

STEP 1: Reflect on a source of conflict in your own life.

warm-up: what types of conflicts do you experience?

Think about a conflict or disagreement that recently occurred in your life. It could be a problem in your family, between you and your friends, or something that happened at school or at work. It could be a disagreement with your boyfriend or girlfriend, or even something that happened on the street with strangers. Then, do a free write in the box provided. What happened to start the conflict? How did it escalate, or get worse? Was it resolved, or is it still a problem for you?



Freewrite

STEP 2: Identify the wants and needs for each party in the conflict.

conflict: when wants and needs collide

Conflict occurs when two people (or groups of people) have wants or needs that are in opposition to each other. Conflicts happen everyday, ranging in seriousness from respectful disagreements to extremely dangerous. However, conflicts aren't always bad. In fact, they can lead to growth and positive change.

Conflict resolution is the practice of negotiating or compromising to bring an end to a disagreement before it **escalates**. The first step in any conflict resolution is to acknowledge the conflict and understand the disagreement that's really behind it. You can do this by identifying the wants and needs which are in conflict.

In your freewrite conflict:



| Person A wanted ... | ... but Person B wanted ... |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
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STEP 3: Identify the level of conflict and envision a win-win resolution.

Levels of conflict

Once you clearly understand the wants and needs that are in conflict, you can identify the level to which the conflict has **escalated**. As you have probably experienced in your life, conflicts can quickly **escalate** from an initial incident into a major problem.

| Level of Conflict: | Characteristics of Conflicts at this Level: | Example | Approaches to Resolution |
|----------------------------|--|---|---|
| Disagreement | Person A and Person B have conflicting wants and needs. Both parties are still aware of their wants and needs, and are only disagreeing about the original issue. | Mom: <i>You have to go on this trip!</i> Daughter: <i>No way, mom! I already made plans with my friends!</i> | Person A and Person B can negotiate a compromise if they remain calm. |
| Argument | Person A and Person B start to get angry and argue about things which are unrelated to the original conflict. Feelings get hurt and things can get hostile. | Daughter: <i>You're always doing this to me! Remember when I wanted to go to homecoming and you said no?</i> Mom: <i>You're always complaining. What did I do to deserve this?</i> | Person A and Person B both need to calm down before attempting to negotiate. Take a time out or walk away, and then come back and talk. |
| Breakdown in Communication | Person A and Person B become so angry that they are no longer communicating. Maybe they are just yelling at one another without listening, or maybe they stop talking altogether and give each other the silent treatment. | Mom: <i>I don't care anymore! Do what I say or you're grounded!!!</i> Daughter: <i>I hate you and I hate this house and I hate everything!!! (Door slams)</i> | Person A and Person B need third party to come in and mediate their disagreement. They are no longer able to communicate effectively. |
| Getting Others Involved | Person A and/or Person B feels need to bring in "backup" or get others involved in the conflict. | Mom: <i>That's it! I'm telling your father.</i> Dad: <i>What is this all about?</i> Daughter: <i>I'm not going.</i> Dad: <i>Oh yes you are!</i> | Dragging others into your disagreement is a bad sign. Mediate the conflict or cool down immediately. |
| Physical Violence | Person A or Person B physically attacks the other person in anger. | Fighting, yelling, hitting, etc. | Physical violence is an unacceptable end to any conflict. Arbitration may be necessary if violence is used. |

How did the conflict you described in your freewrite escalate from one level to the next?

envisioning a resolution

Conflicts can continue to be a problem in our lives unless we deal with them in a positive way. Most conflicts in our lives can be resolved, or ended, through compromise. Compromise doesn't mean losing. It means giving up something less important in order to gain something more important. There are three basic types of compromises:

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|--------------------------|--|
| Win-win outcome | Person A and Person B both get what they want. |
| Win-lose outcome | Either Person A OR Person B gets what they want, but the other person must give up something they wanted in order to come to a resolution. |
| Lose-lose outcome | No one gets what they want. This often happens when conflicts escalate out of control. |

How could the conflict you described in your freewrite be resolved with a win-win outcome?

negotiating compromises:

finding win-win outcomes

We all negotiate all the time for less homework, for a later curfew, for the clothes we want to buy, or more time on the computer. In order to resolve conflicts, you will need a bag of tricks for negotiating win-win compromises where both parties are happy with the outcome, including yourself.

TALK IT OUT
How can you negotiate to get what you want, while ensuring the other person in the conflict is satisfied with the outcome as well?



Tips for Successful Negotiation:

transition skills: resolving conflicts

Follow the steps outlined this week when you find yourself involved in a conflict:

1. Reflect on the source of the conflict by understanding **wants and needs** of both parties
2. Identify the **level of the conflict**
3. Envision the **outcome** you want
4. **Negotiate** to reach a compromise

Put your learning to the test by role-playing some conflict resolution scenarios.

why role-play?

