).
- The topic to be discussed is: "What are the two most important qualities in a good classmate?"
- Begin on side A.
- All students must now individually think of two qualities they generally think describe a good classmate (fun, a good listener, talking to everyone, good at helping, etc.).
- Once you have made up your mind, go to the other side (B) and wait.
- On side B you find a classmate, and together you cross back to side A to discuss the qualities that you have each decided on. If there are an odd number of students, three students are together in a group.
- On side A, the two-person-group must now decide on the two qualities they think best describe a good classmate. When they agree, they go back to side B. Sometimes they agree on two of the words that they have thought about individually, and other times they come up with new words that may contain the meaning of the other words.
- On side B, the two-person-group waits for all other pairs to agree as well, and then the two-person-groups merge into four-person-groups and go back to side A.
- On side A, the two groups tell each other which characteristics they have agreed on, and then the four-person-group must agree on only two characteristics that they bring to side B.
- On side B, the four-person-group waits for everyone else to agree as well, and when all groups are on side B, they meet in eight-person-groups. The eight-person-groups go back to side A to find only two characteristics they can all agree on.
- The exercise continues this way until all students in the class are on side B and have reached an agreement on two important qualities of a good classmate.
- The goal of the exercise is not necessarily to find two ultimate qualities for a good classmate. Through discussions, students get to know each other and gain an understanding of what is important to different people. In the process, a lot of positive qualities will be discussed, and students will get a sense of what the other students generally value in a good classmate.



Practical

- Time consumption: The duration can vary depending on how talkative the students are. You may, for example, set aside 20 minutes for the activity (incl. Introduction) and then spend 10 minutes on follow-up.
- Requirements: You must be in a room where there is space enough to walk around.
- Preparation: None

Tip!

Make sure that you do not have a very large group standing on side B waiting for a small group that cannot agree on side A. If this happens, you should try to help the small group further.

It is important to follow up on the activity. You can do this with the following questions, among others:

- How did you discuss these two characteristics?
- Why did you end up with exactly those two words?
- How quickly do you 'give up' and compromise? Does it make a difference that there are students on side B who cannot move on until the others on side A has agreed?
- What is it like to find an agreement in the eight-person-group compared to the two-person-group?

You can also use this exercise to make the class discuss an academically-relevant topic. Remember, however, that there should not be only one right answer to the question, because the exercise is about learning how people have different attitudes.