

# RESOLVING CONFLICTS

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## AGENDA

- Starter
- Put It Together
- When to Walk Away
- Practice
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

### Objectives

Students will discuss strategies that they have learned for resolving conflicts.

Students will identify situations in which the best option is to remove themselves from the conflict.

Students will analyze conflict situations and make decisions about how to resolve them.

### Materials Needed

- One index card for each student (Starter)
- One copy of the “Cover All Bases” activity sheet for each student (Part I)
- List of procedures and resources for conflict resolution that are in place in your school(Part II)
- One copy of the “Dilemmas” activity sheet for each student, cut into four individual scenarios (Part III)

**Starter (5 minutes)**

As students enter the classroom, give each one an index card. Tell students to write what they have learned about conflict resolution over the last five lessons. Ask students to write about recent conflicts in their lives and how they handled these situations differently as a result of their new knowledge.

**Part I Put It Together (15 minutes)**

Purpose: Students review techniques that they have learned for resolving conflicts.

**1. Students discuss their ideas regarding conflict resolution.**

Ask students to list ideas that they think are important to remember when dealing with conflict situations. Have students write their responses on the backs of the index cards they used during the starter. Explain that it is not necessary to write responses in any particular order.

Have students stand and read the backs of their cards. Ask a volunteer to write responses on the board. If more than one student mentions a particular idea, have the volunteer underline it on the board. If possible, call on everyone to express an opinion.

**2. Students organize their thoughts.**

Say, “We can see from what’s written on the board that you all have learned a lot about dealing with conflicts. It would be helpful to have all of this information organized somehow, wouldn’t it?”

Distribute copies of the “Cover All Bases” activity sheet. Give students time to scan the activity sheet, and then ask if they think these steps represent the ideas that are written on the board. Begin a discussion by asking questions about each step:

- Why is the first step so important? Can you think clearly when you are angry?
- Why is it important to identify what is causing you to feel angry (step two)?
- Have you ever been in a conflict in which you didn’t understand what was happening (step three)?
- How does step four represent a crossroads in the process?
- Why is step five key here?
- Can you listen effectively when you are talking (step six)?
- Why are win-win results the best results (step seven)?

## Part II When to Walk Away (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify situations in which the best option is to remove themselves from the conflict.

### 1. Students discuss the role of decision making in conflict resolution.

Direct attention back to the activity sheet and ask students to identify the shortcut on the road to reaching a resolution (Students should mention that in step four, they can choose the option to walk away.)

Explain to students that there will be times when they must face a problem head-on and deal with it, but there will be other times when the best decision is to just walk away.

Point out that the class hasn't spent much time examining this option before, but it will be discussed now, as sometimes it is the best decision to make.

### 2. Students identify conflicts from which to walk away.

Invite students to give examples of situations in which choosing to walk away and avoid further conflict is the best decision to make.

As students respond, listen for them to make certain points. As they are made, write them on the board. If necessary, use questions and comments to guide students to recognize that they should walk away from the following situations:

- Conflict in which they cannot gain control of their emotions or behaviors.
- Times when another person involved in a conflict is getting out of control.
- Situations that are escalating out of control.
- Situations that become physical or violent.

Explain that each person has the power to control their own feelings and actions, but we do not have the power to control anyone else's. Acknowledge that the goal in these situations should be to avoid making the problem worse, and that the best way to do this is to walk away from the conflict.

### 3. Students explore other options for handling out-of-control conflicts.

Begin a discussion by asking students what else they should do when a conflict gets out of control. Encourage them to give other examples of such conflicts, as well as suggestions for dealing with them.

Affirm responses that reflect the understanding that when a conflict turns violent and personal safety is threatened, or when such a conflict is brewing, students need to alert adults to the situation.

Ask students if they know about school procedures or resources available to them if conflicts escalate. As students respond, verify or clarify the information they give. Tell students to make a note of this information.

Be sure that students understand that when a conflict is escalating and threatens to become violent, they should walk away and get help. Point out that this is not a matter of being disloyal to anyone; it is simply a matter of safety for themselves and for others.

Suggest that students keep the “Cover All Bases” activity sheet in their folders or notebooks and review it from time to time. Emphasize that using these strategies will help them with resolving conflicts.

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### Part III Practice (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students analyze conflict situations and make decisions about how to resolve them.

#### 1. Students work in small groups to discuss situations.

Divide the class into four groups. Give each group one of the scenarios from the “Dilemmas” activity sheet. Explain that they are to discuss the scenario as a group and decide on a course of action that will best resolve the conflict.

Give the groups five minutes to make their decisions. Circulate among students as they work, offering suggestions or comments as needed.

#### 2. Students share resolutions.

Ask students to share their resolutions. Explain that groups can either appoint a spokesperson to report the group’s decision or members of the group can role-play the scenario.

After each group has finished, invite others to ask questions or make comments about how the dilemma was resolved. If necessary, ask questions or make comments yourself that will help students recognize that they can either support a group’s decision or suggest another solution.

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### Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to describe how they will handle conflicts that arise in their everyday lives. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- You have the power to control your feelings and actions, but you do not have the power to control the feelings and actions of others.
- There are situations in which choosing to walk away to avoid further conflict is the best decision to make.
- When a conflict becomes physical or violent, walk away and seek help.

### Student Assessment

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1. When is it best to walk away from a conflict situation?
2. Describe a conflict in which you have been involved. Using the steps to conflict resolution, analyze how you acted. Would you behave differently now? If so, how?

## LESSON EXTENSIONS

### Using Quotations

"I do desire we may be better strangers."

Explain to students that it is often best not to respond to someone who is angry. In these cases, it's best for you to excuse yourself and leave the situation.

