MODULE

Conflict Resolution

PILLAR

Employability

SKILL

Cooperation

TARGET AGE GROUP

12–15 year olds

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How can we resolve conflicts in a way that encourages long-term cooperation?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:
- Identify and apply the five conflict resolution styles (Avoiding, Competing, Accommodating, Compromising, Collaborating).
- Evaluate when certain conflict resolution strategies are appropriate.
- Reflect on how conflict resolution strategies foster teamwork, innovation, and long-term relationship-building.

VOCABULARY

CONFLICT

A disagreement between individuals or groups about tasks or emotional issues.

COMPROMISE

A middle-ground solution where both parties give something up to reach an agreement.

SUBSTANTIVE CONFLICT

Conflicts related to tangible issues, such as goals, tasks, or strategies.

COLLABORATION

Both parties work together to create a mutually beneficial solution.

MATERIALS

Slides   **LINK**

Whiteboard

PREPARATION

Activity	Time	Preparation
Introduction + Conflict Scenario Reset	10 minutes	Prepare revised thought experiment and transition discussion
Conflict Resolution Styles	15 minutes	Review Conflict Resolution Styles and Scenarios Use Conflict Resolution Chart
Tower of Conflict	20 minutes	Prepare role-play scenarios. Give each team their role-play scenario.
Exit Ticket	10 minutes	Choose an Exit Ticket
2 Extension Options	10 minutes each	

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Lesson Structure and Learning Sequence

ACTIVITY 1
Introduction + Incentives Activity

🕐 **10 Minutes**

🎯 **OBJECTIVE**

Help students realize that conflicts often arise because of **hidden incentives.** The exercise introduces the concept of uncovering incentives before trying to resolve a conflict, which lays the groundwork for more advanced techniques later in the lesson.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EDUCATORS

- **Set the scenario**
  - *Say* : *"Imagine you're in a group project, and your group is fighting over how to divide up the tasks. One person wants to take control of everything, another person wants to do as little as possible, and a third person is frustrated because they think the workload isn't fair. What do you think each person's incentive is?"*
- **Prompt**: Ask students to think about what might be driving each person's behavior.
  - *Is one person trying to get a better grade?*
  - *Is another person worried about their social standing?*
  - *Or maybe someone's just trying to get through the project with as little stress as possible?*
- **Students may give varying answers (To which ask them "how do you know?") or some may even say "I don't know what that person wants"**
- When they say this, **transition.**
  - **Transition:** "Exactly! We don't know what they want or what is driving them. In real-world conflicts, people's behavior is almost always driven by something deeper—what negotiators call hidden incentives. FBI negotiators, for example, are trained to identify what's motivating the person they're negotiating with. This allows them to tailor their approach and find a solution that satisfies those incentives.
- **"You may not always know other people's incentives, but using different conflict resolution styles, you can find out! Let's jump into it!"**

➕ **EXTENSION OPTION # 1**   **5-10 MINUTES**

- Students who finish early or want to explore further can spend a few minutes researching what are ways they can figure out someone's incentives? Examples include:
  - Asking them directly
  - Making a calculated guess and asking if they were right
  - Closely observing tone, body language and specific key words

✏ **NOTES**

ACTIVITY 2
Conflict Resolution Styles

🕐 **15 Minutes**

> 🎯 **OBJECTIVE**
> Help students understand that different conflict resolution styles work better in different contexts, with collaboration often producing the most durable results.

✏️ **NOTES**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EDUCATORS

- **Present Simple Definitions: Tell students the plain one-line definitions of each conflict resolution style:**
  - **Avoiding**: Ignoring the conflict, hoping it will resolve itself.
  - **Competing**: Pushing for your own solution, often at the expense of others.
  - **Accommodating**: Letting the other person win to preserve the relationship.
  - **Compromising**: Both sides give something up to reach an agreement.
  - **Collaborating**: Both sides work together to find a win-win solution.

GROUP ACTIVITY: ANALYZING THE BENEFITS OF EACH STYLE

- **Split** students into groups of 3-4. Assign each group one conflict resolution style.
- **Task**: Each group must analyze their assigned style and come up with real-world situations where that style would be **beneficial**.
  - Example 1: Avoiding might work when the stakes are low and confrontation would cause unnecessary stress.
  - Example 2: Competing might be useful in a high-stakes negotiation where only one side can win.
- **Benefits of Each Style**: Groups will identify the key benefits of their assigned style and present why it works in specific situations.

REFLECTION TIME

- **Ask Students:** Which style do you use most often? Why? (Allow 2-3 minutes for them to think about it)
- Have 3-4 students share.

⭐ **ADVANCED OPTION**

- After reflection time, ask the student 1 of the 2 questions
  - *"Would you change your conflict resolution style from now on?"*
  - *"How does this affect the relationship in the long run? Does it set a precedence?"*

💡 **EDUCATOR TIP**

Share with the students a **personal experience** where you've used the different styles of conflict resolution and what happened.

⚙ **PERSONALIZATION OPTION**

- Use this guide to help groups that are struggling to come up with benefits of different solutions.

Avoiding	• Allows time for tempers to cool down, preventing emotionally driven reactions. • Can be useful in situations where the conflict is minor or temporary. • Prevents unnecessary confrontation when the issue isn't critical.
Competing	• Can be effective in high-stakes situations where a quick, decisive action is needed (e.g., legal, business negotiations). • Useful when defending principles or positions that cannot be compromised. • Shows leadership and assertiveness, which can be important in some scenarios.
Accommodating	• Helps preserve relationships and maintain harmony, especially if the issue is more important to the other person. • Can build goodwill for future collaboration, as the other party feels heard and respected. • Allows for quick conflict resolution when the stakes are low.
Compromising	• Ensures that both parties feel they've gained something, reducing resentment. • Promotes fairness and can be a fast way to resolve issues. • Allows for continued collaboration while maintaining relationships.
Collaborating	• Often leads to the most satisfying and durable resolution, as both parties get what they need. • Builds trust and strengthens relationships through mutual problem-solving. • Promotes creativity and innovation, as both sides work together to create a win-win solution.

