

CURRICULUM INTRO

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ABOUT QUANDARY

At the Dawn of a New Society...How Will You Decide?



What is *Quandary*?

Quandary is a free, award-winning game that supports the development of children's ethical decision-making, critical thinking, and perspective-taking skills. Through playing *Quandary*, students recognize ethical issues and manage challenging situations as they arise in the new world settlement on planet Braxos, 32 light years in the future. Based on information they receive from the settlers about problems on Braxos, students must make difficult decisions for the good of the settlement. Students are provided with a decision-making framework and are not told *what* to think but are instead shown *how* to think about complex issues. Their decisions have important consequences for everyone in the new colony, and the future of Braxos' society is in their hands.

***Quandary* Accolades**

Game of the Year
Games for Change
Festival 2013

Gold Winner (Website)
Parents' Choice Awards
2013

Most Meaningful Game
Most Meaningful Play 2012

Silver Winner (Education)
Serious Play Awards 2013

***Quandary* in the Classroom**

Quandary is an educational game with teaching resources available on the website at <https://www.quandarygame.org/teachers>. *Quandary* is designed for students ages 8-14. An 8-year-old and a 14-year-old will differ greatly in their comprehension of ethical issues, but the game's structure and design make it possible for students to engage at age-appropriate levels of both literacy and moral development.

***Quandary* Episodes**

Quandary has four episodes, each addressing a different ethical quandary on planet *Braxos*. Each episode takes roughly 20-30 minutes to complete, depending on player speed and depth of interaction. On the next page, you will find a brief description of each episode. For a more detailed game guide, please visit <https://www.quandarygame.org/teachers>.

QUANDARY EPISODE GUIDE



Episode 1: Lost Sheep

The yashors - predators native to Braxos - are attacking the settlement's sheep. The settlement wants to preserve their sheep, but the predator has a medicinal value that could help colonists fight off disease. Players must talk to the colonists and listen to their diverse opinions to decide how to best proceed.

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Episode 2: Water Wars

On planet Braxos, the community's public water well appears to be polluted. The only other well belongs to a colonist who is charging for access, but not everyone can afford the price of clean water. Players must put themselves in the shoes of the settlers and develop a plan to fix this dilemma.

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Episode 3: Fashion Faction

The colony's tailor has started making special alterations to the standard uniform for his friends. Some colonists say this is dividing the community. Players must listen to everyone's opinions on the matter and make an informed decision for the good of the settlement.

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Episode 4: Mixed Messages

An anonymous member of the colony has been posting mean-spirited messages about engineers on the community message board. This causes Bazzil, the engineer, to feel personally attacked. Players must solve this dilemma by using the information presented to them to develop a solution.

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Quandary in the Classroom

Quandary Resources

The *Quandary* website houses several useful resources for teachers implementing *Quandary* in the classroom. Teachers can access detailed game walkthroughs, character/episode summaries, student worksheets, discussion questions, and more.

Quandary Extensions

Quandary also offers a Teacher Dashboard, where teachers can conveniently track students as they progress through the game. Teachers can access student profiles through the Dashboard and monitor the points each student accrues during gameplay to assess student engagement.

On the tablet version of *Quandary*, students 13 and older can create their own characters and challenges with the Character Creator Tool. Teachers can pair these in-game tools with the following curriculum to maximize *Quandary*'s benefit.



Quandary in Practice

The Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University partnered with Citizen Schools to create the Project 360 Apprenticeship. After playing *Quandary*, 6th grade students applied their new skills to a real-life ethical dilemma: bullying. Students gained a greater understanding of bullying at their school by surveying other class members and engaging in a panel discussion with local high school students and school administrators. The students presented this understanding and discussed their own research process in a final presentation to family, friends, and local community leaders.

Quandary curriculum is modeled after this collaborative research project with the goal of helping students **enhance ethical understanding, gain problem solving skills, foster empathy, and develop information literacy** in a digital age.

Why Teach with Quandary?

Teaching with Quandary...

Builds Real-Life Skills

Although *Quandary* is set in a futuristic colony on a distant planet, the problems faced by Braxos settlers are highly applicable to everyday life. The skills students develop while playing *Quandary* – such as critical thinking, perspective-taking and decision-making – will help them recognize ethical issues and manage moral quandaries as they arise in their own lives.

