Youth participation: decision-making activities for trainers
Introduction:

Napoleon Bonaparte once said that ‘nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious, than to be able to decide’.

Young members need to be supported in making their own decisions in order to participate fully at all levels of Girlguiding. For the individual girl, decision making within guiding is about choosing activities and challenges. Making decisions as an individual allows her to learn by doing. Girlguiding aims to provide a safe environment for her to make mistakes and learn from them without the pressure of meeting a defined academic standard: girls are encouraged to do their best.

To allow young members to make decisions, Leaders have to be able to support them. This pack will give trainers activities to use as part of a stand-alone training on decision making or to integrate into section trainings. They can also highlight ways to help support girls in making decisions throughout Girlguiding.

The resource Training contains theory about decision making that may be helpful in structuring a training session around this topic. This resource is currently undergoing an update, but a limited number of copies of the current version are available by emailing leadership@girlguiding.org.uk.

This pack contains a range of activities that can be used with different sections, through which leaders are able to demonstrate the ways that a decision can be made. See the table on page 3 for more information.
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The activities

Activity 1: How to decide

Purpose:
To discover the various ways decisions can be made.

Time:
10 minutes

Sections:
Guides
Rangers

You will need:
- flipchart
- marker pens.

What to do:
1. Split the participants into small groups and ask them to write down different ways to make a decision.
2. After they have finished, get them to share their ideas with the rest of the group.

Adapt it:
If there are only a few participants, ask them to shout out ideas and write them on a flipchart at the front of the room. Or ask participants to write their ideas on sticky notes and stick them on a large piece of paper.

Ask the participants to use the list of decision-making methods to come up with one method for their group, ie use voting to get rid of one method, then use 50/50 and so on.

Discussion points:
- Do you have a preferred method for making a decision?
- How many methods do you use for making a decision?
- Is there a way you choose which method you use?

Activity 2: If I ruled the world

Purpose:
To discover what laws would we make if we were in charge of the world for one day.

Time:
15 minutes

Sections:
All sections

You will need:
- pens
- paper.
What to do:
1. Split the participants into groups of three and ask them to write laws that they would make if they were put in charge of the world for one day.
2. After the participants have finished, ask them to share their ideas with the rest of the group.

Adapt it:
Split Rainbows into fewer, larger groups and have an adult or Young Leader sit with each group to help if the girls are struggling for ideas. Ask the girls to write down their ideas, then share them with the unit.

Discussion points:
- What kinds of laws did everyone make? Were they laws that would benefit the individual or the world as a whole?
- Did the girls all agree on all the laws or did they choose one law each? If the latter is the case, did they agree with each other’s decisions?
- Was the law-making influenced by events going on in the world at the moment?

Activity 3: Storytime

Purpose:
To get girls to think imaginatively while on their feet.

Time:
5 minutes

Sections:
All sections

Resources:
Nothing

What to do:
1. Ask girls to stand in a circle. One of the leaders starts the activity by saying a single word which must be a word used to start a sentence. The next person in the circle follows this with another word (and it has to make sense), then the next person adds another word and so on. The idea is that the group tells a story but the plot can change at any time depending on what an individual says.
2. After going round the circle several of times, let the girls say three words at a turn, or split them into smaller circles and see how the story develops.

Discussion points:
- How difficult did girls find it to come up with a word on the spot?
- How many of the girls tried to plan what word they were going to say before it was their turn? Did they have to change it when it was their turn, because of what other people had said? How did that make them feel?
- Did this activity help anyone to develop any skills such as quick thinking or decision making?
Activity 4: Bedroom on a budget

Purpose:
For girls to identify what items they would put in a dream bedroom and what would change if the budget was halved.

Time:
25 minutes

Sections:
Brownies
Guides
Rangers

You will need:
- pictures of bedroom furniture, with prices - one of each item per girl.

What to do:
1. Give each girl a list of items (essential and non-essential) that you would find in a bedroom, and the prices of each. Ask them to note down which items they would choose within a generous budget (the amount specified by you, dependent on the individual prices you have set).
2. Ask the girls to discuss in small groups what they chose within their budget. Then tell the girls that their budget has been halved. Which items would they keep and what would they get rid of?

