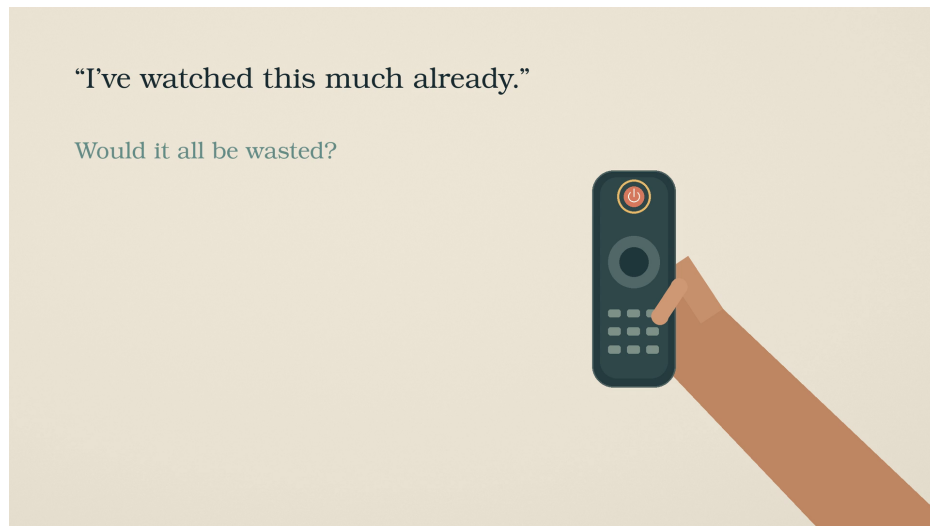


I've Come This Far. How Can I Stop Now?

Name: _____

Class: _____



Are we thinking about time spent, or time still ahead?

1. Keep these two questions in mind as you watch.

In the virtual projects, how does earlier effort affect the decision to continue?

In the piano example, why does past effort still matter to the decision being made now?

Same Choice, Different Reasons

2. Ege and Deniz have each watched forty minutes of a movie. Both decide to keep watching.

Ege

"The movie doesn't interest me. But I've watched this much already. If I stop now, that time will have been wasted."

Deniz

"I'm curious about the ending. I might enjoy watching the rest."

Whose reason is about something they could gain from the rest of the movie? What is the problem with the other reason?

3. Arda's model bridge has collapsed twice. After three days, he has learned that triangular supports are stronger. He also has a sturdy base he can reuse. He is thinking about rebuilding the upper section in a different way.

If Arda changes his design, what two things can he still use? Why does "Those three days were a complete waste" overlook them?

A Fair Comparison

4. You want to study how earlier effort affects a decision. Imagine comparing the same people's choices about whether to continue these two types of projects.

These are made-up examples, not the actual setup used in the study. Each project type will be tried the same number of times.

Project A

First stage completed

Difficult calculations

Next task if they continue

Difficult calculations

Chance of a reward: 1/2

Project B

First stage completed

Easy calculations

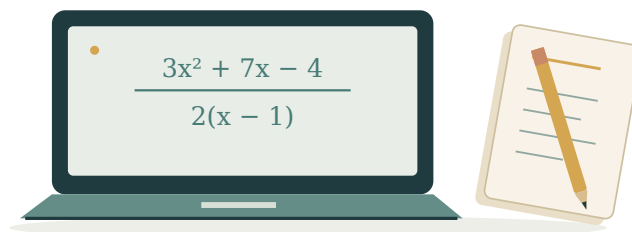
Next task if they continue

Easy calculations

Chance of a reward: 1/2

To study one factor, keep other conditions that could affect the decision similar.

a. Apart from earlier effort, what other condition is different?



b. Which behavior would you count and compare across both project types?

What Do These Findings Really Tell Us?

Virtual projects

In Bogdanov and colleagues' two experiments, people were more willing to continue projects they had already worked on than projects they had not. When the next task was hard, those who had put in more effort earlier were more willing to continue than those who had put in less. The effects of effort and time could not be fully separated.

Before the video starts

Beknazar-Yuzbashev and colleagues changed how long viewers had to wait before skipping a YouTube ad. Longer waits did not produce a statistically significant increase in total time spent with the video. More viewers in the longer-wait condition left before the video began.

