

# What is a conflict?



## *Step 1*

Write in your notes the first **3 words** that come to your mind when you think about conflict.

# What is a conflict?



## Step 2

Share your words and write a **group definition** of conflict!

Group 1: Maria Antonia, Uldis  
Group 2: Noa, Antonio, Sophie  
Group 3: Isabel, Linda, Matīss



# What is a conflict?

Opposition arising from disagreements due to inconsistent objectives, thoughts or emotions within or among individuals, teams, departments or organizations.

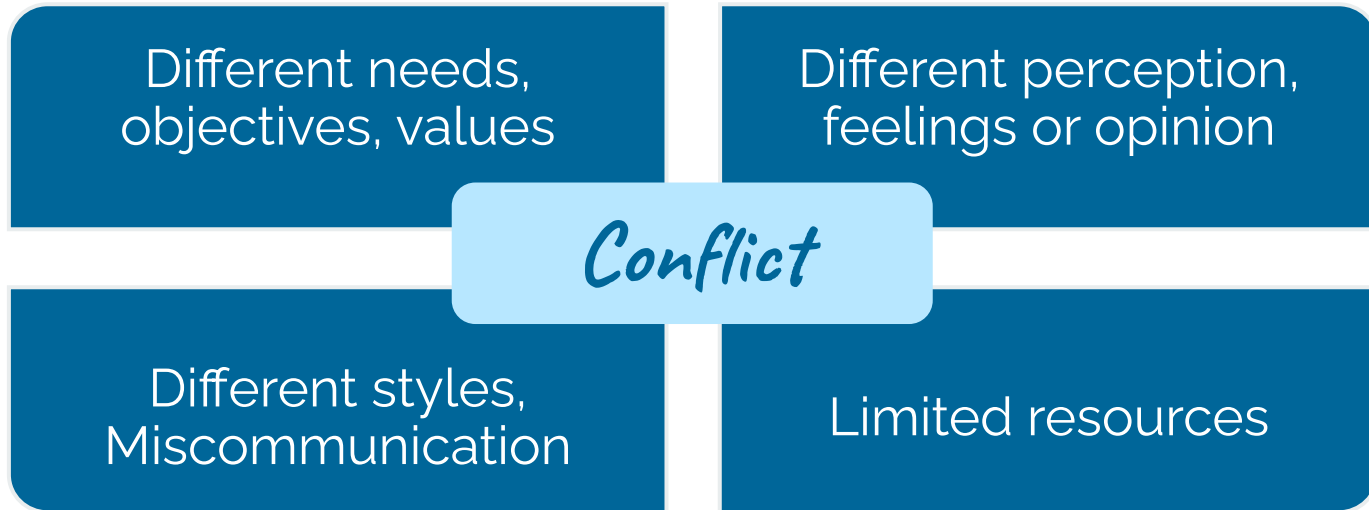
# Types of conflict

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1. Goal conflict
2. Cognitive conflict
3. Affective conflict

# Why do conflicts arise?

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# Views on conflicts

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- Negative view
  - Positive view
  - Balanced view
- Write **3 random words** (objects, not abstract concepts) on **3 post-its**.
  - Choose one and create a metaphor using this structure: "Conflict for me is / is not like **[random word]** because..."
  - For example: "Conflict for me is like a pencil because when it's sharp, it can hurt, but it can also be used to create something new."

# Conflicts as opportunities



[TED Talk by Clair Canfield](#)

## STEP 1

### UNDERSTAND WHAT THE CONFLICT IS ABOUT

1. Think about a time in which you managed a conflict.
2. What good impact did it bring in your life? What are the positive aspects of conflicts? Share your thought in plenary.

# Conflicts as opportunities

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- They bring to the table issues that were hidden.
- Highlight mismatches in the relationship → give the opportunity to fix the problem!
- Hear a different opinion that might be helpful to find a better/correct solution.
- Improve future collaboration.
- Help practice empathy and active listening.
- Understand yourself better, know what are your priorities.
- You get to know people on a deeper level.

