

# RESOLVING CONFLICTS

## STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Students will interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, communicate meaning, and develop logical interpretations through collaborative conversations.
- Students will build upon the ideas of others to clearly express one’s own views while respecting diverse perspectives.
- Students will develop effective coping skills for dealing with problems.
- Students will know how to apply conflict resolution skills.

### Objectives

Students will be able to define the word conflict and the word resolution.

Students will be able to identify a conflict when they encounter one.

Students will be able to list different strategies that can be used to resolve a conflict.

### Materials Needed

- Board or chart paper and markers (“Starter”)
- Whiteboard or chalkboard (“I Do”)
- “Sample ‘You-Message’” activity sheet (“I Do”)
- Conflict ideas created by you to present to the class (“You Do”)
- An “I-Message” activity sheet for each student (“You Do”)

**Starter (10 minutes)**

On chart paper or a board, create a T-Chart with one side labeled “Words that Light Us Up,” and the other side labeled “Words that Scorch Us.” (*Optional: Draw or print out a picture of a light bulb and fire to go along with each side of the T-Chart.*) Ask students to brainstorm words that bring “light” (for example, joy and happiness) to their lives. To prompt their thinking, ask students, “What words make you feel good about yourself when someone says them about you?” Record student responses. Then, ask students to think of words that “scorch” (for example, burn, harden, sadden) their “feelings” (egos, hearts). Again, record the words the students suggest. Following the brainstorm, tell students, “As we have just shown on this chart, words have a very special power. They can either lift someone up or tear someone down. We have to be careful with how we use our words, especially when we are upset or angry. Today, we are going to learn the best way to communicate and use our words when faced with conflict.”

**Teacher Presented Knowledge/I Do (30 minutes)**

Ask students if they have ever been accused of something and how it made them feel. After listening to a few student responses, show students the “Sample ‘YouMessage’” activity sheet. Have students read the text conversation between Naomi and her friend. After reading the text messages, analyze the conversation by asking the following questions: Why is Naomi upset? How do you think she is feeling? How do you think her friend felt when she read Naomi’s messages? Which word is repeated the most in this conversation? (*Answer is “you.”*) What types of adjectives do Naomi and her friend use to describe each other? (*Answer could be liar, mean, worst friend ever.*) Could Naomi have talked to her friend in a better way?

Lead the class to understand that effective communication is the key to resolving conflicts. Explain to students that whenever people are upset or angry, they often accuse others of doing things and use “You-Messages” instead of explaining how a person’s actions made them feel. When accusations and hurtful words (“YouMessages”) are used by the speaker, more conflict is often triggered because the listener feels as if they are being attacked. Instead, the best way to effectively communicate during a conflict is to use something called an “I-Message.”

Explain how an “I-Message” contains three important pieces.

1. Begin the statement with “I” instead of “you,” and a statement of feelings. (*Write “I feel \_\_\_\_\_” on the board.*)
2. Include a statement about the problem or what happened, but only stick to the facts! Do not use any hurtful words, accusations, or insults. (*Write “when you \_\_\_\_\_” on the board.*)
3. End the message with why the person’s behavior has affected you and made you feel certain emotions. (*Write “because \_\_\_\_\_.” on the board.*)

When finished writing all of the parts of an “I-Message,” the final formula should look like the following: “I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.”

Inform students that the way a person says their “I-Message” is very important. Tell students, “An ‘I-Message’ should always be said in a calm voice with eye contact, confidence, and respectful body language.”

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### Guided Student Practice/We Do (20 minutes)

Direct students to revisit the text conversation between Naomi and her friend. Ask students to think of several different ways Naomi could have used an “I-Message” instead of a “You-Message.” As a class, have students work together to craft an “I-Message” from Naomi. To prompt their thinking, ask students to recall why Naomi is upset: What is the main problem? How does Naomi feel? Why does she feel that way? (A sample “I-Message” from Naomi could be “I feel hurt that you did not attend my party and went to the mall instead because I thought you had soccer and feel like I was lied to and ditched.”)

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### Student Independent Practice/You Do (30 minutes)

Hand each student the “I-Message” activity sheet. Direct students to work in pairs to come up with an appropriate “I-Message” for each conflict situation you created before class. (For example, a friend says something hurtful without intending offense, someone cuts in front of you in the lunch line, a younger sibling breaks something of yours.) Then have students role-play the conflict scenario and practice saying their “I-Messages.”

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### Closure (5 minutes)

Close the lesson by reminding students that words are very powerful and must be used wisely. When faced with conflict, it is important to use an “I-Message” to express one’s concerns without hurting anyone else and causing more conflict.

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### Student Assessment

1. What are three reasons why an “I-Message” is a great way to communicate?
2. How are words powerful?
3. Think of a miscommunication you have had with a parent, sibling, and/or friend. What happened? How did the words that you or the other person used increase or decrease the conflict?

# LESSON EXTENSIONS

## Addressing Multiple Learning Styles Extension

Select a brief clip from a movie or TV show portraying a conflict between two people. Play this clip in class with the sound turned off. Have students guess the emotions that the people in the scene might be experiencing. Then, play the scene again with the sound turned on.

## Art Extension

Students can make a conflict resolution fortune teller to use when faced with a conflict. (See “*Conflict Resolution Fortune Teller*” activity sheet for the fortune teller template.)

## Drama Extension

Students can role-play scenarios where they present a conflict and then proceed to resolve it.

## ELA Extension

Students can analyze a conflict faced by a character in a book the class has read. Then, the students can decide the best solution the character could have chosen. They can even rewrite the ending to a story if their “best solution” differs from the solution the character in the book decided upon.

## Social Studies Extension

Find a historical instance where conflict resolution could have been used to resolve a situation.

## Technology Extension

Have students identify the emotions that common emojis are used to communicate. (See “Emotional Emojis” activity sheet.) Then, have students reflect on how they feel when they receive emojis like these in messages sent from others. Have them analyze communication via text messaging and the conflicts it can create versus face-to-face communication.

# SAMPLE “YOU-MESSAGE”

Read the text conversation between Naomi (*messages in white*) and her friend (*messages in blue*).

How would you feel if you were Naomi’s friend?



# “I-MESSAGE” PRACTICE

*Directions: Read the following examples.*

*Imagine they were happening to you; then, write your own “I-Message” for each example.*

## EXAMPLE:

Your mom is making you cut your hair before you visit your grandparents. But you want your hair to stay how it is.

I feel upset

when you make me change my hairstyle

because I like the way my hair currently looks.

1. A teammate has been making fun of the shoes you wear to practice.

I feel \_\_\_\_\_

when you \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Your classmates won't let you join their game at recess.

I feel \_\_\_\_\_

when you \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Your sibling calls you a “nerd” because you like to read.

I feel \_\_\_\_\_

when you \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_.

# CONFLICT RESOLUTION FORTUNE TELLER

8 7	Blue Say sorry	Yellow Share it!	6 5
Green Talk about it with someone		Get help or ask for advice	Brown
Orange Take turns/ switch off		<del>Compro-</del> mise	Pink
2 1	Red Come to an agree- ment	Purple Let things cool down	4 3

# EMOTIONAL EMOJIS