Nurtures Independent Thinking

Quandary provides a framework for ethical decision-making without telling players what to think. The game aims to strengthen students' moral compasses by developing the skills necessary to understand ethical issues and process conflict in their own lives. These skills include:

- Critical Thinking
- Digital Literacy
- Perspective-taking
- Leadership/Decision-making

Cultivates Meaningful Conversations

Through a combination of gameplay and thought-provoking discussion, *Quandary* can be used in the classroom to help develop a range of essential literacy skills and life skills including:

- Digital Citizenship and Information Literacy
- Collaboration and Communication
- Global awareness
- Creative thinking

Emphasizes Empathy

Empathy lies at the core of each *Quandary* episode. As leaders of the settlement, students must actively consider the perspectives of each community member and choose a solution for the good of the group. Playing *Quandary* in the classroom opens the door to rich discussions about perspective taking, identity development, and group differences.

Quandary is aligned with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (*reading; speaking and listening*) and the Illinois Social/Emotional Learning Standards (*self-awareness, self-management, using social awareness and interpersonal skills, and demonstrating decision-making skills/responsible behaviors*). For an in-depth look at how *Quandary* maps on to the Common Core standards, please visit <http://www.quandarygame.org/teachers>.

ABOUT the CURRICULUM

What's inside?

Quandary curriculum is divided into three options: *Quandary* Essentials, Subject-Based Links, and Project-Based Learning.

Option 1: *Quandary* Essentials (QE)

The first option, *Quandary* Essentials, is a 4-part lesson package covering the most important and valuable concepts within *Quandary*: ethical problem-solving, digital literacy, leadership/decision-making, and perspective taking. Students participate in a warm-up discussion or activity, play an episode while discussing the episode's main themes, and participate in an activity specially designed to help them apply skills learned through *Quandary* gameplay and discussion.

Option 2: Subject-Based Links (SBL)

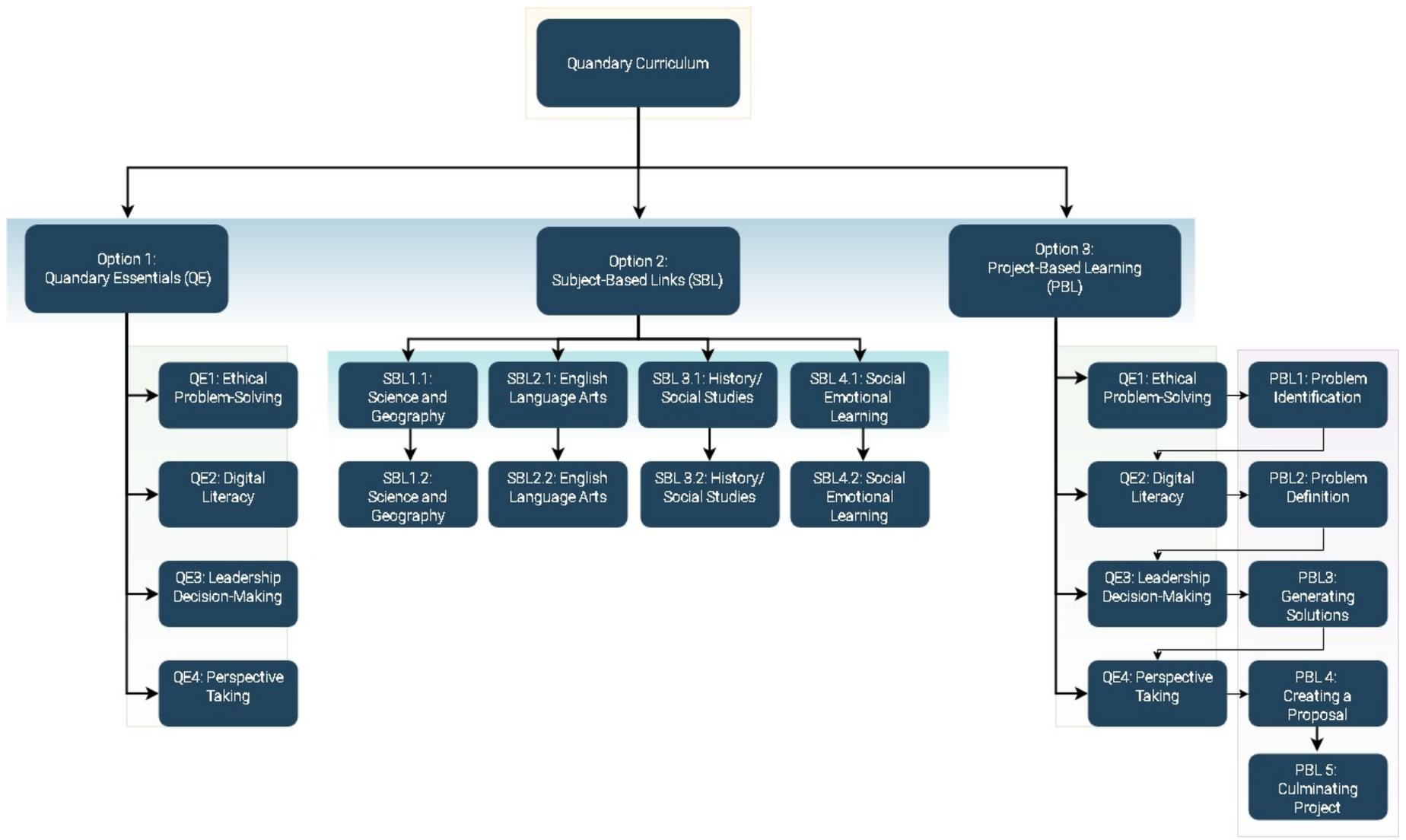
Quandary can also be used to expand conversation around topics already found in teacher's curriculum. The second option, Subject-Based Links, is a more freeform and customizable approach to using *Quandary* in the classroom. This option links *Quandary* content to major subject topics to extend students' thinking by merging classroom concepts with ethical reasoning. For example, a geography teacher may use Subject-Based Links to frame a conversation about water usage, using *Quandary's* Water War episode to stimulate conversation about water as a public good or a privilege. Subject-Based Links are divided by major subject, with Key Concepts noted in the top-left hand corner of each page. Used in this way, *Quandary* can augment existing lessons. Included below are suggestions for using *Quandary* as a link to your existing curricula in the following areas: Science, Social Studies, English Language Arts, and Social-Emotional Learning.