# Positive and negative effects of a conflict

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## *Negative*

- Wastes resources (in terms of time, emotions, and sometimes money)
- Increases aggressive behaviours and negative feelings
- Reduces efficiency

## *Positive*

- Stimulates the creation of new ideas
- Promotes creativity
- Gives the opportunity to solve a problem

# Conflicts as opportunities

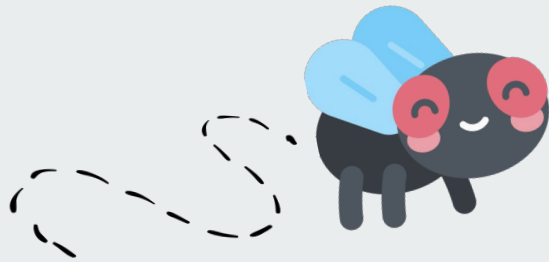


[TED Talk by Clair Canfield](#)

## STEP 2

RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU ARE STUCK

# How to approach the conflict and get unstuck?



## Be a fly!

Form groups of three.

Each person will take on one role:

- **The In-Conflict:** shares a real (preferably ongoing) conflict situation.
- **The Question Master:** asks questions, using the template as inspiration.
- **The Observer:** takes notes in the template during the activity and later shares observations with the group.

### The question master starts by asking questions for the person in conflict:

- Share a conflict situation you are dealing with.
- Who is the other person involved?

*Now the in-conflict changes chair and takes the other person's perspective.*

### The question master continues by asking questions for the other person:

- What happened from your perspective?
- How did you feel?
- What did you say?

*Now change chair again. Imagine a fly is in the room, just observing the situation.*

*The fly needs to take notes paying attention to behaviour, emotions and language for both parties of the conflict.*

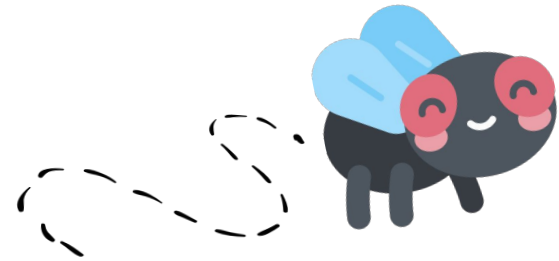
### The question master asks questions for the fly:

- What do you notice?
- How are they communicating?
- How could they communicate better?

*Now, the in-conflict goes back to the first chair.*

### Final reflection questions for the in-conflict:

- What do you see differently now?
- Which suggestions can you use in your behavior?



# Debriefing

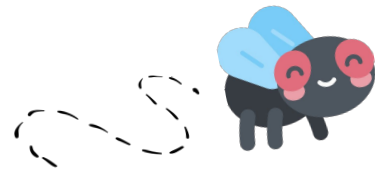


- How did you experience the activity?
- What did the **Observer** notice?
- In what way did the **In-Conflict** person's perspective shift during the activity?
- How did exploring the conflict from **three different perspectives** help deepen understanding?
- How might this activity help you move forward or get “unstuck” in a real conflict?

# How to implement it in your classroom

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- 1:1 with a student
- Activity to share with the students
- In plenary with the whole class if there is a conflict involving everybody



# How to approach the conflict and get unstuck?

What are the most common words, attitudes and behaviours **instigating** a conflict?

What are the most common words, attitudes and behaviours **defusing** a conflict?

## TASK

In pairs, brainstorm the **words, expressions and attitudes** that you think are (not) the most appropriate to approach a conflict.

# Words that **instigate** a conflict



# Words that defuse a conflict



# Conflicts as opportunities



[TED Talk by Clair Canfield](#)

**STEP 3**  
**SPEAK RESPONSIBLY**

# Speaking Responsibly in conflicts - VOCAB

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- **Vulnerability:** Let yourself be vulnerable.
- **Ownership:** Own your needs and mistakes.
- **Communication:** It's about how you communicate, and also about listening.
- **Acceptance:** Embrace the reality.
- **Boundaries:** Respect the other person.

## ACTIVITY

Go back to the previous exercise: can you identify where the words, expressions and behaviours you mentioned fit in **VOCAB**?

