Look at the photo below.

1. What problems can conflict in a professional environment bring?

2. Can conflict in the workplace bring any benefits?



nip in the bud (phr)	squabble (n)
underlie (v)	buy-in (n)
disengagement (n)	petty (adj)
detrimental (adj)	flaw (n)
name and shame (phr)	bottle up (phr v)

Replace the underlined parts of the sentences with the correct form of the words in the box. You might also have to add words and change their order. Then discuss in pairs if you agree with the sentences.

1. The real issues behind an office disagreement are not always clear.

_____

2. Not letting out your feelings can be harmful to your mental health. _____

3. A hostile work environment can quickly lead to an employee no longer wanting to be involved.

_____

4. A good way to deal with conflict is to focus on the situation, not the faults of the people involved.

_____

5. It's always better to suppress any conflict between employees early.

_____

6. A manager shouldn't get involved in minor arguments between their team members.

_____

7. If someone makes a dishonest mistake, they should be identified.

_____

8. A key part of any new initiative within a company is the employees' willingness to support it.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Listen to a talk in a staff training session. Put the topics in the order they are mentioned.

____Learning from our mistakes

____Creating through conflict

____Getting the problem out in the open

____Identifying bigger problems early on

____Better decision-making

____Not bottling it up

Listen again and choose the correct option.

1. What does Amanda specialise in?
a. ending work conflict early
b. seeing the positive side of conflict
c. finding the origin of a conflict

2. What can conflict be a sign of?
a. inefficient management
b. an invisible opportunity
c. a larger hidden issue

3. What happens when not all employees are heard?
a. They are less willing to participate.
b. There is less conflict.
c. People make better decisions.

4. What is the 'elephant in the room' that Amanda refers to?
a. the cause of the conflict
b. the lack of productivity
c. the increased tension

5. What is harmful to our mental health, according to Amanda?
a. having physical problems
b. having to conceal our emotions
c. being involved in a conflict

6. How can conflict help someone develop personally?
a. by being ourselves in a conflict
b. by reinforcing our beliefs
c. by learning from our mistakes

7. What does Amanda ask participants not to do in the roleplaying stage?
a. role play a conflict that actually happened
b. show the group members how upset you are
c. identify the people involved

Read the extract from the script. What does the underlined expression mean?

This means that conflict can often lead to increased productivity because once the elephant in the room is addressed, workers stop wasting time with petty gossip and dealing with the tension in the office.

Complete these other business idioms with the animals below. Then discuss the questions.

bear  bull

cat cow



bull  cat

dog lion

1.When there's a problem at work, is it better to take the_____ by the horns or ignore it to see if it goes away?

2. Have you ever let the_____ out of the bag regarding important information about your company?

3. Have you ever made a _____'s dinner out of an important project because of interpersonal problems?

4. Has your manager ever made a decision that set the _____ among the pigeons?

5. What should an investor do when it's a _____ market (i.e., when share prices are falling)? And in a market, when the opposite happens?

6. Which product or service is your company's cash _____?

7. Who gets the _____'s share of your company's profits?







LIVEWORKSHEETS

Complete the extract from the script with one word in each gap. Then listen again and check.

Thanks, Jake. I believe most 1_____ you know me already, but for 2_____ who don't, I have made conflict in the workplace my area of expertise and am concluding a PhD on it, so I feel I have 3_____ to say about it. Most talks about conflict revolve 4_____ identifying its source and nipping it in the 5_____ . My research, however, is mostly about another side of conflict: its benefits. We don't often hear conflict and benefit in the 6_____ breath, but there are many possible upsides to conflict, as 7_____ as well managed. So in a minute, we're going to be doing a bit of role-playing, but first I want to give you six major advantages of having the right type of conflict in the office.

First of all, conflict often raises a red 8_____ about a much more serious problem in the work environment. A little squabble 9_____ co-workers can often be just the visible part, the 10 _____of the iceberg, of a larger underlying problem developing, and that conflict allows the manager to identify that problem early and deal 11_____ it.

The second point I want to make is that an office 12_____ people feel encouraged to speak their mind, even if that may 13_____ to some degree of conflict, is certainly one better 14_____ to make important decisions. All too often there are one or two dominant voices in the office, leaving little space 15_____ others to participate. This leads to poor decisions, 16_____ buy-in to new initiatives and general disengagement.



1. Is conflict in the workplace predominantly positive or negative? Why?

2. What is the best way to deal with conflict?

3. What type of co-worker is most detrimental to a work environment?

4. In which cases is it better to ignore a provocation?

5. Would you consider changing jobs solely due to a bad work atmosphere?

Think of an example of conflict in the workplace that you have experienced. Did it result in any of the benefits described in the talk (below)?

1. Identifying bigger problems early on

2. Better decision-making

3. Increased innovation

4. Getting the problem out in the open

5. Not bottling it up

6. Learning from our mistakes

LIVEWORKSHEETS