

# Lesson 2.1

## Observing Conflict



### Rationale

Conflict analysis is a key process in managing conflict. Through analysis you can begin to understand a conflict's complexity. Once you have analyzed a conflict and are aware of the various perspectives involved, the process of envisioning creative solutions becomes easier. This activity engages students in simple conflict analysis by teaching students what to notice when they observe a conflict. Students learn a more in depth process of conflict analysis in lesson 2.3.

### Objectives

1. To understand the value of analyzing conflicts.
2. To identify elements to look for when observing conflicts.

### Standards

- ◆ Individual Development and Identity
- ◆ Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- ◆ Power, Authority, and Governance

**Time:** One class period (45 minutes)

### Materials

- Conflict Role-plays* Handout (only for the pairs role-playing)
- Observing Conflict* Worksheet
- Paragraph Exit Pass* Worksheet (optional)



45 minutes

## Procedures

### I. Essential Question

What can you observe about conflicts that will help you understand them better and help prepare you to manage them?

### II. Motivation/Introduction (5 minutes)

1. If definitions of conflict are still hanging in the classroom from Lesson 1.1 (Part 1), ask students to get up and move to their preferred definition. Have one person at each definition read it out loud. If the definitions are not hanging, ask students what they remember about the definitions of conflict that they wrote. Share with students that they will begin analyzing conflicts as a way to understand them better.
2. Select four students ahead of time to act out Role-play 1 and Role-play 2. Give them time to read the scenarios for understanding. Encourage them to role-play how a conflict can escalate by name calling, yelling, arguing, etc., but remind them that there should be no physical contact or use of force. Tell them they will have 3 minutes to act out their role-play.
3. While the four students are preparing, ask the class if anyone has a brief example of a time they observed a conflict. What did they notice?

### III. Teacher Directed (5 minutes)

1. Divide the class into seven groups.
2. Distribute the *Observing Conflicts* Worksheet to everyone and review the questions. Assign each group one question to answer from the worksheet.
3. Tell the class they are going to observe a role-play closely and answer their one question.

### IV. Guided Practice (15 minutes)

1. Have the first pair of students present Role-Play 1.
2. After the role-play, direct students to answer their one question independently by writing the answer on a piece of paper. Have them share answers with the people in their group. Have each group select a representative to share with the whole class.
3. In the order of the questions on the worksheet, ask each representative to share their answer.

### V. Independent Practice (15 minutes)

1. Explain that students will now have the opportunity to practice observing various elements of conflict on their own.
2. Distribute another copy of the *Observing Conflicts* Worksheet to each student.
3. Share that they are to watch Role-Play 2 and take notes on the worksheet.
4. Have the second pair of students present Role-Play 2.
5. After students have had time to take notes, pair them up to review their notes together and complete the worksheet.
6. Once students have finished, call on pairs to share their answers and discuss any differences of opinion.

**Alternate Ending:** You can use a version of “Playback Theater” to address the last question of the worksheet: “How could the conflict have ended differently?” Have pairs volunteer to jump into the role of the characters in the second role-play and play back the role-play with their alternate ending. Then explain that this strategy is a model of peacebuilding that has been used throughout the world. Playback theater is a form of improvisational theater that values personal stories and community building. It is used internationally in situations of trauma or crisis, as a means of facilitating community dialogue and as a reconciliation process. Playback theater has been used with refugee populations and with groups, such as the Dalit, or untouchables, in India to address discrimination.

### Extension Activity

Using students’ homework (*Observing Conflicts Worksheet* based on a personal conflict), have them turn their conflict into a conversation, writing in script format, or a comic strip, but leaving out the ending. Have students exchange their scripts/comics and have a partner write an ending or guess the actual ending.

## VI. Discussion or Optional Exit Pass (5 minutes)

Lead a discussion using some or all of the following questions:

- ◆ Why is understanding or knowing a conflict well important when trying to find a solution?
- ◆ The worksheet is useful for understanding interpersonal conflicts—conflicts between two or more people. How do you think observing conflicts can help you understand a national or international conflict you have studied? What other questions would you ask to help understand a larger or more complicated conflict? Share with students that in lesson 2.3 they will look at a more in depth process that will help them understand more complicated conflicts.

## VII. Homework (optional, as preparation for Lesson 2.2)

Think about a conflict you have had with another person and analyze it using the *Observing Conflicts Worksheet*. Think specifically about how you handled it and what you could have done differently.

### Assessment:

Participation, *Observing Conflicts Worksheet*

## Lesson 2.1 HANDOUT: CONFLICT ROLE-PLAYS

### Role-play 1

Student A (playing a young person): Your mother/father is not happy with your grades. She/he thinks you are spending too much time with your friends and does not like them. She/he wants to take you out of your current school and put you in a private school so you will focus more on studying. You are very happy in your current school and do not want to leave your friends to go somewhere new. For you, the issue is not your friends, it's the amount of homework you have and the difficulty of the subjects.

Student B (playing a mother/father): Your son/daughter is not doing well at school. You think he/she is wasting too much time with friends who are also not doing well. You want your child to go to the private school in town where there is a stronger academic environment and fewer distractions from studying.

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### Role-play 2

Student A (playing a young person): You are sure your sister/brother has borrowed your favorite T-shirt again. You can't find it anywhere in the house.

Student B (playing a young person): You borrowed your sister's/brother's T-shirt. She/he wasn't home, so you couldn't ask her. When you get home from school, your sister/brother is there and very angry.

## Lesson 2.1 WORKSHEET: OBSERVING CONFLICT

**Directions:** Use this worksheet to help you analyze a conflict when you observe it.

1. Describe what happened (the facts).
2. Who was involved?
3. What was the conflict about?
4. What was the problem for person A?  
A feels . . .  
  
A needs . . .
5. What was the problem for person B?  
B feels . . .  
  
B needs . . .
6. How did the conflict end?
7. How could the conflict have ended differently?

## Lesson 2.1 WORKSHEET: PARAGRAPH EXIT PASS

**Exit Pass Question:** What is the value of analyzing a conflict and how can you use this skill in your life?

Topic Sentence:			
Supporting Detail 1	Supporting Detail 2	Supporting Detail 3	Supporting Detail 4
Summary/Concluding Sentence:			

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**Exit Pass Question:** What is the value of analyzing a conflict and how can you use this skill in your life?

Topic Sentence:			
Supporting Detail 1	Supporting Detail 2	Supporting Detail 3	Supporting Detail 4
Summary/Concluding Sentence:			