✎ **NOTES**

ACTIVITY 3
The Tower of Conflict

🕐 **20 Minutes**

🎯 **OBJECTIVE**

Students will build a "tower" by stacking objects (like chairs or books). They must collaborate, negotiate, and manage conflicts as they go, with decisions and obstacles being introduced that force them to use different conflict resolution strategies.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EDUCATORS

- **Form Teams:** Divide students into groups of 4-5.
- **Initial Setup:** Each team starts with a basic task: Build a "tower" of objects (e.g., chairs, books) within the classroom
- **Time Limit:** Each team has **10 minutes** to build their structure, but there will be several interruptions where decisions need to be made. Each decision introduces a conflict scenario that forces the team to choose between two difficult outcomes..

CONFLICTS

Decision 1	Lose 1 minute of building time	Half the team's resources (chairs/books) must be removed.
Decision 2	One team member must sit out for 2 minutes	The entire team loses 1 minute of building time
Decision 3	Only one person on the team can speak for the next 2 minutes	The entire team must work without talking for 1 minute
Decision 4	Rebuild the base of your structure	Continue building but lose a team member for the remainder of the time

WINNING CRITERIA

- **Tallest Tower:** The team that builds the tallest, most stable structure in the allotted time wins. If two teams are tied for height, stability (no collapsing or wobbling) will be the deciding factor.

- **Conflict Resolution:** Teams are also judged on how they handled conflicts during the challenge. Bonus points are awarded to teams that resolved conflicts creatively and effectively using collaborative approaches.

✏️ **NOTES**

💡 **EDUCATOR TIP**

Make sure students are **careful** when building their tower. They shouldn't do anything that is too risky.

DEBRIEF

- **After the activity, gather all students and discuss:**
  - Which conflict resolution strategies did you use, and how did they impact the success of your tower?
  - What decisions were hardest for your team, and why?
  - How did compromise or collaboration help (or hurt) your team's progress?
  - Would you change any of your decisions in hindsight?

TIMELINE OF ACTIVITY

- **Introduction: (2 minutes)** Explain the goal and rules of the challenge.
- **Building Time: (10 minutes total)** Teams start building, with conflicts introduced every 2-3 minutes.
- **Decision Time: (1 minute each)** Teams make decisions during conflict scenarios.
- **Wrap-Up: (5 minutes)** Teams finish building and the tallest, most stable structure wins.
- **Debrief: (5 minutes)** Reflection and discussion on conflict resolution.

ACCESSIBILITY OPTION

- **Alternative roles**: For students with physical limitations, assign roles such as communication coordinator, timekeeper, or decision-maker.
- **Simplified instructions:** For students who may struggle with processing speed, break instructions into smaller steps and offer visual guides for each conflict decision.

ADVANCED OPTION

- Introduce more complex constraints, such as requiring teams to "**vote**" on decisions within a specific time limit to encourage quicker, more strategic collaboration.

✎ **NOTES**

ACTIVITY 4
Strengths Reflection + Exit Ticket

🕐 **10 Minutes**

🎯 OBJECTIVE

The exit ticket helps students internalize their personal conflict style and think critically about applying these strategies in their daily lives.

EXIT TICKET   **10 MINUTES**

- Have students write their answers to one of the questions below
- Options for exit tickets:
  - **Identify Your Style:** "What conflict resolution style do you think you use most often in group settings? Why?"
  - **Most Effective Style:** "During today's activity, which conflict resolution style did you find to be the most effective for your team's success? Explain why."
  - **Personal Takeaway:** "What's one lesson you learned about resolving conflicts today that you can apply to your next group project or real-life situation?"
  - **Next Time:** "If you could redo the activity, what conflict resolution style would you try to use more of, and why?"

+ EXTENSION OPTION # 2   **10 MINUTES**

- Review Vocabulary
  - Incentives
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Each style: avoid, accomodate, compete, compromise, collaborate

✏ **NOTES**

Assessment + Rubric

INSTRUCTIONS

As you go through the lesson with your class, keep in mind a few assessment topics below to gauge how the students are developing skills. Then, when you review the exit tickets, mark how well each student understands the material by how they answer the questions. You can also take any notes on what you noticed during class.

Formative Assessment Topics

ACQUISITION

Are they able to identify different conflict resolution styles (avoiding, competing, accommodating, compromising, collaborating) and describe how each style can be beneficial in specific situations?

IMPROVEMENT

Are students able to reflect on their personal conflict resolution style and explain how they've used it in the past to resolve disputes or overcome challenges in school, friendships, or family settings?

APPLICATION

Can they apply these strategies in hypothetical scenarios or reflect on how they could use them in future group projects, disagreements with peers, or other conflicts?

Rubric for Exit Ticket

DEVELOPING

Response may be incomplete or unclear in articulating understanding of the key ideas.

PROFICIENT

The student shows how the lesson applies to real life but lacks detailed reasoning.

EXPERT

The student demonstrates a deep understanding of the lesson content and confidently applies it to personal or hypothetical scenarios.

Teacher Notes

After each activity, teachers can record notes on student engagement and understanding. These notes can track individual student progress and class-wide learning goals, such as how students are applying their strengths and coping strategies in discussions and written reflections.