# Keys in conflict management

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- Understand what the conflict is about
- Choose how to handle it
- Communicate responsibly



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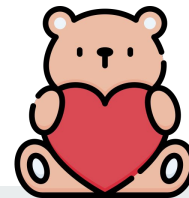
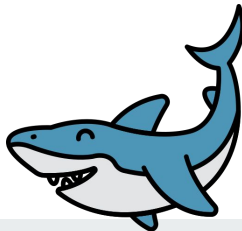
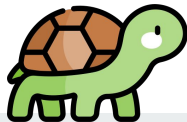
# Managing conflicts at school and in everyday life

## Practical tools

# Conflict management styles

Connect the animal with the right attitude.

- |               |   |                            |
|---------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Turtle     | → | A. Competing/Forcing       |
| 2. Teddy bear | → | B. Compromise              |
| 3. Shark      | → | C. Avoidance               |
| 4. Fox        | → | D. Collaborative           |
| 5. Owl        | → | E. Accommodating/Smoothing |

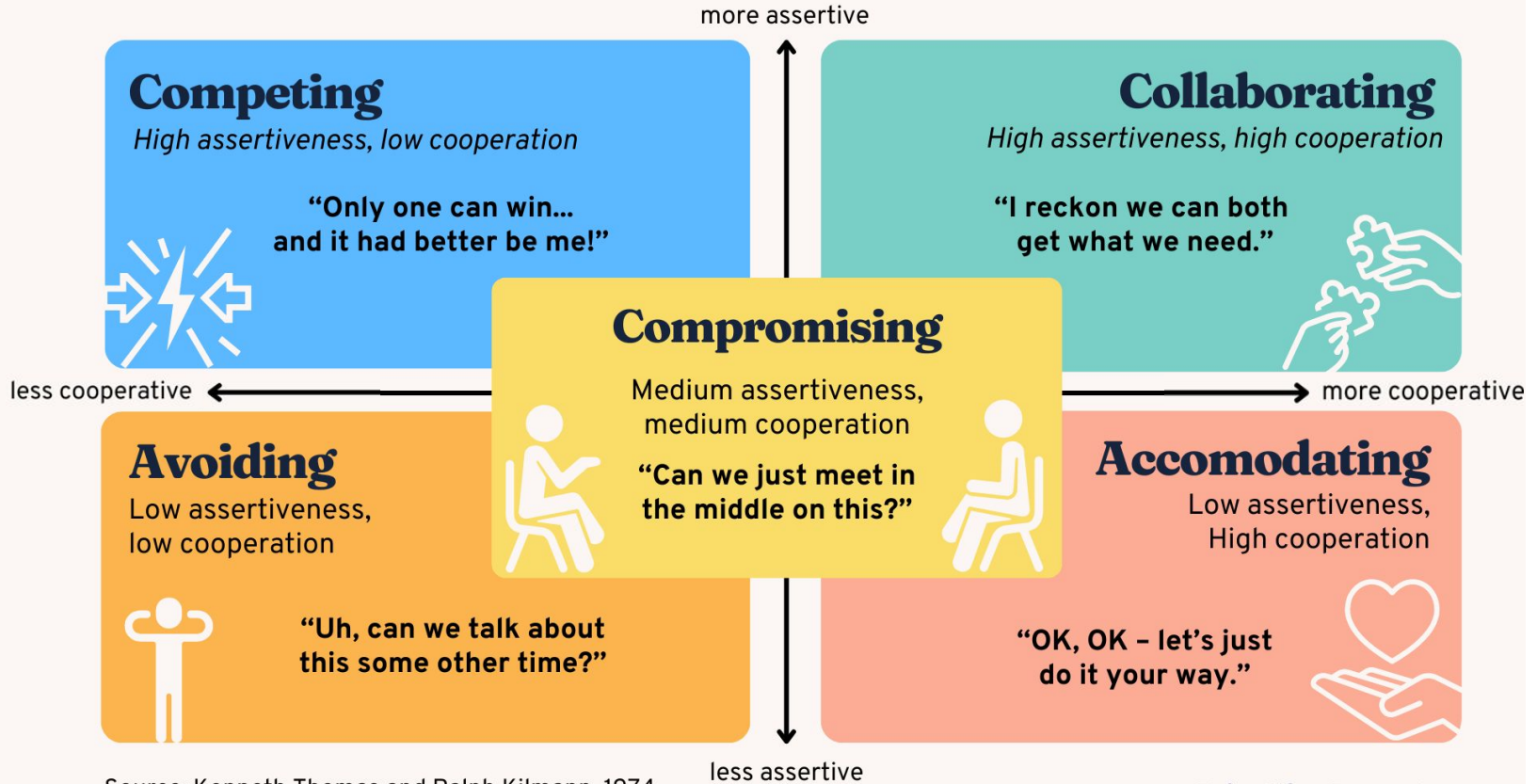


# Conflict management styles

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- Avoidance → Turtle
- Accommodating/Smoothing → Teddy bear
- Competing/Forcing → Shark
- Compromise → Fox
- Collaborative → Owl

# Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Model

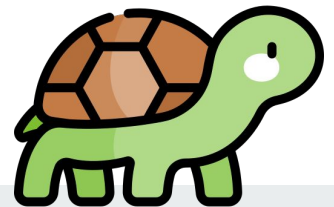


Source: Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann, 1974

# Avoiding | Turtle

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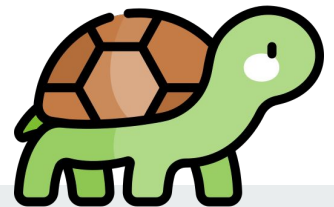
- People who avoid conflict are generally **unassertive** and **uncooperative**
- **Avoid** the conflict entirely or **delay** their response instead of voicing concerns
- Can create some space in an emotional environment
- Not a good long-term strategy
- The conflict is not solved



# Uses of the “Turtle”

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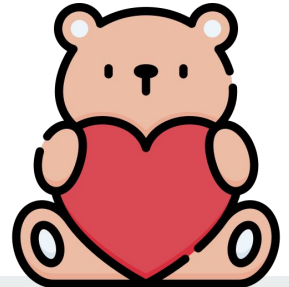
