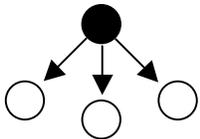
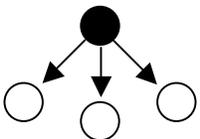
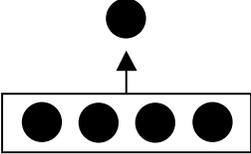


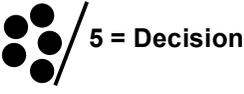
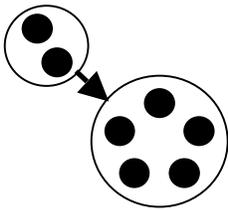
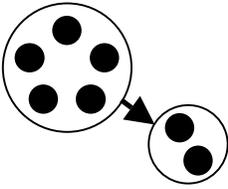
# Typical Methods of Group Decision Making

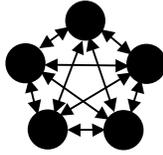
There are a variety of decision-making methods. Each comes with advantages and disadvantages. Below are some of the more common methods.



Decision-Making Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Coin toss</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick</li> <li>• Can result in decisions when no other approach will work</li> <li>• Suitable for simple, unimportant decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes no use of group resources</li> <li>• Gains no benefits from group interaction</li> <li>• Builds no commitment to implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Decision by authority without consultation</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good for simple, routine decisions</li> <li>• Good when little time available--for example, in crisis situations</li> <li>• Good when group expects decision maker to use this method</li> <li>• Good when members lack resources to do otherwise</li> <li>• Good when authority has all relevant information</li> <li>• Good when authority has trust of all group members</li> <li>• Good when decision affects only the decision maker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One person is not always a good resource</li> <li>• No group interaction</li> <li>• Group resources poorly used</li> <li>• Little commitment</li> <li>• May cause resentment</li> </ul>
<b>Decision by expert</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good when expert has the necessary information</li> <li>• Good when little is to be gained from group interaction</li> <li>• Good when commitment to implementation is not a concern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expertise is often hard to determine</li> <li>• Advantages of group interaction are lost</li> <li>• Little commitment</li> <li>• May cause resentment</li> </ul>
<b>Decision by authority after consultation</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses some resources of group</li> <li>• Gains benefits of group discussion</li> <li>• Can build some commitment to implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority may not get unbiased information</li> <li>• May not build enough commitment to implementation</li> <li>• May not resolve conflicts</li> </ul>



<p><b>Average of group member opinion</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good for simple, routine decisions</li> <li>• Useful when it is hard to promote interaction</li> <li>• Useful when time is short</li> <li>• Good when group lacks skills and information needed to do otherwise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits of group interaction are lost</li> <li>• May not resolve conflicts</li> <li>• Little commitment to implementation is built</li> </ul>
<p><b>Minority decision</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Useful when delegation to a smaller group is necessary</li> <li>• Can be used when not everyone can meet</li> <li>• Good when time is short</li> <li>• Good when rest of group lacks skills and information needed to make decision</li> <li>• Good when commitment to decision is not necessary</li> <li>• Good for simple, routine decisions</li> <li>• Good when subgroup has necessary information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not take advantages of the resources of most group members</li> <li>• Does not gain the benefits of group interaction</li> <li>• Does not build widespread commitment</li> <li>• May not resolve conflicts</li> </ul>
<p><b>Majority decision</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good when there is not time to build consensus</li> <li>• Closes off discussion on matters not important to the group as a whole</li> <li>• Seen as a very legitimate method in a democracy</li> <li>• Good when commitment to decision by everyone is not necessary</li> <li>• Good when members of the group are equally informed</li> <li>• Good when majority can handle implementation without minority involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full benefit of group interaction not gained</li> <li>• May not make best use of relevant group resources</li> <li>• May not result in full commitment to decision</li> <li>• Can leave a disgruntled minority; there should be a plan for handling such a situation</li> </ul>

<p><b>Consensus</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can produce a high quality decision</li> <li>• Can produce strong commitment to implementation</li> <li>• Makes best use of group resources</li> <li>• Gains full benefits of group interaction</li> <li>• Future problem-solving ability of group is enhanced</li> <li>• Useful for serious, important, complex decisions that affect a lot of people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes a great deal of time and energy</li> <li>• Time pressure must be minimal</li> <li>• Places major demands on group members' skills</li> <li>• Requires rich exchange of ideas and information; the group needs to be informed prior to reaching the decision</li> <li>• Hard to use in large groups</li> </ul>
---	--	--



**Adapted principally from:**

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, F. P. (2000). *Joining together: Group theory and group skills* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 289-296). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.