



# CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR 2016 PROJECT SUMMARY

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<b>Project Title</b> Impact of the Decoy Effect on Promoting Positive Choice in an Academic Setting	
<b>Abstract</b> <b>Objectives/Goals</b> I often find myself buying more than I need, simply based on the price. Through research, I learned that I was being influenced by the decoy effect, a phenomenon in which consumers will change their preference between two options when presented with a third decoy option. I believed that the decoy effect could be used to influence students to select a more difficult assignment by introducing a less difficult option to a set of two others: an easy option and difficult option. <b>Methods/Materials</b> In order to test my hypothesis, I tested fourth through eighth grade students in a classroom environment. In one test, they were presented with two options: a two-paragraph essay for no extra credit (easy) and a six-paragraph essay for 5% extra credit (difficult) In another test, a decoy option (less difficult) was introduced: a five-paragraph essay for 2% extra credit. <b>Results</b> I found that 7% more students chose the difficult assignment when presented with the decoy option. In fact, when two extra credit options were presented, 84% more students selected an extra credit. This meant that there was a 50% decrease in students who picked the easy option when a decoy option was introduced. I saw that not only was there a significant increase in students who chose the more difficult option, but there was also an impressive number of students overall who decided to do more work and choose one of the extra credit options, rather than the standard easy assignment. The decoy effect was evident in all demographic categories I tested. <b>Conclusions/Discussion</b> I believe that by changing the way assignments are presented to students, educators can influence students to set higher goals. The decoy effect impacts all demographic variables. In the future, I would like to test students from different socioeconomic classes and test different decoy options.	
<b>Summary Statement</b> The purpose of this project was to see if the "decoy effect" could be used to influence students to set higher goals.	
<b>Help Received</b> My science teacher helped me to carry out my experiment and my father helped me create graphs and charts in Excel.	