

Resolving conflict: *The Blind Men and the Elephant*

Part 1

Listen to the song about The Blind Men and the Elephant. In this story, each of the six blind men has a different opinion about what an elephant is like.

PRO TIP: You can use the **LYRICS** to support your listening comprehension.

1. What is the conflict in this story?

2. How would you try to solve this conflict?

Part 2

Read the ending of the story of The Blind Men and the Elephant.

While they waited, the six blind men talked about the elephant.

"An elephant is like a wall," said the first blind man. "Surely we can finally agree on that."

"A wall? An elephant is a giant snake!" answered the second blind man.

"It's a spear, I tell you," insisted the third blind man.

"I'm certain it's a giant cow," said the fourth blind man.

"Magic carpet. There's no doubt," said the fifth blind man.

"Don't you see?" pleaded the sixth blind man. "Someone used a rope to trick us."

Their argument continued and their shouts grew louder and louder.

"Wall!" "Snake!" "Spear!" "Cow!" "Carpet!" "Rope!"

"Stop shouting!" called a very angry voice.

It was the rajah, awakened from his sleep by the noisy argument.

"How can each of you be so certain you are right?" asked the ruler.

The six blind men considered the question. And then, knowing the rajah to be a very wise man, they decided to say nothing at all.

"The elephant is a very large animal," said the rajah kindly. "Each man touched only one part. Perhaps if you put the parts together, you will see the truth. Now, let me finish my nap in peace."

When their friend returned to the garden with the cool water, the six men rested quietly in the shade, thinking about the rajah's advice.

"He is right," said the first blind man. "To learn the truth, we must put all the parts together. Let's discuss this on the journey home."

The first blind man put his hand on the shoulder of the young boy who would guide them home. The second blind man put a hand on his friend's shoulder, and so on until all six men were ready to travel together.

In the story, the rajah gives a "reasoned argument" in a series of statements to the six blind men. He uses evidence and reasoning to persuade them that they are all wrong.

Think about what the rajah could have told each of the blind men. For example, the rajah might have said to the first blind man: *"You say the elephant is a wall. This is because you felt something smooth and solid. But not everything that is smooth and solid is a wall."*

Copy the following table in your notebook and complete it by answering the questions.

	You say the elephant is like...	This is because...	However, this is not correct because...
The first			
The second			
The third			
The fourth			
The fifth			
The sixth			