5. The statement below claims more than these findings show.

“The more time someone spends on a task, the more likely they are to keep going.”

a. Write a more careful statement that takes both studies into account.

b. Why might it be a problem to apply the findings from calculation tasks directly to waiting through an ad?

Running to Stay in Place

Lewis Carroll • Through the Looking-Glass • Chapter II

In the strange world beyond the looking-glass, Alice runs hand in hand with the Red Queen.

The most curious part of the thing was, that the trees and the other things round them never changed their places at all: however fast they went, they never seemed to pass anything. "I wonder if all the things move along with us?" thought poor puzzled Alice. And the Queen seemed to guess her thoughts, for she cried, "Faster! Don't try to talk!"

Not that Alice had any idea of doing that. She felt as if she would never be able to talk again, she was getting so much out of breath: and still the Queen cried "Faster! Faster!" and dragged her along. "Are we nearly there?" Alice managed to pant out at last.

"Nearly there!" the Queen repeated. "Why, we passed it ten minutes ago! Faster!" And they ran on for a time in silence, with the wind whistling in Alice's ears, and almost blowing her hair off her head, she fancied.

"Now! Now!" cried the Queen. "Faster! Faster!" And they went so fast that at last they seemed to skim through the air, hardly touching the ground with their feet, till suddenly, just as Alice was getting quite exhausted, they stopped, and she found herself sitting on the ground, breathless and giddy.

The Queen propped her up against a tree, and said kindly, "You may rest a little now." Alice looked round her in great surprise. "Why, I do believe we've been under this tree the whole time! Everything's just as it was!"

"Of course it is," said the Queen, "what would you have it?"

"Well, in our country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else—if you ran very fast for a long time, as we've been doing."

"A slow sort of country!" said the Queen. "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"

"I'd rather not try, please!" said Alice. "I'm quite content to stay here—only I am so hot and thirsty!"

From the original English text, now in the public domain.

6. How does what happens differ from what Alice expects? Explain using a detail from the passage.

What Does Effort Do?

7. Assume the Queen's rule is true in this imaginary world. Does the purpose of running change when Alice's goal changes?

If her goal is to stay where she is...

Does running at the same speed serve a purpose? Why?

If her goal is to get somewhere else...

Why isn't running at the same speed enough?

8. A student says, "I worked hard, but nothing changed. That means it was useless."

Give an everyday example of effort that helps keep something the way it is. Explain what would change if that effort stopped.

Where His Gaze Leads

Winslow Homer • The Fog Warning • 1885



Oil on canvas • Museum of Fine Arts, Boston • 94.72

Image: Wikimedia Commons / public domain reproduction from the museum

9. Follow the direction of the fisherman's gaze. Where does it lead you in the painting? Together with the oars and waves, what does this detail suggest about the journey ahead?

a. Do the fish in the boat represent only time already spent? Think about their value now, and explain how they differ from the time spent watching the movie.

Forty Minutes Left

10. The school magazine team has worked on an article for three days. The facts have been checked, but the final section is unclear. The deadline is forty minutes away. The team considers the estimates below realistic.

Finish the Article

Rewrite the final section: **25 min**
Check the article: **15 min**

The full topic appears in this issue.

Use a Shorter Version

Remove one section and revise: **15 min**
Check the article: **10 min**

The scope is narrower, leaving time for another task.

Save It for the Next Issue

Add and check a ready-made announcement: **10 min**

The article waits; the draft is saved.

Other tasks: redesign the cover, **15 min**; choose a topic for the next issue, **15 min**. A usable cover is already available.

a. Choose a plan. Divide the time bar among the tasks and label each one. Each section represents 5 minutes.



