

COMMUNICATE, DON'T ESCALATE

SUBJECT Citizenship Education; Personal, Social and Emotional Learning

TOPIC Conflict Resolution and Non-Violent Communication

DURATION 50 minutes

AGE 14+

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the lesson, students are expected to:

-  Understand the basic principles of non-violent communication.
-  Recognise how words and tone can influence conflict.
-  Develop empathy by considering different perspectives.
-  Practise expressing feelings and needs respectfully.
-  Learn constructive strategies to resolve everyday conflicts peacefully.

MATERIALS

- Projector or interactive whiteboard
- [Infographic](#)
- [“Say It Better”](#) activity (with [Teachers Notes](#))

METHODS

- Guided class discussion
- Interactive presentation
- Pair work
- Collaborative language activity
- Individual reflection

PREPARATION/OPENING

Before the lesson, the teacher prepares (see the examples below):

- an Infographic or a short presentation to introduce conflict, active listening and the four basic elements of non-violent communication (Observation, Feelings, Needs and Request);
- the [“Say It Better”](#) activity for students.

LESSON STRUCTURE/DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION (10 minutes):

- Introduce the concept of conflict. Explain that conflict is a normal part of everyday life and that disagreements are not necessarily negative. What often makes conflicts worse is the way people communicate.
- Present the **four basic steps of Non-Violent Communication** in simple language (see the Infographic below):
 - Observe what happened without judging.
 - Express how you feel.
 - Identify what you need.
 - Ask respectfully for what you would like.
- Provide one simple classroom example.

IMPLEMENTATION (35 minutes):

- Students work in pairs (20 minutes). Each pair receives a set of common conflict statements from the “Say It Better” activity (see the example below).
- Students choose a possible everyday context for each statement and rewrite it using respectful language based on the four Non-Violent Communication steps.

For example, instead of: “You never listen to me”.

Students might write: “I feel frustrated because I don't feel heard. Could we both take turns speaking?”

- The teacher moves around the classroom, encouraging discussion and supporting students where necessary.
- Then, each pair presents one transformed sentence. Discuss (10 minutes):
 - Which words changed?
 - How did the message become more respectful?
 - Would the new sentence help reduce conflict?
- Emphasise that respectful communication does not mean avoiding disagreement, it means expressing ourselves without attacking others.

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

- Summarise the key messages:
 - Conflict is normal.
 - Respectful communication helps prevent conflicts from escalating.
 - Listening is just as important as speaking.
 - Focusing on feelings and needs encourages understanding rather than blame.
- Remind students that Non-Violent Communication is useful for everyday disagreements, but situations involving bullying, abuse or serious power imbalances should not be managed alone and may require support from a trusted adult or professional.

INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

- [Infographic](#) about the four basic steps of Non-Violent Communication
- [“Say It Better” activity](#)

REFERENCES

- UNICEF - [Guide: Ten key competencies for adolescents](#)
- Vilhauer, J - [“3 ways to speak up without starting a fight”](#), In Psychology Today
- Miacademy & MiaPrep Learning Channel - [Conflict Resolution Skills - Solving Disagreements in Healthy Ways](#) (YouTube Video)
- #NotTheOne - [“Managing conflict: Exercises for young people”](#)
- Garey, J - [“Teaching Kids How to Deal With Conflict. Tips for building lifelong skills”](#), In Child Mind Institute
- Rosenberg, M. B. - [Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life](#)

CONCLUSION/ASSESSMENT

Assess students through: participation in discussions; collaboration during pair work; ability to transform conflict statements into respectful messages; understanding of the principles of non-violent communication.

HOMEWORK

Ask students to choose a disagreement they have observed at school, at home, online, or in a fictional situation, without including names or personal details. Then, ask them to write a short reflection (100–150 words) describing:

- what caused the disagreement;
- how people communicated;
- one example of how non-violent communication could have improved the situation.

THE 4 STEPS OF NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION



Conflict and disagreements are a normal part of everyday life. People have different opinions, needs and feelings.

Conflict itself is not the problem. The way we communicate can make the situation better or worse.

STEP 1 - OBSERVE

Describe what happened **without judging or blaming**.

Ask yourself: What happened?

Instead of: "You never listen to me".

Try: "I noticed you were looking at your phone while I was speaking".



STEP 2 - EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS

Share **how you feel** using "I" statements.

Ask yourself: How do I feel?

Examples:

- I feel frustrated.
- I feel left out.
- I feel worried.



STEP 3 - IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS

Think about what is **important to you**.

Ask yourself: What do I need?

Examples:

- To feel heard.
- To be respected.
- To work together.



STEP 4 - MAKE A RESPECTFUL REQUEST

Ask **clearly and politely** for what you need.

Ask yourself:

What would I like to happen?

Instead of: "Stop interrupting me!"

Try: "Could you let me finish speaking before you respond?"



EXAMPLE

A classmate keeps interrupting you during your presentation.

Step:

- Observe: "You interrupted me while I was speaking".
- Feel: "I felt frustrated".
- Need: "I need to finish sharing my ideas".
- Request: "Could you please wait until I finish before speaking?"



Remember:

Good communication doesn't avoid conflict, it helps us solve it with respect.

SAY IT BETTER

Rewrite the message using Non-Violent Communication: Read each statement carefully, imagine an everyday situation in which it could occur, and work in pairs to rewrite it using the four steps of Non-Violent Communication. Remember: your goal is not to avoid conflict, but to communicate in a respectful and constructive way.



1. You never listen to me!"
2. "It's all your fault!"
3. "Stop being so annoying!"
4. "Leave me alone!"
5. "You always interrupt me!"
6. "I don't care what you think"
7. "You're so selfish"
8. "If you were a real friend, you would do it"
9. "You embarrassed me on purpose!"
10. "Why can't you ever do anything right?"
11. "Just stop talking!"
12. "I'm not talking to you anymore".

TEACHER NOTES (SUGGESTED EXAMPLES)

1. "You never listen to me!" → I noticed I wasn't able to finish what I wanted to say. I feel frustrated because I'd like to feel heard. Could you let me finish before responding?
2. "It's all your fault!" → When the project wasn't finished on time, I felt disappointed because I wanted us to work together. Could we talk about how to organise the work differently next time?
3. "Stop being so annoying!" → I'm finding it difficult to concentrate. Could you please lower your voice?
4. "Leave me alone!" → I need some time to calm down. Can we talk about this later?
5. "You always interrupt me!" → I noticed I was interrupted several times. I feel frustrated because I'd like to finish my ideas. Could we take turns speaking?
6. "I don't care what you think" → I see that we have different opinions. I'd like to explain my point of view, and I'd also like to hear yours.
7. "You're so selfish" → I felt disappointed when you didn't share the materials. I need us to cooperate. Could we work together next time?
8. "If you were a real friend, you would do it" → I'd really appreciate your help, but I understand if you're not comfortable doing it.
9. "You embarrassed me on purpose!" → When you laughed during my presentation, I felt embarrassed because I wanted to be taken seriously. Could you avoid doing that next time?
10. "Why can't you ever do anything right?" → I noticed there were some mistakes. Let's look at them together and see how we can improve.
11. "Just stop talking!" → I'm having trouble concentrating. Could we let one person speak at a time?
12. "I'm not talking to you anymore". → I'm upset right now and I need some time to calm down. Can we talk again later?