Brainstorm with students a list of times when it is better to just walk away and not get involved.

### Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Have students brainstorm a list of tips for walking away from conflicts (e.g., leave, seek help from an adult, ask a friend to escort you away). Divide students into small groups. Have the groups create posters showing a few of these tips. Display the posters around the classroom.

### Writing in Your Journal

Have students review their notes for this module. Have them write about which lessons they enjoyed the most and which skills they found most useful.

### Using Technology

Create a classroom blog about conflict. Have students write, on paper, short entries with tips for conflict resolution and how they can apply (or have applied) these tips to their own lives. Upload these entries to the blog. Provide students with the blog's address and allow them time to browse it.

### Homework

Have students write a paragraph in response to the following question: What would you do if your best friend asked you to hide something they had stolen?

Have students present their work to the class.

## Additional Resources

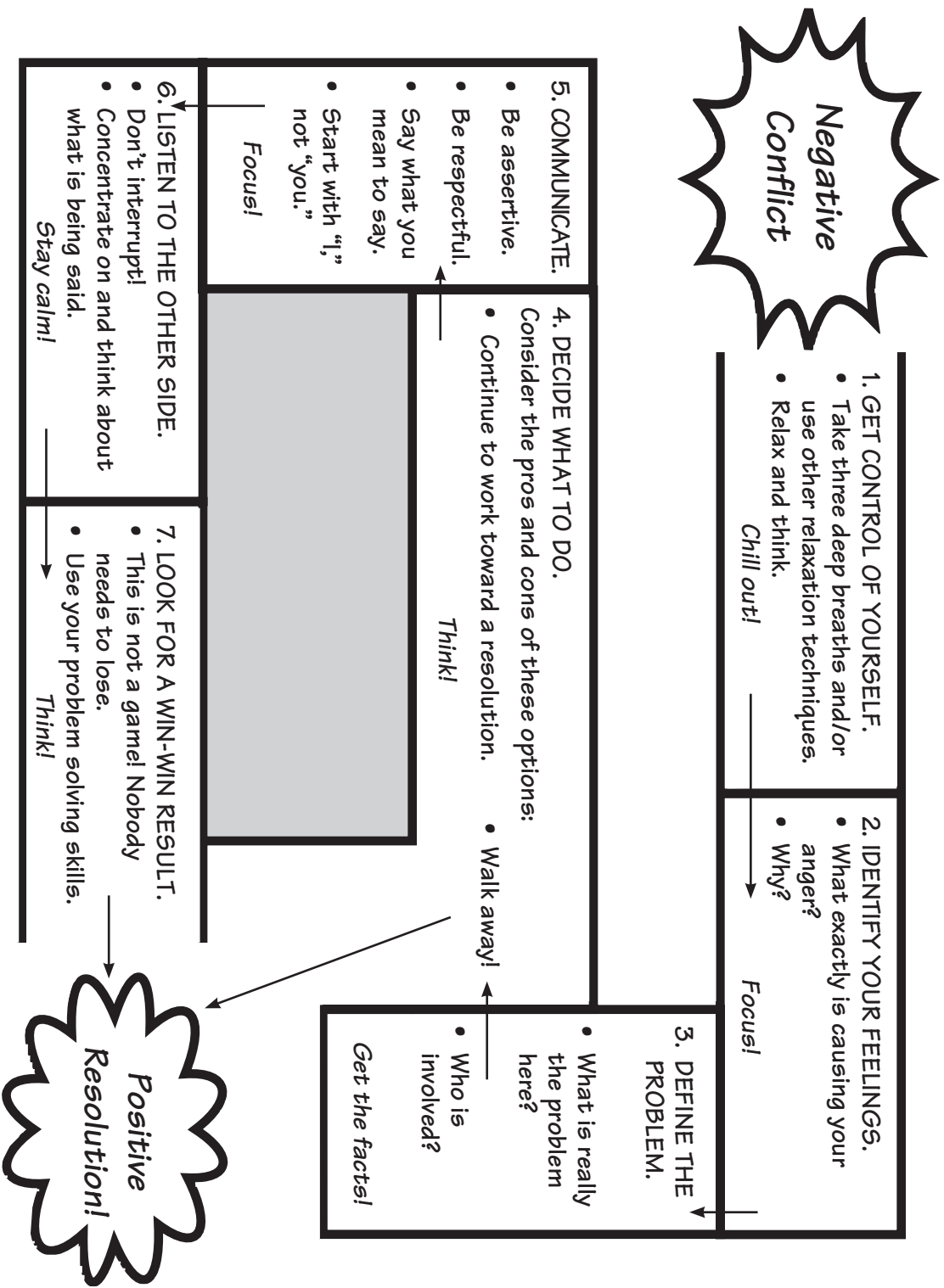
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Have students research the peaceful protest strategies used by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Have students report their findings to the class. Discuss reasons why Gandhi and King chose to protest peacefully rather than resort to violence to solve their problems.



# COVER ALL BASES



# DILEMMAS



1. You are playing soccer with your classmates during lunch. Some players are pushing and shoving each other during the game. As everyone walks back to class, someone throws a punch at you. What do you do?

2. Your friend is in a bad mood because she got grounded for a week. You are talking about going to a movie, when she suddenly starts yelling at you. The next thing you know, you're in an argument. What do you do?

3. Your brother has been teasing you all afternoon. You throw a pillow at him and tell him to back off. He throws the pillow back at you and knocks your glasses off your face. What do you do?

4. You hear that someone is accusing you of stealing a jacket. This person lost a jacket that looks just like yours. This person hangs around with a group of people that you try to avoid. What do you do?