Role-plays allow you to:

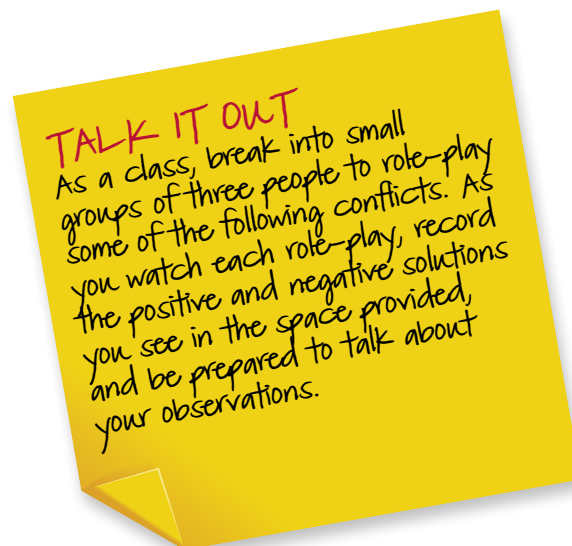
- Try new ways of communicating
- Demonstrate positive and negative approaches to conflict resolution

Some questions to ask as you observe a role-play:

- How do you think each participant in the role-play felt while playing their role?
- How did the conflict develop? How did it escalate?
- Why do you think Person A and Person B behaved the way they did?
- What might they have done differently?
- Have you ever been in a situation like this? How did you handle it? How did it turn out?

Tips for a role-play:

- Focus on behaviors, not on the people performing. Don't say, "I didn't like what Billy said." Remember, the players are just acting, so comment on the behavior you saw.
- Be specific. Tell exactly what you liked or didn't like. Instead of saying "It was good," say, "When you asked the other person what he/she wanted the outcome to be, you used a really positive strategy."
- Give positive and negative feedback. Don't say, "I hated it." Say, "You did a great job of keeping eye contact during the negotiation, but I think you could speak up more next time."



postsecondary conflict scenarios

In a class discussion about a novel, Person A makes a comment that Person B feels is insulting to his/her culture.

Person A is planning an office party on a day that Person B has a big deadline.

Person A and Person B are at a party for work. Person B wants Person A to loosen up and have a drink. Person A is worried about making a bad impression on their boss.

Person A is Person B's boss. Person A is constantly telling Person B how pretty/handsome she/he looks and hinting that he/she would like to date Person B.

Person A and Person B are roommates, but they come from such different backgrounds that they are often arguing about politics, religion, or some other sensitive subject.

Person A and Person B are in class together. Person B wants to copy Person A's notes because Person B skips class every day. Person A doesn't want to do it.

Person A is 21. Person B asks Person A to buy alcohol for his/her friends, even though it is against school policy to purchase alcohol for minors.

Person A and Person B both work at a bank. Person A observes Person B stealing cash from the register.

Person A is Person B's professor. Person A suspects that Person B plagiarized his/her report from an internet source.

Person A is a student in Professor B's course. Person A received a low grade on a paper, even though he/she worked really hard on it. Person A doesn't know what he/she did wrong.

Person A's boss wants him/her to work on a project with Person B, one of his/her coworkers. The only problem is, Person B is lazy and wants Person A to do all the work.

Person A stayed late at the library to do research. Person B, who is walking by, spills a cup of coffee all over Person A's notes, ruining them.

Person A wants to study in their dorm room, but his/her roommate, Person B, is talking loudly on the phone.

Person A has a big project due in five days which will require Person B to contribute. Person B is blowing off the assignment.

OTHER:

OTHER:

OTHER:

OTHER:

STEP 6: Apply conflict resolution strategies to a conflict in your own life.



My Role-Play Observations

| Role Play | Person A Wants: | Person B Wants: | Level of Conflict: | Resolution Approach Chosen: | Outcome (win-win, win-lose, lose-lose) | Negotiation Styles Used: |
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conflict resolution: making a smooth transition

As you learned this week, some conflicts might energize and inspire you; others might cause you stress or escalate to a dangerous level. Applying conflict resolution strategies to the conflicts in your life now and those you encounter in your future will ensure that you make a smooth transition from high school to life on your own.

Now that you've learned about conflict resolution strategies, resources, and solutions, try applying some of your learning to your own life. Choose one conflict that is currently a problem in your life and reflect on the following questions:

What do you think the REAL problem is? What is the root of the conflict?

What level would you assign this conflict at this time? (check one)

- Disagreement
- Argument
- Breakdown In Communication
- Getting Others Involved
- Physical Violence

What are you willing to compromise? What are you NOT willing to compromise?

Which negotiation tips do you need to try out?

Try out your new strategy this week, and then reflect on how it worked.

In order to resolve the above conflict, I tried out the following strategies:

In the end, the conflict was:

- RESOLVED** (Was it win-win, win-lose, or lose-lose?)
- MANAGED** (It is under control and not escalating.)
- ESCALATED** (It's an even bigger problem now than it was before!)

The most successful strategies for me, personally, are:
