



Take the Lead

Lesson 6: Peace Out!

Grade level: 6-8

Learning objectives:

Participants will learn:

- to define conflict resolution
- to identify characteristics a leader needs to manage conflict
- tips for dealing with conflict
- conflict management styles and how to use them properly

Codes for TEKS:

Language Arts

Codes for 40

Developmental Assets:

Peaceful conflict resolution
 Positive peer interaction and influence
 Planning and decision making
 Interpersonal skills
 Resistance skills

National Education Standards:

Language Arts

Life Skills Model:

Conflict resolution
 Accepting differences
 Cooperation
 Communication
 Social skills

Time required:

60 minutes

Equipment/materials:

White poster board or flip chart paper
 Markers, crayons, colored pencils
 Variety of craft supplies (fabric scraps, pipe cleaners, glue, tape, scissors, etc.)
 Masking tape

Handouts/Support Materials:

Analyze This Situation

*Conflict seems to be ever-present in our lives...
on the battlefield, on the football field, in the boardroom,
or in the bathroom. The possibility of conflict looms
anytime two or more people convene.*

– Peter Grazier

Who in this group has never had an argument or disagreement with another person?

Allow young people to answer.

No one can honestly say that he or she hasn't ever had conflict in their life! Conflict is not always bad, but sometimes it can be. Sometimes conflict helps us see things from other perspectives that we had been blind to before.

Have you ever avoided conflict and not worked out a problem and then found out later that this caused more problems?

Allow young people to answer.

Some of us don't like confrontation or conflict so we avoid it at all costs. Others thrive on conflict and enjoy stirring things up. The fact is, we cannot always avoid conflict so we have to be able to deal with it when we need to. Today we will talk about conflict resolution and how to solve conflicts in a productive way. It's important for a leader to have skills in conflict resolution. Why do you think that is true?

Allow participants to answer.

What skills does it take to help people resolve their conflicts?

Allow participants to answer.

To help resolve conflicts a person must:

- **Be objective.** Leaders need to be able to look at all sides of a problem.
- **Communicate well.** A leader must be able to moderate or mediate communication between the people who have the conflict. Conflict often arises because one person did not understand the other or information was not communicated clearly.

- **Be a good listener.** This is very important. A good listener uses body language to show that he or she is listening. That means making eye contact, nodding your head, and ignoring distractions.
- **Be able to summarize the problem.** When a person is finished expressing a thought, a leader knows it's important to summarize the facts and the emotions involved so the other person knows you have understood what they've said and how they are feeling.
- **Clarify.** In conflict resolution, a leader asks questions to make sure all parts of the problem are clear.
- **Have good speaking skills.** When you speak, try to send a clear message, with a specific purpose, and with respect to the listener. Speak about how you are affected by the problem.
- **Be respectful.** Don't interrupt, criticize or laugh at the other person. Don't offer advice, bring up your own experiences, or change the subject.

Here are some tips to help you when there are conflicts that need to be resolved.

- Respect everyone's ideas and needs.
- Turn problems into possibilities.
- Listen so people will talk, and talk so people will listen.
- Focus on the problem, not the person.
- Build "power with" not "power over" others.
- Express feelings without blaming others.
- Admit your part in the conflict.
- Learn to suggest solutions everyone can agree with.
- Create options. If only one answer is suggested, someone will always be the loser.
- Solve the problem and build the relationship.

Conflict management techniques

People deal with conflict in different ways. It's easy to get stuck using just the style you are comfortable with. But the more different ways you know to resolve conflict the better. Today we are going to explore five ways we can deal with conflict and learn some strategies for using each of them.

Competing. This management style is assertive and uncooperative. An individual pursues his or her own concerns at the other person's expense. Competing means using whatever power seems appropriate to make things go your way.

When would we use competition as a conflict management style?

Allow young people to answer.

You would want to use competition:

- when you know you are right
- when you need a quick decision
- when you need to stand up for your own rights when a very forceful person is trying to make you do something you don't want to do

Accommodating. This conflict management style is unassertive and uncooperative. This is the opposite of competing. A person who is always accommodating is neglecting or sacrificing his or her own concerns to satisfy the other person.

When would we use accommodation as a conflict management style?

Allow young people to answer.

You would want to use accommodation:

- when the issue is not important to you but it is to the other person
- when you discover that you are wrong
- when continued competition would be harmful and you know you can't win
- when it's more important to preserve harmony without disruption and it's not the right time for a battle

Avoiding. This conflict management style is unassertive and cooperative. Avoiding means not pursuing either your own concerns or the other person's concerns. It means avoiding the conflict altogether by refusing to deal with it, postponing it or simply withdrawing from the problem.

When should we use avoiding as a conflict management style?

Allow participants to answer.

You would want to use avoiding:

- when the stakes aren't that high and you don't have anything to lose
- when you don't have time to deal with a problem
- when it isn't the right time or place to deal with it
- when there are more important issues to handle
- when you see no chance of having your concerns met
- when you would have to deal with an angry, hot-headed person
- when you are totally unprepared and taken by surprise, and you need time to think and collect information
- when you are too emotionally involved and the others around you can solve the conflict more successfully

Collaborating. This conflict management style is both assertive and cooperative. This is the opposite of avoiding. Collaboration means trying to work with other people to find a solution that satisfies everyone. To do that, you must understand everyone's concerns.

When should we use collaboration as a conflict management style?

Allow participants to answer.

You would want to use collaboration:

- when others' lives are involved
- when you don't want to have full responsibility
- when there is a high level of trust
- when you want to gain commitment from others
- when you need to work through hard feelings, animosity, etc.

Compromising. This conflict management style is somewhat assertive and cooperative. The objective of compromise is to find some appropriate, effective, useful solution that partially satisfies everyone and that everyone can agree on. It falls in the middle between competing and accommodating. With compromise people give up more than when competing, but less than when accommodating.

When should we use compromise as a conflict management style?

Allow young people to answer.

You would want to use compromise:

- when the goals are moderately important and not worth using more assertive methods
- when people of equal status are equally committed to different ideas
- to reach temporary settlement on complex issues
- to reach suitable, practical solutions on important issues
- as a back-up when competition or collaboration don't work

Which of these five conflict management styles do you think is the best to use and helps people reach the best decisions?

Allow young people to discuss. Stage a debate to give young people the opportunity to defend their stance.

The best decisions usually are made by collaboration. When you can reach a decision that satisfies everyone, then everyone is a winner.

Activity 1: Conflict Animals

Young people will identify animals that represent the different conflict management styles and create posters describing the styles.

Instructions:

1. Divide the participants into five groups and assign each group a conflict management style.
2. Ask each group to identify an animal that best represents the characteristics of their assigned conflict management style and create a poster depicting the animal and any other information they want to include.
3. Have each group make a brief presentation about their animal and management style to the whole group. They may do a skit, write and perform a song, or develop any other creative presentation.

Activity 2: Analyze This Situation

Participants will develop methods of dealing with typical team issues and practice their problem solving and conflict resolution skills.

Instructions:

1. Divide the group into teams of six to eight people. Give each group flip chart paper, markers and a copy of one of the Analyze This Situation handouts.
2. Ask each group to discuss how they would address the problem in their assigned situation and write their ideas on the flip chart paper. Allow 15 minutes for this discussion, but extend the time if necessary.
3. After the groups have completed the task, have each group give a report to the entire group. As they do, they should tape their flip chart to the wall where everyone can see it. Groups may then discuss any other solutions that have not been identified and add them to the chart.

Variation: To create more conflict within the groups, assign each person in the group a role to play. Do not announce the roles aloud. Young people may draw their roles from a hat or you can whisper to each person what their role will be. Here are some examples of roles to assign.

- negative person – always points out the bad things
- positive person – tries to see the good side of everything
- peacemaker – tries to get everyone to work together and not argue
- troublemaker – tries to start arguments
- leader – in charge of getting the task completed
- inactive person – won't participate in any way in the group
- distracting person – takes focus off of the task
- talker – talks all the time but not necessarily about the task
- wishy washy person – goes along with what everyone says; plays both sides of the fence

Discussion questions:

- What did you learn about being an effective team member?
- How did the group handle specific problems it saw?
- What types of things help a team deal with all the issues in these cases?
- Did the group work together well or was there conflict?
- If there was conflict, what conflict management style(s) were used to address the conflict? Who took the lead in trying to solve the conflict?

Analyze This Situation – page 1

Situation #1:

The Math Club has a checking account with the funds they have raised through their semi-annual cake walk. At the last club meeting, the treasurer reported that there was \$1,275 in the account. The cake walk made \$300, but this month the treasurer reported that there is now \$1,375, which is an increase of only \$100.

Discuss this situation in your group and record your answers to each question on the flip chart paper provided.

If you were the club president, how would you handle this situation?

If you were a club member, how would you handle this situation?

If you were the club treasurer, how would you handle this situation?

Analyze This Situation – page 2

Situation #2:

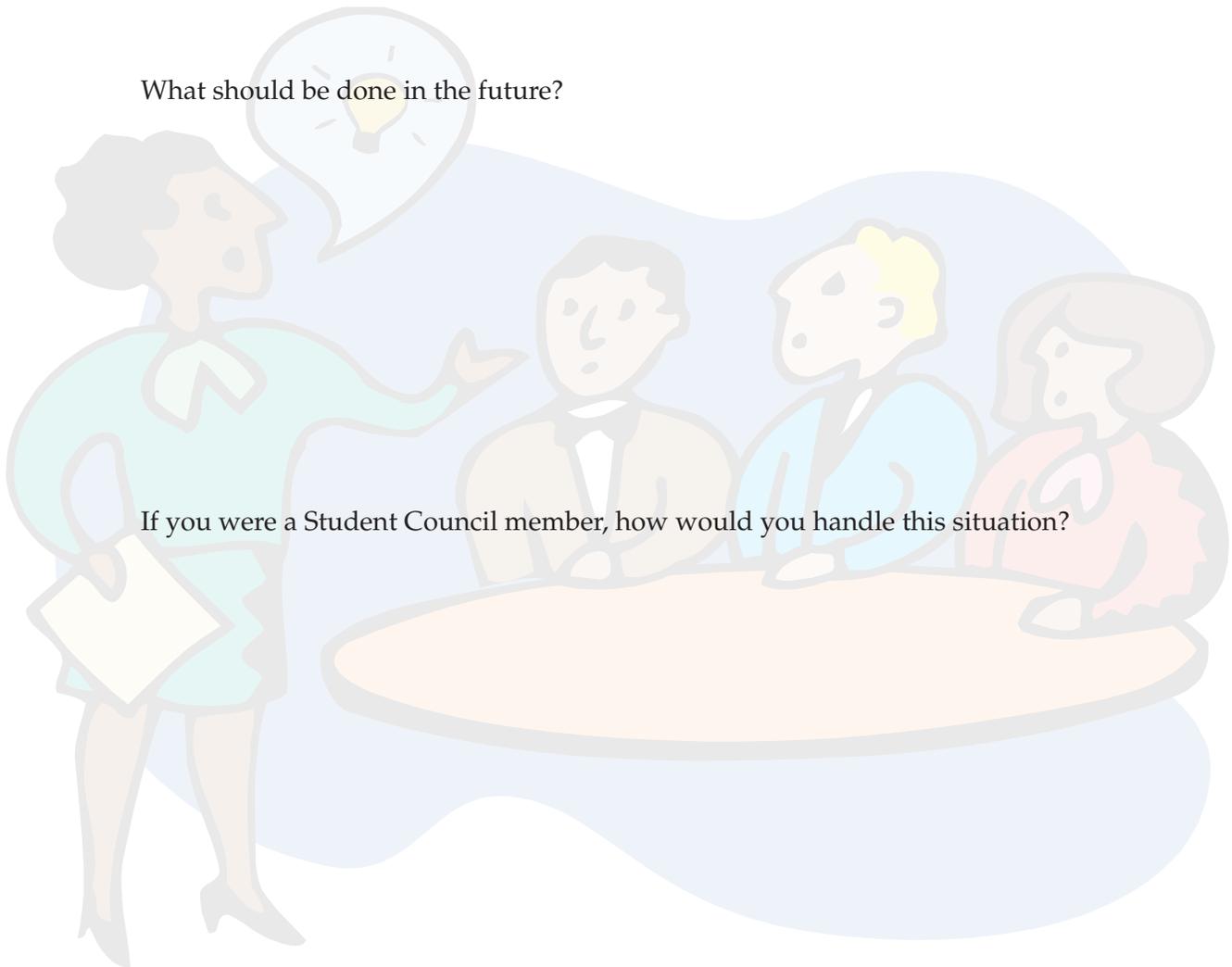
The Student Council president has a full agenda today and she is on a tight schedule to get through the meeting because a guest speaker will arrive in 1 hour to present a workshop on teamwork. There are Council members who are continually disrupting the group and getting off the subject.

Discuss this situation in your group and record your answers to each question on the flip chart paper provided.

If you were the Student Council president, how would you handle this situation right now?

What should be done in the future?

If you were a Student Council member, how would you handle this situation?



Analyze This Situation – page 3

Situation #3:

The 4-H Club is eager to identify a community service project to work on this year. For the past 3 years the club has coordinated the Green Santa project—collecting and distributing gifts to needy families. There is great debate in the club about whether or not to continue with the same service project or choose something new.

Discuss this situation in your group and record your answers to each question on the flip chart paper provided.

What questions would the club president ask to facilitate discussion?

What techniques could be used to determine the service project fairly?



What could club members do to help solve the situation?

Analyze This Situation – page 4

Situation #4:

The Science Club is allowed to take one field trip each year. The school has agreed to allow an overnight trip because the club has enough funds to cover the cost of lodging and meals for all members. The Club is having difficulty deciding where to go on their field trip and many members do not want to spend that much money out of the account for an overnight trip.

Discuss this situation in your group and record your answers to each question on the flip chart paper provided.

As the teacher/sponsor of the Science Club, how would you facilitate discussion in this situation?

What alternatives for an overnight trip could club members suggest?

Should there be minimum requirements to qualify to attend the trip?
If so, how would those requirements be determined?