Option 3: Project-Based Learning (PBL)

The third option, Project-Based Learning, is a deeper dive into ethical problem-solving that uses *Quandary* as a catalyst for students to become problem solvers on an important school issue. This option is highly student-driven: students identify the problem and study it much like the leader in *Quandary*, soliciting facts, opinions, and solutions from relevant stakeholders to find the best solution. This option includes a culminating project, where students document their problem-solving process and present their proposed solutions to relevant stakeholders in the school community. Project-Based Learning is designed to be carried out alongside *Quandary* Essentials, alternating between the two each week to establish a foundation for the student-driven portion. While the most time-intensive option, Project-Based Learning has several broader applications and can be used as part of Tier 1 Response to Intervention plans as well as Positive Behavior Intervention and Support initiatives.

Review each of the three options – *Quandary* Essentials, Subject-Based Links, and Project-Based Learning – and choose the curriculum which best supports your students and their learning goals. On the following page, you will find a map of each curriculum option to guide implementation.

Quandary Curriculum Road Map



PREPARING the CLASSROOM

Accessing Quandary

On the Web

Quandary is available for free to play at www.quandarygame.org, on [BrainPOP's GameUp](#) site, or via [Edmodo](#). Teachers are encouraged to play through *Quandary* independently first before implementing curriculum

Tablet/Mobile Versions

Quandary is also now available as a standalone app on Android tablet devices via [Google Play](#) and Apple iOS devices via the [Apple App Store](#). A mobile version of *Quandary* is coming soon. The tablet app and web versions of the game are the same, but the tablet app contains the exclusive Character Creator tool, where players can build their own colonists in response to a new set of challenges.

Creating the Environment

Seating Suggestions

Based on feedback from teachers who have used *Quandary* in the classroom, arranging desks in a circle sets the tone for group discussion. Students can see who is speaking from any perspective (taking a 360-degree view) and are more likely to interact and contribute to the conversation.

Cultivate a “No-Points” Culture

Although students earn points as they progress through *Quandary*, one option is to create a “no-points” culture and remove the focus on achieving high scores. Students can be encouraged first to thoroughly listen to each settler’s perspective, and in doing so, they may subsequently improve their score.

Pairing Students

Students will benefit most from playing *Quandary* in pairs due to the quality interactions that take place during gameplay. Playing in pairs requires students to participate in moral discussions, negotiate perspectives, and reach consensus on how to progress through the game. Teachers who have used *Quandary* suggest pairing students who have the tendency to rush with more contemplative and philosophical students to control pacing and maximize learning benefit.

Teacher Checklist

Review this brief checklist before implementing *Quandary* in the classroom to assure preparedness.

Have you...

- Chosen a Curriculum Option?
- Accessed *Quandary* in class?
- Chosen effective pairs?
- Played *Quandary* yourself?
- Arranged seating in circle?
- Reviewed the lesson?

If so, good luck and let the fun begin!