

# RESOLVING CONFLICTS

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## STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Students will practice the skills of taking turns, listening to others, and speaking clearly.
- Students will use active and attentive communication skills, building on others' ideas to explore, learn, enjoy, debate, and exchange information.
- Students will name healthy ways to express needs, wants, and feelings.
- Students will know how to apply conflict resolution skills.

### Objectives

Students will understand that when resolving a conflict, it is important to calm down before taking any action.

Students will understand that resolving conflicts requires one to be open-minded and to listen to the other person's side.

Students will learn that there are good and bad ways to resolve conflict, and that compromise is vital to resolving conflicts.

Students will learn to make "I" statements rather than "You" statements.

### Materials Needed

- Board or chart paper and markers ("I Do")
- List of "I" and "You" statements ("We Do")
- "Conflict Scenarios" educator resource and a basket ("You Do")

### Starter (5 minutes)

Explain to the class that conflict is when people disagree or argue about something. Ask students, “Have you ever been involved in a conflict at home or at school? What happened?” Discuss as many of the students’ examples as time allows. Tell students, “Conflicts are going to happen, but there are good and bad ways to resolve them. We’re going to learn about this today.”

### Teacher Presented Knowledge / I Do (10 minutes)

Before class, create a chart titled “Conflict Resolution Plan.” Underneath the title, write the following conflict resolution strategies:

1. Take a deep breath and calm down.
2. Listen carefully.
3. Think about the situation.
4. Use “I” statements instead of “You” statements.
5. Be willing to compromise.

Now, direct students’ attention to your “Conflict Resolution Plan.” Say to students, “I have made a list of things that help to resolve a conflict. I am going to share this list with you. As I read it, I will explain each strategy to you and show you how to do it.” Model each strategy for the students.

### Guided Student Practice / We Do (15 minutes)

Say to students, “Now, it’s your turn to try each strategy. First, let’s take a deep, calming breath. Breathe in through your nose, feel the air going into your chest, and then breathe out slowly through your mouth.” Allow students to do this exercise a few times. Then, ask students how slow breathing can relax their bodies.

Next, tell students, “Now, I am going to read some statements and I want you to listen carefully. Give me a thumbs-up if I am saying my needs in a good way and a thumbs-down if I am just putting the blame on someone else and making things worse.” (*Examples of “I” statements could include “I would like to play with you” and “I am hungry.” “You” statements could be “You never let me play” and “You never listen to me.”*) After reading the statements, ask students to analyze how “You” statements can anger people and “I” statements can help others see what a person needs.

Finally, read and explain a sample conflict and ask students to brainstorm multiple ways to make the situation better. (*For example, one of your friends always makes you play the game he or she wants to play.*)

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### Student Independent Practice / You Do (15 minutes)

Place the scenarios from the “Conflict Scenarios” activity sheet in a basket (ensure you have one conflict for every two students).

Separate the class into pairs and say to students, “You and your partner are going to solve a conflict all by yourselves. I am going to pick a conflict for you from my basket, and you will work to resolve it. I am going to watch each of you to see who takes their calming breath and who uses ‘I’ statements when talking about the problem. In the end, you and your partner should be willing to compromise.”

Hand each partner a conflict from your basket and, once each pair has a scenario, tell the class to begin. Circulate around the room as students practice conflict resolution.

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### Closure (5 minutes)

Call on partners to share the resolution of their conflict. Review the four steps listed in the “Conflict Resolution Plan.”

### Student Assessment

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1. What are some things you can do to avoid a conflict? (*Answers should include using “I” statements, calming yourself by taking deep breaths, etc.*)
2. Can good friends have conflicts and still be good friends?
3. How do you feel after you have successfully resolved a conflict?

## LESSON EXTENSIONS

### Art Extension

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Each student can make a flower that has petals labeled with different conflict resolution strategies. The center of the flower can have the student's picture or name. Display a "Peaceful Classroom Garden" bulletin board.

### Art Extension

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Have students create collages that combine words and pictures to show what resolving conflict looks like on one half of the sheet of paper (*people talking together, shaking hands, smiling*) and what unresolved conflict looks like on the other half (*people shouting, angry faces*).

### Drama Extension

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Have students role-play teaching a friend strategies for conflict resolution.

### Literature Extension

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Read *Matthew and Tilly*, by Rebecca C. Jones, to the class. Following the reading, direct students to your "Problem Solving Choices" anchor chart (*you can also use the sample anchor chart at the end of this lesson*). Say to students, "Using the formula for problem solving shown here on the anchor chart, how did Matthew and Tilly solve their problem?" Guide students to come to the following conclusions and record these on your anchor chart:

- First, they did something to make it worse. They got mad at each other over the broken crayon.
- Then, they did nothing to solve the problem but simply separated.
- Lastly, they each did something to make the situation better and solve their problem. They missed each other, so Tilly smiled at Matthew and he apologized.

## Literature Extension

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Have students select their favorite fictional character known for resolving conflicts and identify words that describe the character.

# PROBLEM SOLVING CHOICES

**Choice 1:** You can do something to make the situation worse.

*Matthew and Tilly* example:

**Choice 2:** You can ignore the situation and wait to see what happens.

*Matthew and Tilly* example:

**Choice 3:** You can do something to make it better.

*Matthew and Tilly* example:

# CONFLICT SCENARIOS

1. You want to play a game, but your friend wants to play another. What can you do?

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2. The student behind you in line keeps poking you. What can you do?

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3. Someone cuts in front of you in line. What can you do?

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4. You are trying to tell your mom about your day at school, but your little brother or sister keeps interrupting you. What can you do?

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5. Someone calls you a name on the playground. What can you do?

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