- When the issue is **trivial**
- When both parties are **not ready to manage the conflict**
- To let people **cool down & reduce tension**
- When gathering information



# Accommodating | Teddy Bear

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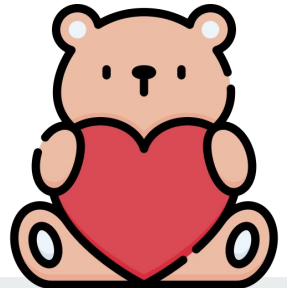
- People who accommodate are **unassertive** and **very cooperative**
- **Give in** during a conflict
- **Acknowledge** they made a mistake or decide it was **no big deal**
- Put relationships first, ignore issues, and **try to keep peace at any price**
- Effective when the other person or part has a better plan or solution
- It encourages individuals to **cover-up** or **gloss over their feelings**



# Uses of “Teddy Bear”

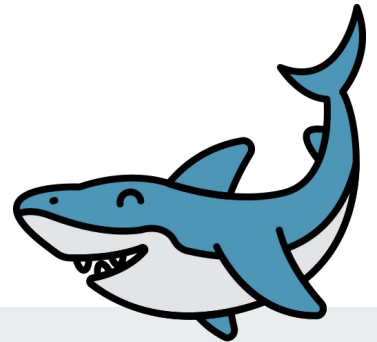
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- When you realize **you are wrong**
- To **learn** from others
- When the issue is more important to the other person than to yourself
- When others can solve the conflict more effectively



## Competing/Forcing | Shark

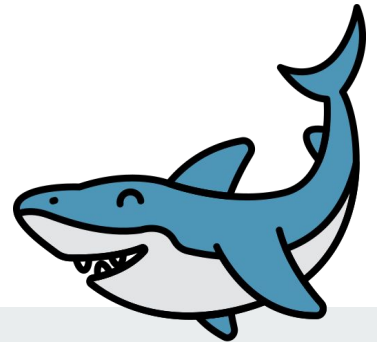
- People who approach conflict in a **competitive** way **assert** themselves and **do not cooperate** while **pursuing their own concerns at another's expense**
- Takes on a “**win-lose**” **approach** where one person wins and one person loses
- Does not rely on cooperation with the other party to reach outcome
- May be appropriate for **emergencies** when time is important



## Uses of the “Shark”

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- When **quick, decisive action** is vital
- When the issue is much more important for you
- To **protect** yourself against people who take advantage of you