Adapt it:
Give older girls several catalogues (with a range of prices) from which to cut the pictures.

Discussion points:
- What items did they put in their bedroom when they had a higher budget?
- Which items did they remove when the budget was halved? How did they decide?
- Have they had to make any similar decisions in their own lives, or had to deal with a similar situation?

Activity 5: Smiley faces

Purpose:
To help younger girls express their views in making choices or evaluating.

Time:
15 minutes

Sections:
Rainbows
Brownies

You will need:
- pictures representing the choices, eg activities, places to go etc.
three large face pictures: smiley, sad and uncertain, as below.

What to do:
1. Put a picture of the smiley face one wall, the uncertain face on another and the sad face on a third wall.
2. Hold up the relevant choice picture and ask them girls whether they want to do it. They should move to the corresponding face – happy for ‘yes’, sad for ‘no’, uncertain for ‘don’t know’. Count the responses.
3. When evaluating, if they enjoyed the event or activity ask them to run to the face appropriate to their enjoyment. Count the responses.
4. Once they have done this ask them to sit in a circle again and go through each of the results, to ensure that the girls understand the decision that has been made by the group, and their part in making it.

Adapt it:
If space is limited, the girls may have to point to a picture, stand up for ‘yes’ or stay sitting for ‘no’, or raise a hand when the appropriate face is shown.

Discussion points:
Did the girls follow a leader or make their own decision? How could you ensure that they all make independent decisions?

Activity 6: Body building
Purpose:
To work as a team to complete a task.

Time:
15 minutes

Sections:
Guides
Rangers

You will need:
Nothing

What to do:
Split the participants into small groups. Call out an object or animal to be created by the group, by making shapes with their bodies – all members of the group must be included. Some ideas are a house, fairground ride, car, bus, famous monument or elephant.

Adapt it:
Ask one group to create an object and the other groups must decide what they think it is.
Discussion points:
- How did you decide what your object was going to look like?
- Did any members of your team take on specific roles?

Activity 7: What happens next?

Purpose:
To enable a group to think about possible outcomes of a situation resulting from decisions that they make.

Time:
15 minutes

Sections:
Guides
Rangers

You will need:
- resource cards for this activity (see Appendix, page 21).

What to do:
1. Split the participants into small groups and give them each a scenario on a card.
2. Ask the groups to come up with three possible outcomes for their situations and the decisions the person in the story has to make.

Adapt it:
Ask a group to act out their scenario and have the rest of the group decide on the outcomes. Or ask the groups to act out their preferred outcome of the possible three.

Discussion points:
- If you were in this situation how would you decide what to do?
- Did any of your group come up with a different answer?
- Can you think of any situations when you would decide to do nothing?
- What would influence you to make a different decision?

Activity 8: Truth and lies

Purpose:
To experience quick decision making and what influences it.

Time:
15 minutes

Sections:
Guides
Rangers

You will need:
Nothing
What to do:
1. Give each participant 30 seconds to come up with two statements about herself, one that is false and the other that is true.
2. Each participant should share her statements and everyone else must decide which they think is true and which is false.

Adapt it:
If there is a large group and limited time, ask only some participants to share their statements.

Discussion points:
- How did you feel about having to make the decision about your statements in a short time?
- What helped you decide which statement made by someone else was false?

Activity 9: ‘Sara Says’

Purpose:
A warm-up game focused on making decisions as individuals or groups. Its second purpose is to introduce the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games activity resource On Your Marks.

Time:
10 minutes

Sections:
All sections

You will need:
- list of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic sports, as found in On Your Marks.

What to do:
1. The game is played like ‘Simon says’.
2. Choose one player to be ‘Sara’ and the rest of the players spread out around the playing area.
3. Sara calls out instructions to mime different Olympic and Paralympic sports. If she starts by saying ‘Sara says...’ then the girls must act out the sport that has been called. If a sport is called without the phrase ‘Sara says...’, any girl who starts to mime is out of the game. Sara’s aim is to get all the other players out!

Adapt it:
Younger girls may find it easier to do this in groups rather than individually. If the space is limited, shorten the list to the less energetic sports. Include some more unusual sports, which the girls may not have heard of – they can use their imagination!

Discussion points:
- Did the girls copy each other or make their own decisions?
- How did the girls mime any sports they didn’t know about?
Activity 10: To build or not to build

**Purpose:**
To put decision making into practice.

**Time:**
15 minutes

**Sections:**
Guides
Rangers

**You will need:**
- resource cards for this activity (see Appendix, page 21).

**What to do:**
1. Divide the participants into five groups and allocate a person and a card to each of them.
2. Read out the following statement. ‘The local council wants to build a bypass around a village. At the moment all traffic travels through the village. You must come up with an argument based on the character of your person.’
3. After the groups have come up with their argument, engage the group in a debate and then vote on whether the bypass should be built or not.

**Adapt it:**
Use a situation that is occurring in the local area or at a national level to make this activity more current and relevant.

**Discussion points:**
- What do you think the council would do before building the road?
- Have you ever been involved in a decision like this?

Activity 11: Opinion finders

**Purpose:**
To promote decision making and recording.

**Time:**
20 minutes

**Sections:**
All sections

**You will need:**
- one recording sheet per person (see Appendix, page 22)
- pencils.

**What to do:**
Everyone is given a sheet with a different statement at the top about which a decision is needed, such as ‘We should go canoeing this spring.’ (It’s fine if several people have the same statement.) The group members are then asked to circulate and chat to each other. As group members meet, they should ask each other for their opinions about the statements. When an opinion is given, the relevant box is ticked on the sheet, and the individuals...
move on. Everyone should try to talk to all other group members if possible. The activity is allowed to run for ten minutes (or less if it finishes earlier) then the ticks are tallied.

Adapt it:
Use pictures instead of statements for Rainbows or younger Brownies. For older girls the sheets can be given out randomly. Girls could also work in pairs or small groups.

Discussion points:
- Did everyone get a chance to comment on every statement?
- Did the group appreciate being able to give their views anonymously?
- Did everyone mix?

Activity 12: Wish you were here

Purpose:
To discover the roles people take in group discussions in order to make decisions.

Time:
15 minutes

Sections:
Brownies
Guides
Rangers

You will need:
- copies of the face pictures from Activity 5 (page 7)
- travel brochures.

What to do:
1. Put the smiley face picture on one wall, the uncertain face on another and the sad face on a third wall.
2. Divide the participants into small groups. Give each group a travel brochure and ask them to decide as a group where they want to go on holiday. Ask the groups to share their choices.

Adapt it:
As with Activity 4, give each group a furniture catalogue and ask them to decorate a bedroom. To extend the activity, ask them to make a collage of their decision.

Discussion points:
- How did you make the decision?
- What roles did members fulfil in the group?
- Did you all agree on the final decision?
- How did you make the decision fair?
- Did you need any further information to make the decision?
Activity 13: Focus on fashion

Purpose:
To encourage participants to think about how they make decisions about their appearance.

Time:
20 minutes

Sections:
Brownies
Guides
Rangers

You will need:
- two signs saying 'Agree' and 'Disagree'.

What to do:
Put up the signs on opposite sides of the room. Read out some of the statements below and ask the participants to move to one sign or another depending on their opinion. Ask participants to share their reasons for their choices.

Statements:
- People can tell a lot about me from the clothes I wear.
- My style shows that I am an individual.
- My style shows that I belong to a certain group.
- I choose whatever clothes I like and no one influences my decisions.
- People who dress individually are more likely to be bullied or teased.
- It’s important for young people to be able to express themselves through their clothes and style.
- I would wear something I love even if I thought my friends wouldn’t like it.
- If my parents or carers didn’t like my style I would compromise with them.
- If something I owned went out of fashion I would still wear it, otherwise it’s wasteful.

Adapt it:
If time permits, encourage a debate about some of the statements.

Discussion points:
- Do you think about where clothes come from when deciding whether to buy them?
- Do you think your responses are typical of your age group?
- Are clothes often used to judge a person? Is this a good or a bad thing?

Activity 14: Face value

Purpose:
To illustrate how stereotypes may influence our decisions.

Time:
10 minutes
Sections:
Brownies
Guides
Rangers

You will need:
- pictures of five different faces (older woman, young man, businesswoman etc)
  labelled 1 to 5.

What to do:
Tell the participants that they are on a crowded train and there are only five available seats
next to the people in the photographs. They must decide which person to sit next to and
inform the other participants of their decision. Emphasise the fact that there is no right
answer to this.

Adapt it:
Give further information about each person, for example who is reading a book, who
is listening to music etc. Ask the participants to reverse the situation and decide which
person might sit next to them.

Discussion points:
- How did you make your decision?
- Can you think of any other examples of where image plays a role in making a decision?
- Is it right that decisions are made based on how someone looks?
- Do you think you conform to any stereotypes people may have?

Activity 15: Size prejudice

Purpose:
To explore how decisions may be based on our assumptions about person’s physical
appearance.

Note:
Be aware that some girls and young women may be extremely sensitive about their body
image or weight and might find this activity difficult or upsetting. Make sure you carry out
the activity in a positive and supportive atmosphere.

Time:
15 minutes

Sections:
Guides
Rangers

You will need:
- three images of women with different physiques (one very thin, one healthy, one obese)
- pens
- a question list for each participant (see Appendix, page 23).
What to do:

1. Stick the pictures of the women on separate pages of flipchart paper labelled A, B and C.
2. Give each participant a pen and a list of questions. Ask them to answer the each question with A, B or C.
3. Make a tally of the scores for each woman. There may be some interesting answers to the questions above – especially the last question – so ask participants to elaborate on their decisions if they are willing to do so.

Adapt it:
Use pictures of celebrities at different weights such as Renée Zellweger before and during the filming of Bridget Jones’s Diary.

Discussion points:
- How did you decide on your answers to the questions?
- Were you influenced by any preconceptions of what these women could be like because of their appearance?
- Why do you think there is prejudice against fat people?
- Are thinner women considered to be more successful by society, and if so why?
- Are there any instances when fat prejudice is reversed?

Activity 16: Peas in a pot

Purpose:
To allow younger girls to vote.

Time:
5 minutes

Sections:
Rainbows
Brownies

You will need:
- 1 dried pea, marble or dried pasta shape per girl
- pots labelled with different options such as places to go on a trip, activities to do etc.

What to do:
The girls should take turns to put their pea in the appropriate pot to indicate their choice. For Rainbows, it is best to offer only two choices.

Adaptations for different situations:
This could be done behind a screen so the girls are not influenced by their friends’ decisions.

Discussion points:
- Did it work better behind a screen? Why might this be?
Activity 17: Peer pressure in a jar

Purpose:
To allow participants to make a decision and then negotiate with others in a controlled way.

Time:
15 minutes

Sections:
Guides
Rangers

You will need:
- a jar filled with sweets, the number of which is known to the Leader
- a pen and paper for each participant.

What to do:
1. Individually ask the participants to decide how many sweets are in the jar. Tell them that the people with the closest answer to the correct amount will get the sweets to eat. Get them to write the answer on their paper at the top.
2. Ask the participants to pair up and then ask them to come up with a joint answer for the number of sweets in the jar. Get them to write this underneath their first answer. Get each pair to join with another pair and re-estimate. Continue this process until the whole group is divided in half. The group with the estimate closest to the correct number of sweets gets the sweets to eat. You could also share the sweets with the whole group.

Discussion points:
- How did you decide on the numbers?
- How did people persuade others that their estimate was right?
- How did they react if others did not agree with them?
- Was everyone consulted when the final number was decided on?
- Relate this to the pressure felt by people to conform to certain ideals - who puts pressure on you in your life?

Activity 18: The negotiation game

Purpose:
To introduce groups of girls to group decision making and the need to negotiate and compromise.

Time:
10 minutes plus activity time

Sections:
Brownies
Guides

You will need:
- one set of six cards per group, each containing the words: INDOOR, OUTDOOR, THINKING, DOING, TEAM, INDIVIDUAL.
What to do:
1. One member of each group should come to the Leader, who gives them the first two cards (INDOOR and OUTDOOR). They then return to the group, and between them agree which type of activity they want. They then return to the Leader, who records the decision and gives the next two cards.
2. This is repeated with the third set of cards, until each group has a decision set, eg INDOOR/DOING/TEAM. This represents the activity they have chosen, which they will then carry out, either then or next week.