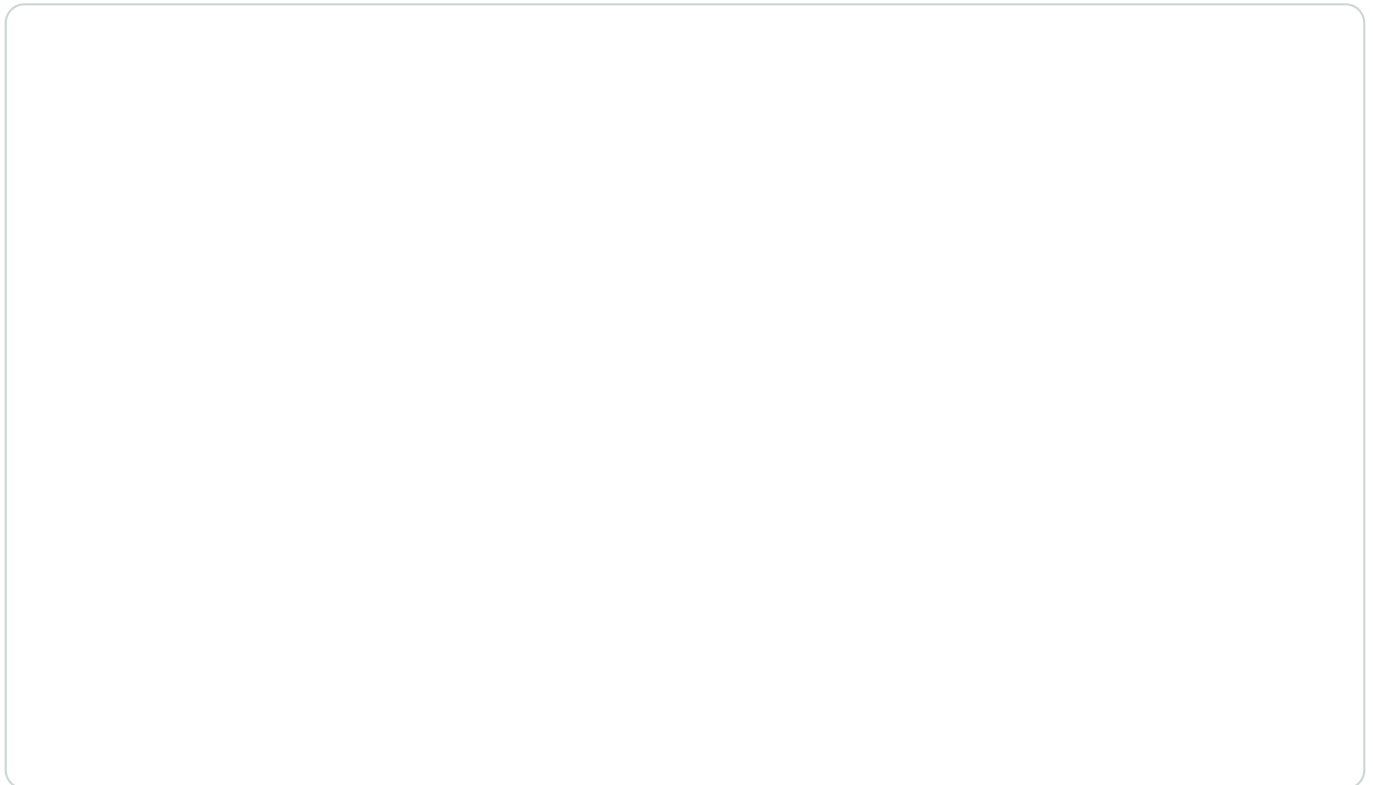
b. What does your choice give you, and what opportunity do you give up?

A Slogan Isn't Enough

“Never give up!”

“If it’s not working, quit now!”

11. Design a small poster that shows what both slogans leave out. Use one main sentence and an image. Include a condition in which continuing makes sense and another in which changing your approach makes sense.



12. Support the idea in your poster with a detail from Alice’s run, the fisherman’s situation, or the school magazine example.

Sources

Video

I've Come This Far. How Can I Stop Now?

Text

Lewis Carroll

Through the Looking-Glass,
and What Alice Found There
Chapter II: The Garden of Live Flowers

Excerpt from the original English text. Public domain.

[Read the Original Text ↗](#)

Painting

Winslow Homer

The Fog Warning • 1885
Oil on canvas
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
94.72

Public domain artwork and reproduction.
Shown in full, with the original proportions
and colors.

[Museum Collection ↗](#)

[Image and Rights ↗](#)

Research Featured in the Video

Mario Bogdanov and colleagues (2026)

Throwing good effort after bad: Evidence for a sunk-cost effect in cognitive effort-based decision-making.

Cognition, 275, 106628.

[Article ↗](#)

George Beknazar-Yuzbashev, Sota Ichiba, and Mateusz Stalinski (2026)

To the depths of the sunk cost: Experiments revisiting the elusive effect.

Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, 241, 107352.

[Article ↗](#)

The opening image comes from this video's original animation. The project cards, bridge story, and magazine scenario are fictional examples created for these activities.