# Compromising | Fox

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- Compromisers are **moderately assertive** and **moderately cooperative**
- Try to find **fast, mutually acceptable solutions** to conflicts that partially satisfy both parties
- Results in a “**lose-lose**” approach
- Appropriate temporary solution
- Considered an easy way out when you need more time to collaborate to find a better solution



## Uses of “Fox”

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- When goals are **not worth the effort** or disruption
- When opponents with equal power are strongly committed
- When there is **not enough time**
- To achieve **temporary settlements** to complex issues



# Collaborating | Owl

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- Collaborators are both **assertive** and **cooperative**
- Assert own views while also **listening** to other views and **welcoming differences**
- Seek a “**win-win**” outcome
- Identify underlying concerns of a conflict
- Create room for multiple ideas
- Requires **time and effort** from both parties



## Uses of “Owl”

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- To find an **integrative solution** when both sides are too important to compromise
- When your objective is to **learn**
- To work through hard feelings which have been interfering with a relationship



## Which one is best?

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There is **no** best way to handle conflict. Different conflict management styles may be used when faced with different situations.

**Knowing yourself** and **fully understanding each situation** will help you understand the conflict management style needed.

# Which one is best?

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There is **no** best way to handle conflict.

Each conflict is different and requires a different response.

In English, there are these ways of saying:

*“Two heads are better than one.”* (Collaborating)

*“Kill your enemies with kindness.”* (Accommodating)

*“Split the difference.”* (Compromising)

*“Leave well enough alone.”* (Avoiding)

*“Might makes right.”* (Competing)

# Activity

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*Group 1: Maria Antonia, Isabel*

*Group 2: Noa, Antonio, Sophie*

*Group 3: Linda, Matīss, Uldis*

Work in groups to identify classroom or work situations where each conflict management style is most appropriate. Stick the post-its on the flipchart!



**Avoiding** – When is it best to step back?



**Accommodating** – When should you prioritize harmony?



**Competing/Forcing** – When is it necessary to stand firm?



**Compromising** – When is finding middle ground the best option?



**Collaborating** – When should you work together for a win-win solution?

# Battling negativity in the classroom

The interrupter  
The know-it-all  
The negative one  
The gossiper  
The quiet one

Can you recognize these “negative”  
types? What are their  
characteristics?



# The negative types

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- **The interrupter:** probably insecure, enjoys interrupting us because feels more powerful, aggressive and enjoys arguing.
- **The know-it-all:** showing off; in fact has a lot of knowledge and is eager to show it
- **The negative one:** everything is bad for him; whining the whole time, making himself a victim
- **The gossip:** has something unclear, makes jokes of the things that you say, bored from the material
- **The quiet one:** insecure, shy, bored, indifferent

# Battling negativity in the classroom

The interrupter  
The know-it-all  
The negative one  
The gossiper  
The quiet one

Try to come up with good strategies  
to manage this kind of student in the  
classroom.



# How to battle negativity

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- **The interrupter:** discuss what they said briefly and continue. Try to ask them what they can be really interested in.
- **The know-it-all:** thank them for the addition and try to postpone the moment in which we are answering the questions, maybe at the end of the class.
- **The negative one:** ask them to be more specific on what they don't like, show them that the goal of the class is positive result, try to change perspective and let them solve the problem. Give feedbacks to motivate them.
- **The gossiper:** try to put them in charge of the organization of something that can involve them.
- **The quiet one:** encourage them, ask them easy questions, use them as an example to give them courage, ask them questions in a way that you show that you believe in them, try to put them in charge of a group to make them feel involved and participative.