Adapt it:
On a camp or holiday, the process of choosing can be repeated several times so that each group tries several activities. It can be also run as a challenge for points or just for fun.

Discussion points:
- Did the group manage to agree?
- If not, how do those whose view was not taken feel?
- Did they join in the activity?

Activity 19: Secret vote

Purpose:
A simple way for younger girls to vote to avoid influencing each other.

Time:
5 minutes

Sections:
Rainbows
Brownies

You will need:
Nothing

What to do:
The girls stand in a circle with their hands behind their backs. They have their hands open or closed to indicate their choice between two options. The leader walks round the outside of the circle counting the hands.

Adaptations for a different situation:
For younger groups, a leader could hold up a card saying something like ‘CLOSED HANDS – stay inside’ or ‘OPEN HANDS - go outside’ to remind the girls of their choices.

Discussion points:
- Did the girls understand the meaning of open and closed hands?
- Did you show them?
- How else could you do this activity?
**Activity 20: Pictures**

**Purpose:**
To help girls make decisions and choices.

**Time:**
15 minutes

**Sections:**
All sections

**You will need:**
- several pictures in a theme such as landscape, animals, Christmas cards, people of different countries, holiday destinations. (Note that you will need at least twice as many pictures as the total number of girls.)

**What to do:**
1. The pictures are all placed in a central place such as the floor or a table where all the girls can gather round and look at them.
2. Ask the girls to choose the one they like best, and consider including a purpose for their choice such as the pet they would most like, a place they would like to live, the location where they would like to make their Promise.
3. The girls are invited to share their decisions either as a group or with their friends.

**Discussion points:**
- Did anyone change their mind during the sharing process?

**Activity 21: Colours**

**Purpose:**
To make decisions and negotiate, quickly and under pressure.

**Time:**
20 minutes

**Sections:**
Brownies
Guides

**You will need:**
- one set of cards per group consisting of the colours red, green, yellow, blue, black, white

**What to do:**
1. Each group has a set of cards, and one girl is nominated as the runner.
2. The Leader reads a statement and the groups have to decide which colour(s) answer the question. The statements should be simple for Rainbows and harder for Guides.
   - The colour of grass.
   - The colour of a post box.
   - The colour of soot.
   - The colour of a dandelion.
   - The colour of the sky.
   - The colour of snow.
• The two colours that make purple.
• The two colours on a Greek flag.
• The two colours of a magpie.
• The colour of a second-class stamp.
• The colour your local football team plays in.
• The three colours on the Union Flag.
• The three colours on the French flag.
• The three primary paint colours.
• The two colours very old films are made in.

3. A point is awarded to the team whose runner gets the correct card(s) to the leader first.

Adapt it:
A different range of non-primary colours can be used if the girls get good at the game.

Discussion points:
• How much guess-work was used? Wrong answers can be penalised to stop this.
• Did any one person dominate a group?

Activity 22: Value continuum
Purpose:
To allow non-verbal expression of views.

Time:
15 minutes

Sections:
Rainbows
Brownies
Guides

You will need:
• Two opposing statements written on cards – see ‘What to do’ for an example.

What to do:
1. Set up an imaginary line across the room, clearly marking where it starts and finishes (with chairs, for example). Put cards at each end with opposing statements such as:
   • I am a vegan.
   • I love to eat meat and I eat it at every meal.
2. Ask the participants to stand at the point on the line that best represents their view.

Adapt it:
For Rainbows, points along the line could be labelled with different views. For very sensitive topics, participants could leave a token rather than stand in place. A knotted rope could also be used to show points on a line.

Discussion points:
• Did participants feel intimidated when standing at their point?
• Did some participants follow the crowd?
Activity 23: Dot voting

Purpose:
To try a method of prioritising a series of ideas.

Time:
10 minutes

Sections:
All sections

You will need:
- packs of coloured sticky dots, stars or other shapes
- a flipchart with a list of options written on it.

