

Lesson 2.3

Identifying Elements of Conflict



Rationale

This activity presents a more complex and thorough framework for analyzing conflicts, allowing students to engage more deeply in the process of understanding conflicts. Conflict analysis is an essential skill in conflict management, as it allows an individual to do the necessary information gathering that can broaden their perspective and understanding of the conflict and can lead to creative problem solving in the search for a solution.

Objective

1. To understand how conflict analysis can benefit conflict management.
2. To develop skills in analyzing conflicts.

Standards

- ◆ Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- ◆ Global Connections

Time: 90 minutes

Materials

- Elements of Conflict* Handout
- Analyzing a Conflict* Worksheet

Preparation

Research background material on the conflict in Uganda. One source is BBC: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1069181.stm>.



90 minutes

Note: Some conflicts may involve more than one issue, e.g., a struggle for resources and a need for respect.

Extension Activity 1

Tell students they are going to watch a three-minute video about a Ugandan peacebuilder, Betty Bigombe, who worked to bring peace to her country. Following the video, ask students what additional information they can add to their *Analyzing a Conflict Worksheet*. Access the witness video at www.buildingpeace.org

Extension Activity 2

For more practice, have students research the conflict in Northern Ireland and then show the USIP witness testimony about George Mitchell and his work mediating the conflict. Have students complete an analysis of the conflict. Access the video at www.buildingpeace.org

Procedures

1. Explain to students that they will explore more deeply the conflicts they were working on previously. Now they will look at the specific elements of these conflicts.
2. Distribute the *Elements of Conflict* Handout and review the elements with students. If possible, select a conflict known to all students, and as a whole class identify the elements of that conflict using the worksheet. This could be a historical conflict students have studied, such as the Civil War or World War II.
3. Have students return to their scenario groups from the previous day (or put them in groups and give each group a scenario from lesson 2.1 if you did not do that lesson). Have students analyze the scenario they acted out from lesson 2.1. They can write their responses on the *Analyzing a Conflict Worksheet*. Some questions will need to be answered from their imagination.
4. Have each group share their responses.
5. Tell students that the same process of conflict analysis used in personal scenarios is used to understand interstate (between countries) and intrastate (between groups within a country) conflicts. Tell them that they are going to apply what they have learned to a conflict that took place in another part of the world. Ask students where Uganda is and what they know about the country.
6. Divide students into six groups. Distribute conflict background materials for the conflict in Uganda, which you have gathered prior to class (see link under Preparation), and a copy of the *Analyzing a Conflict Worksheet*. Assign each group one of the elements of conflict analysis to complete. After each group has finished, either have each group share their response, inviting others to contribute additional information, or have the groups share with each other using the jigsaw technique in which one person from each group becomes the group's representative and shares the information from his or her group with all of the other groups. To begin, you can ask each representative to move one group to their left. They have 3 minutes to share their information with their new group and answer any questions, while those listening to the information take notes on their worksheet. After 3 minutes, the representatives then rotate again and speak with another group. This process continues until each representative is back with their original group.
7. Close the lesson by leading a discussion using some or all of the following questions:
 - ◆ How did the conflict analysis process help you better understand a conflict?
 - ◆ Were there new elements that you hadn't identified through your basic analysis in the last class?
 - ◆ You have now analyzed personal, national (depending on the conflict used in Step 2), and international conflicts using the same process. What does this tell you about the nature of conflict? Share that personal and international conflicts differ greatly in terms of dynamics and complexity but the basic elements of conflict often remain the same, as do the basic skills and concepts used to manage them.
 - ◆ How would you use this analysis technique to help you in managing any particular conflict?
 - ◆ Segue to the next lesson on conflict styles by asking: How can analyzing a conflict you are a part of affect the way that you choose to respond to it?

Assessment:

Completed *Analyzing a Conflict Worksheet* and class discussion

Lesson 2.3 HANDOUT: ELEMENTS OF CONFLICT

ISSUE(S): WHAT IS THE CONFLICT ABOUT?

Conflicts are often about multiple issues at many levels. Conflict analysis must look at all possible causes.

- ◆ Is it about resources (human resources, land, natural resources, things)?
- ◆ Is it about power and political control?
- ◆ Is it about emotional needs—fear, respect, recognition, friendship, love?
- ◆ Is it about values and beliefs?
- ◆ Is it about history?

PARTIES: WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT?

Parties can include those who are visible, as well as those behind the scenes.

- ◆ Is it an internal conflict—a conflict with oneself?
- ◆ Is it an interpersonal conflict—a conflict between two or more people?
- ◆ Is it an intergroup conflict—a conflict between two or more groups?
- ◆ Is it an intragroup conflict—a conflict within a group?
- ◆ Is it an international conflict—a conflict among two or more nations?
- ◆ Is it a global conflict—a conflict that affects many people and all nations in the world?
- ◆ Outside of the people who are directly involved in the conflict, who has a stake in the outcome?

RELATIONSHIP: WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE IN THE CONFLICT?

In some conflicts, the parties know one another and in others they do not. When parties know one another, conflict management includes rebuilding relationships. When parties do not know one another, establishing a relationship means making sure all parties act in good faith.

- ◆ Do the parties have equal power?
- ◆ How well do the people know each other?
- ◆ How much do the people rely on each other? Do the actions of one seriously affect the actions of the other?

HISTORY: WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT?

In conflict, each party has its own story, its own history.

- ◆ How long has the conflict been going on?
- ◆ How often has the conflict come up?
- ◆ How intense is the conflict? Is the conflict life-threatening? How does the intensity affect possible solutions to the conflict?

STYLES: HOW HAVE THE PARTIES CHOSEN TO DEAL WITH THE CONFLICT?

Each party may use one or more styles to manage the conflict. It is helpful to identify the styles being used.

- ◆ Confront or compete
- ◆ Accommodate
- ◆ Compromise
- ◆ Problem solve
- ◆ Avoid

MANAGEMENT: WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE EFFORTS TO MANAGE THE CONFLICT?

It is important to know the impact of prior efforts to manage the conflict.

- ◆ Has this conflict gone on for a long time? What has been the result?
- ◆ Have there been attempts to resolve the conflicts?
- ◆ If so, who made the attempts and what happened? If not, why not?
- ◆ What could be done to resolve the conflict now?

Lesson 2.3 WORKSHEET: ANALYZING A CONFLICT

1. Describe the conflict in one sentence.
2. What type of conflict is it? (internal, interpersonal)
3. **ISSUES:** What are the sources of the conflict? (e.g., resources, values, needs)
4. **PARTIES:** How many parties (different individuals or groups) are involved in the conflict? List them.
5. **RELATIONSHIP:** Describe the relationship among the parties.
6. **HISTORY:** What is the history of the conflict? How long has the conflict been going on? Is it recurring? How serious is the conflict?
7. **STYLES:** How are the parties currently dealing with the conflict?
8. **MANAGEMENT:** What can the parties do to move toward ending the conflict?