# The interrupter

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1. Make this student a helper or give them an extra special task or responsibility to feel important
2. Be prepared before they have a chance to interrupt
3. Find out the reason they are interrupting
4. Teach the students a good way to interrupt

# The know it all

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1. Name the other ones at first
2. From time to time let that student share to keep up the motivation
3. Explicit why you find this behaviour annoying (the student might not be aware)
4. Switch roles (student becomes teacher)
5. Give them extra tasks

# The negative one

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1. Give a task the student can manage
2. Give positive feedbacks
3. Try to find something that this student is interested in
4. Real life situation as a sharing point
5. Give confidence to the student
6. Use a supportive approach

# The gossiper

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1. Talk to the student individually
2. Give them extra tasks (no time to gossip)
3. Show the student how to accommodate their tendency to a group situation
4. Stand close to them

# The quiet one

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1. Use different working methods and lead them to have success
2. Ask the student every time you know they have a correct answer
3. Try to make the student feels included in the class to participate
4. Try to understand why: personality, indifference, emotional, not interested, other priorities etc.
5. Find a topic the student is really interested in
6. Give them enough time

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# The 6 Thinking Hats method

*Edward De Bono (1985)*

# Instructions

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*We have a problem to solve!*

- 6 people will be assigned a role: during the discussion, you need to adopt the attitude and characteristics of the role you are assigned.
- 2 people will be the observers: listen carefully and take notes of the discussion.
- You have **5 minutes** to enter in the role. Before, during and after the discussion, **do not reveal what your role is.**
- You will have **20 minutes** to discuss their situation and **find a solution.**

*Ready...?*

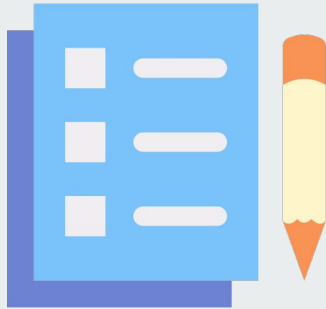
# Scenario

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You, as a team of teachers, have a really important project to finalize. It is with heavy administration, a lot of documents to be filled in and you are still far away from finishing it. The deadline is on Friday. Meanwhile, **Tom** comes to you. He is a student with learning difficulties. He needs more time to understand the lesson and he lacks concentration. He usually is not open to admit that he needs help, but this time he asks you to spend some time together to prepare for his final exam. The exam is also on Friday.

# Debriefing

*The 6 Thinking Hats is a method for solving problems in groups. Each Hat symbolizes **a role, a mode of thinking.***



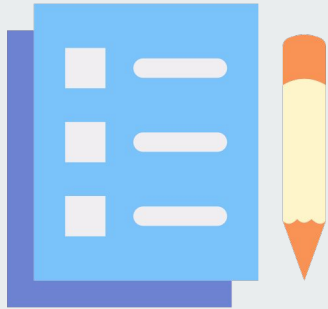
Take a piece of paper and try to describe the **role of the person on your right.**

Hand the piece of paper to him/her.

Read aloud the piece of paper you are given. Is the description correct? Can you explain better the role you were assigned and reveal what colour your Hat was?

# Debriefing

*The 6 Thinking Hats is a method for solving problems in groups. Each Hat symbolizes **a role, a mode of thinking.***



**Observers:** What roles can you spot in the discussion? Make some guesses related to the scenario.

**Hats:** Are the guesses right? Can you describe better what your role was throughout the scenarios?

What hats are more difficult to wear?

# The Six Thinking Hats

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## **BLUE HAT: PROCESS**

Thinking about thinking, organizing and planning for action

Gathering information and data, neutral and objective

## **RED HAT: FEELINGS**

Intuition, hunches, gut instincts. Immediate feeling, no reasons

## **BLACK HAT: CAUTIONS**

Difficulties, weaknesses, dangers, spotting the risks, logical reason

## **YELLOW HAT: BENEFITS**

Positive thinking, always looks at why an idea is useful

## **GREEN HAT: CREATIVITY**

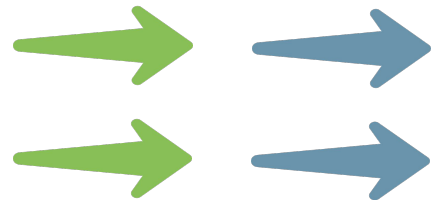
# A method for parallel thinking

- Method for **cooperative and coordinated thinking**: all sides are thinking in parallel in the **same direction**.
- To persuade people to **abandon their customary thinking patterns** and think in parallel with others for more constructive results.
- In contrast with traditional argument or **adversarial thinking** where each side takes a different position and then seeks to attack the other, trying to prove the other side is wrong.

