Factors and Options Worksheet Instructions

On the accompanying worksheet, you will be writing down information about a specific decision, listed below. There are several steps to this worksheet, and completing this worksheet may take some time and reflection. Please follow the directions for each step, and move on when you’re ready. **Take your time and be thoughtful.**

**Decision:** Academic Major

**Step 1: Options**
- **Options** are the specific things you might choose from in making a decision.
- For example, if you were deciding what kind of car to buy, you might be choosing between 2 specific options; a used 2007 Toyota Prius and a new 2009 Honda Accord.
- In this case, each option is a **specific academic major** you are considering.
- In each of the “Option” columns (“Option A”, “Option B”…) list each of the majors that you are currently considering. If you feel like you have already decided on a major, please list the final set of alternatives from which you chose.
  - List only one option per column
  - List any and all options that you are considering for this decision
  - You do not have to fill in each column; fill in as many as you need
  - If you need more columns, just ask for a second sheet

**Step 2: Factors**
- **Factors**, or criteria, are the specific kinds of things you take into account when making a decision.
- In the car example, you might consider the following factors: price, size, gas mileage, color, etc.
- Under the column labeled “Factors”, list each of the factors or criteria you are considering in **choosing a major**.
  - List any and all factors that you are considering for this decision
  - You do not have to fill in each row; fill in as many as you need
  - If you need more rows, just ask for a second sheet

**Step 3: Importance weights**
- **Importance weights** indicate the “size” or significance of each criterion in your decision, where higher numbers indicate more weight or importance to the decision.
- In the car example, car size might be less important to you than gas mileage, but more important than color. So, these factors might have weights of 7, 9, and 5, respectively.
- Under the “Importance weights” column, give each factor a weight between 0 (not at all important) and 10 (extremely important).
  - Use only WHOLE numbers, no decimals or fractions
  - You may use the same number more than once when factors are of equal importance
Step 4: Ratings
- Now you are going to rate each of your Options on how well it fulfills each Factor.
  - Start with Option A
  - Using a scale of 0 (this option would NOT fulfill this criterion well at all) to 10 (this option would fulfill this criterion very well), evaluate how well Option A meets your each of your separate criteria
  - Use only WHOLE numbers, no decimals or fractions
  - If you do not know how a particular option rates on a particular factor, use your best guess
  - When you have rated Option A on each Factor, move on to Option B, C, D, etc. until you have rated each Option on each Factor
- If you need help, see the car example below or ask for assistance.

Step 5: Finishing
- Check over the worksheet(s) for completeness and legibility.
- Check to see that you did NOT use decimals or fractions.
- Hand in to research assistant.

Example Worksheet
Decision: Buying a Car

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance weight</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Option A Used 2007 Toyota Prius</th>
<th>Option B New 2009 Honda Accord</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>6 (a little more than I want to spend)</td>
<td>8 (decent price)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Size</td>
<td>8 (good, same as Option B)</td>
<td>8 (good, same as Option A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Gas Mileage</td>
<td>9 (excellent gas mileage)</td>
<td>6 (average gas mileage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Color</td>
<td>5 (not my favorite, but okay)</td>
<td>10 (favorite color!)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The parenthetical information is to help you interpret this example. You do NOT need to explain the ratings you make on your Factors and Options Worksheet.