

Living with Hunger: Impossible Choices

An interactive, online video

By Food Banks Canada

Watch video at <https://foodbanksCanada.ca/impossiblechoices/index.html>

“*Living with Hunger: Impossible Choices*” is a group of three interactive, online videos that illustrate how it is possible that a person in Canada can slide into poverty and hunger.

In each video, an actor delivers a monologue that tells the story of their character — Sue, Miriam, or Doug*. At several points in each story, a decision must be made by that character, and the options are presented on screen. The viewer is invited to interact by selecting which of two actions they would take in that situation. In the process, the viewer determines the narrative path of that character’s story and the final outcome. As you will discover, some choices are harder than others — and some choices feel almost impossible.

**The stories in these videos are compilations based on real-life challenges often faced by people who are helped by food banks.*

How It Fits Into Your Curriculum

Impossible Choices could be integrated into any number of subjects, including Social Studies and Civics, used in conjunction with Community Service programs, or as a preparation before visiting a food bank.

The ideas explored in this resource and possible learning outcomes include:

- A better understanding of the issues of low-income and food insecurity in Canada and how the two are connected.
- Insights into how almost anyone can find themselves in a situation where they don’t have enough to eat.
- Empathy towards people with low income.
- Action that can be taken as individuals, organizations, society — and your students.

How to Use This Resource in Your Class

Consider using this resource:

1. **As a class.** The entire class watches one or more stories together, making the decisions with a show of hands.
2. **In work groups of 2-3 students.** Each group chooses a character to follow. Each decision in the video is determined collectively within that group.

After everyone has watched the assigned video(s), the following questions can be used to guide a discussion. Alternatively, this resource can be used as the basis for a homework assignment.

Discussion Guide

1. Did your character end up where you thought they would? If not, how was it different? Is there anything that could have happened differently?
2. In the video, you were asked to make decisions on behalf of your character.
3. How hard were these decisions to make?
4. How did it make you feel to have to make them?
5. Were there any times when you didn't know what the best choice was?
6. What was the hardest decision you had to make?
7. How do you think the people around Sue/Miriam/Doug — such as Sue's son, or Miriam's husband, or Doug's brother — felt about their struggles?
8. How do you think you would feel if this happened to you?
9. What does it feel like to be hungry? What if this happens every day? How do you think that affects a person?
10. Do you think Sue/Miriam/Doug could have done anything differently?
11. What do you think will happen next?
12. Is there anything we can do to help people in this situation?
13. If you don't have enough to eat, or if you know someone else who goes hungry a lot, can you think of ways that you (or they) can get more food?

Further Reading

Visit www.foodbankscanada.ca to learn more about hunger in Canada and what you can do to help, to find links to the food bank association for your province, and to find your local food bank.

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- Action that can be taken as individuals, organizations, society — and your students.

How to Use This Resource in Your Class

Consider using this resource:

1. **In work groups of 2-3 students.** Each group chooses a character to follow. Each decision in the video is determined collectively within that group.
2. **Individually.** Each student chooses a character to follow and watches the video individually, either in class or as homework.

After everyone has watched the assigned video(s), the following questions can be used to guide a discussion.

Alternatively, this resource can be used as the basis for a homework assignment.

Discussion Guide

1. What do the following terms mean, and how are they related:
 - Low income
 - Food insecurity
2. What are some of the factors that lead to food insecurity?
3. How easy do you think it was for Sue/Miriam/Doug to visit the food bank and ask for help?
4. To what extent do you think your character could have done things differently? Looking back on some of the choices you made for your character, are you happy with those decisions or would you change them?
5. If you met Sue, Miriam or Doug, do you think you would know that they are struggling financially? Does it surprise you that many people dealing with low incomes and who need to visit food banks are employed? Why do you think this happens?
6. At the end of the video, we learn that more than 850,000 Canadians a month seek help from food banks.
 - Based on your viewing of the video, what are some of the reasons that a person turns to a food bank?
 - How easy was it for the character in the story you watched to go to the food bank? And what were the reasons that motivated them to do so?
 - How can we as individuals help people in this situation?
7. Do you know what types of programs and services food banks provide?

8. In the introductory text, we are told that food insecurity affects four million Canadians.
 - What are some of the factors that cause low income?
 - What can we as a society do to prevent people from sliding into a situation where they lack the financial resources to pay for essentials?
9. What are some follow-up actions that we as a class could take? Examples to consider:
 - Hosting a food drive
 - Holding a fundraising activity
 - Volunteering at a food bank
 - Raising awareness of the issue
 - Writing to an MP to change legislation

Further Reading

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