Dealing with conflict

1. What is conflict?
2. What causes conflict?
3. How can conflicts be resolved?
4. Is it possible to avoid conflicts?

Lead-in **1A** **Work in pairs. Look at some of the reasons for possible conflict in a team. Have you experienced any of these at your work or place of study?**



B **Tick (✔) the statement(s) you agree with and explain your choices to your partner.**

1 I avoid conflict where possible.
2 I am very bad at dealing with conflict.
3 I am usually able to remain calm during a conflict.
4 I believe conflict can sometimes be positive.

C **In small groups, think of 3–4 pieces of advice for two people trying to resolve a conflict.**

Don't use an aggressive tone of voice.

2A 6.03 **Tony and Alex are discussing a problem at work. Listen to Part 1. Which situation in Exercise 1A is the cause of the conflict?**

B **Correct the false statements. Then listen again and check.**

1 The ZX390 is faulty.
2 Tony's apprentices are responsible for cleaning the workshop.
3 The cleaner is currently on holiday.
4 Tony and Alex are worried about completing the Japanese order on time.
5 Alex understands Tony's concerns *and* those of the management team.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

C **In pairs, discuss how Alex and Tony could resolve this conflict. Compare your ideas with the rest of the group.**

D 6.04 **Listen to Part 2 and answer the questions.**

1 What practical solution does Alex suggest to help resolve the problem?
2 How does Tony react to the suggestion?
3 Are Alex and Tony able to resolve the conflict?
4 What three things does Alex say will happen next?

3A **Complete the sentences from the conversation with the words in the box.**

appreciate	both	check	come	difficult	happy	proceed	saying	see	suggestion	understand

1 I _____ it's _____ for you, Tony.
2 I _____ what you're _____, Alex, but what's the solution?
3 I totally agree. I can _____ it from _____ sides.
4 So how do we _____?
5 I think we need to _____ to a compromise.
6 My _____ is to supply your team with slip-resistant footwear.
7 Can I just _____ you're _____ with this idea before I speak to the management team?

B **Match the sentences in Exercise 3A with the correct category (a–d). One sentence falls into two categories.**

a Empathising (showing understanding)
b Asking for suggestions
c Making suggestions
d Checking someone agrees

C **Here are more phrases to resolve a conflict. Match them with the correct category in Exercise 3B (a–d).**

1 I can see how annoying it is for you.
2 Why don't you try discussing it with him first?
3 Can we come to an agreement on this?
4 It might be a good idea to think about all the details.
5 I know how you feel.
6 Do you agree?
7 What do you suggest?
8 How would you deal with the problem?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

2 **Put the dialogue in the correct order (1–11). Two lines have been done for you.**

a I can see how annoying it is for everyone, but he is our best salesman and hits his targets. Why don't you try discussing it with him? ___

b My suggestion is to give him more responsibility and more work. And limit personal internet time for everyone. Do you agree? ___

c There's another problem with Andrea. He uses the internet all day but not for work. 1

d Yes, I think he needs that. Can I just check senior management are happy with that plan? ___

e I know it's not, but he can't do whatever he wants. I think we need to come to a compromise over this – the team aren't happy about it because they are so busy. ___

f OK, I'll try it for a month. I'll also speak to Andrea this week, privately. I'll tell him I want to give him more responsibility. ___

g I totally agree. I'd like to make the internet limit an official policy. How do we proceed? ___

h I'll discuss it with him, but if I can't stop him using the internet, what do you suggest? ___

i It might be a good idea to think about the exact details first. Then explain the policy in a team meeting, and review the situation next month. ___

j Of course. Let me know as soon as you hear from them. 11

k I know how you feel about this, but it is not against the rules to use the internet at work. ___

4A **Work in pairs and read the scenario. You are going to practise resolving the conflict.**

Scenario

Several colleagues have complained about a new intern using his/her mobile phone in the office. The intern's supervisor has agreed to meet the intern and one of the colleagues to resolve the situation.

B **Decide who will be the supervisor and who will be the intern.**

Student B (Intern)

You started your internship a week ago and you are enjoying it, although you have a lot of responsibility. You are staying with a friend in his/her one-room flat, which is not very practical. You are having difficulty finding somewhere to live.

Possible arguments:

Other employees use their mobile phones in the office.
You try to take the calls outside when possible.
There's nowhere private to speak.
You are waiting for important calls about your new accommodation.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Student A (Supervisor)

You are supervising a new intern who arrived a week ago. You are very pleased with his/her work so far. However, some of the staff have complained he/she often uses his/her mobile phone in the office and it is disturbing them.

Company rules on mobile use:

Keep your phone on silent or vibrate mode.

Don't take personal calls in your own time – use your lunch break or coffee break.

In an emergency, you must take your call in the corridor or outside the building.

Arguments:

Company rules are very clear.

It creates noise in the office and disturbs your colleagues.

You are using company time for personal matters.

You can ask people to contact you by text message.

LIVEWORKSHEETS