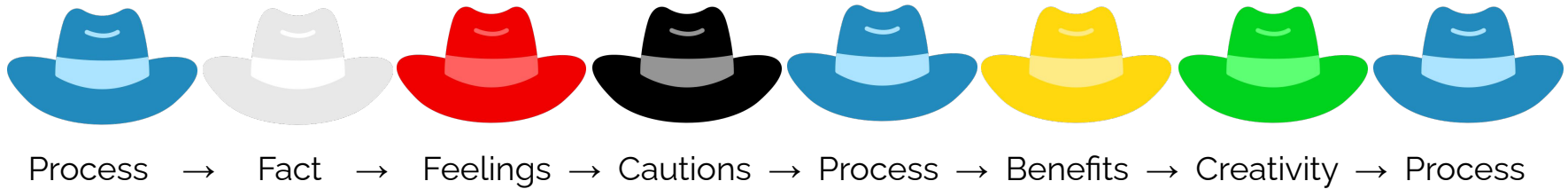
*From adversarial...*



*...to parallel thinking*



## *Example of a typical Six Thinking Hats sequence*




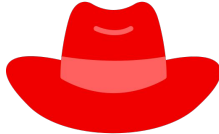




# The Six Thinking Hats in school...

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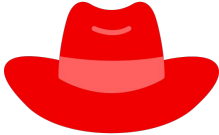




Some examples:

- Assign book reviews
- Evaluate the best strategy to solve a math problem
- Explore social studies and science content
- Understand important historical facts
- Organize classroom discussion/prepare for classroom debates
- Hold formative assessment sessions

# Book-review chart

<p><b>The White Hat (fact-based thinking)</b> What are the key facts of the book?</p> 	<p><b>The Red Hat (emotional thinking)</b> What were your feeling and emotions while reading this book?</p> 	<p><b>The Black Hat (critical thinking)</b> What are the main weaknesses of this book? What didn't you like? Why?</p> 
<p><b>The Yellow Hat (positive thinking)</b> What would be the benefit of reading this book for students of your age?</p> 	<p><b>The Green Hat (creative thinking)</b> What are three other ways in which this book could have ended?</p> 	<p><b>The Blue Hat (managed thinking)</b> Have you considered all relevant perspectives to review this book?</p> 

# Formative Assessment chart

<p><b>The White Hat (fact-based thinking)</b> What did you learn this week? Name 5 facts you learned about...</p> 	<p><b>The Red Hat (emotional thinking)</b> How did you feel this week?</p> 	<p><b>The Black Hat (critical thinking)</b> What activity didn't you like doing? Why?</p> 
<p><b>The Yellow Hat (positive thinking)</b> What was your best achievement this week? Why?</p> 	<p><b>The Green Hat (creative thinking)</b> If you could change something about this week, what would you change? Why?</p> 	<p><b>The Blue Hat (managed thinking)</b> In summary, how would you rate this week? What could be the plan for next week?</p> 

# Benefits of the Six Thinking Hats





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- Distinguishes personal identity from the task, **reducing ego-driven responses**
- Encourages **switching between different thinking styles** deliberately
- Supports **effective parallel thinking** among individuals or teams
- Promotes a **balanced use of emotional and rational processing** (neurotransmitter engagement)
- Helps groups **collaborate** more efficiently, stay **focused**, and **align** their thinking toward a **shared goal**

# Your turn!

- Think about one (or more!) practical ways to use the 6 Thinking Hats in your class with your students. Use the chart as a template.
- Share in plenary!



<p><b>The White Hat (fact-based thinking)</b>  <u>What did you learn</u> this week? <u>Name 5 facts</u>  <u>you learned about...</u></p> 	<p><b>The Red Hat (emotional thinking)</b>            How did you feel this week?</p> 	<p><b>The Black Hat (critical thinking)</b>            What activity didn't you like doing? Why?</p> 
<p><b>The Yellow Hat (positive thinking)</b>  <u>What was your best achievement</u> this week?  <u>Why?</u></p> 	<p><b>The Green Hat (creative thinking)</b>            If you could change something about this            week, what would you change? Why?</p> 	<p><b>The Blue Hat (managed thinking)</b>            In <u>summary</u>, <u>how would you</u> rate this week?  <u>What could be the plan for next</u> week?</p> 