What to do:
1. Give everyone three dots. Ask them to come one by one to stick their three dots against their choices.
2. Add up the dots to show which choices were the most popular.

Adapt it:
Restrict the girls to one vote each. Or colour code the dots in a range of ways to show first, second and third choices, and age range.

Discussion:
- Was it obvious which option was chosen?
- What about the less popular options – will they be used?

Activity 24: What's in the bag?

Purpose:
To promote thinking about risks when making a decision.

Time:
15 minutes

Sections:
Brownies
Guides
Rangers

You will need:
- four sealed bags that contain (Bag 1) a calculator, pen, notebook with answers to the next school test, (Bag 2) an empty CD case, (Bag 3) an onion, (Bag 4) a £5 note or an IOU for £5.

What to do:
1. Choose three participants – the rest are to be the audience. Tell the participants to choose a bag and stand by it. Ask them to share why they picked that bag.
2. Tell the participants they can feel the bags and amend their choices if they want. Ask them to share their reasons for the change.
3. Open the bags and see what was inside. Who was surprised?
Adapt it:
This could be done as a blindfold game where the bags chosen only by the feel of the objects in them.

Discussion points:
- Talk about how the decisions were made.
  - Bag 1 was interesting because the things in it made a noise. It had positive contents but negative consequences: illegal answers to a test.
  - Bag 2 appeared to contain a CD but the case was empty. You can be fooled by not having enough information to make a decision.
  - Bag 3 felt as if it contained an apple. Sometimes we make a quick decision and don’t look for all the information (eg the smell).
  - Bag 4 was unknowable, except for the paper rustling. Choosing this bag was a risk and decisions based on risk can be dangerous.
- Talk about the risks taken in life and their consequences.

Conclusion
Trainers can offer these activities to create training sessions which promote youth participation by allowing girls and young women from all sections to make their own decisions.
Appendix: Activity resources

Activity 7: What happens next? (page 8)
Set the text below into five cards that Leaders can cut up and use at a meeting. Make the text large enough for a small group to read together.

Charlotte is walking along the street. She sees the man ahead of her drop £10 on the ground. He doesn’t notice and carries on walking. What happens next?

Maddie has asked her parents if she can have friends round one evening. They have said no. Her parents are then invited out and Maddie is home alone. What happens next?

Izzy sees a woman struggling down some stairs with two children and her shopping. Izzy is late to meet someone. What happens next?

Kira knows that she should be home by 10pm but her friends have asked her to go to the cinema with them. The film finishes at 10.30pm. What happens next?

Sophie sees a girl from school in a shop slip something into her bag and leave without paying. What happens next?

Activity 10: To build or not to build (page 10)
Set the text below into five ‘cards’ that you can cut up and use at a meeting – text large enough for a small group to read together.

A local council representative: ‘The bypass is needed to make the village safer and to make traffic flow quicker in the area. It will cost lots of money but will be worth it in the end.’

A local farmer: ‘The bypass will go right through the middle of my land. This will mean I can’t have as many sheep so I will lose money.’

A local business person: ‘If the bypass is built fewer people will come to the village for a restful weekend and so my business will lose money.’

A village resident: ‘The traffic that comes through the village at the moment is dangerous for the people in the village. The bypass will make our village safer and quieter.’

A commuter: ‘The bypass will cut my journey to work down from 45 minutes to 30 minutes. This will save me money on petrol and let me get home sooner to my family.’
### Activity 11: Opinion finders (page 10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement: We should go canoeing next term.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Strongly agree</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
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<tr>
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### Activity 15: Size prejudice (page 13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which woman is healthiest?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which woman is sexiest?</td>
<td>Which woman is sexiest?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which woman is most successful?</td>
<td>Which woman is most successful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which woman has most friends?</td>
<td>Which woman has most friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which woman makes the best decisions?</td>
<td>Which woman makes the best decisions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which woman is happiest?</td>
<td>Which woman is happiest?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which woman earns the most money?</td>
<td>Which woman earns the most money?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which woman has the most successful love life?</td>
<td>Which woman has the most successful love life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which woman is the best role model for her children?</td>
<td>Which woman is the best role model for her children?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which woman would you most like to be friends with?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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