

Game Theory for Elementary School

BRAVE games, including JAMs, are a Game Theory application called “repeated games” that explore the role trust plays in conflict and cooperation.

With JAMs, students use skilled reading to layer viewpoints, detect bias, diagnose, then transform working dilemmas. Groups of 4 can use these 30-minute activities as prequels or sequels to BRAVE board game learning, or as stand-alone fun.

Each booklet in this series presents a unique schema designed to support students as they play through its correlating JAM.

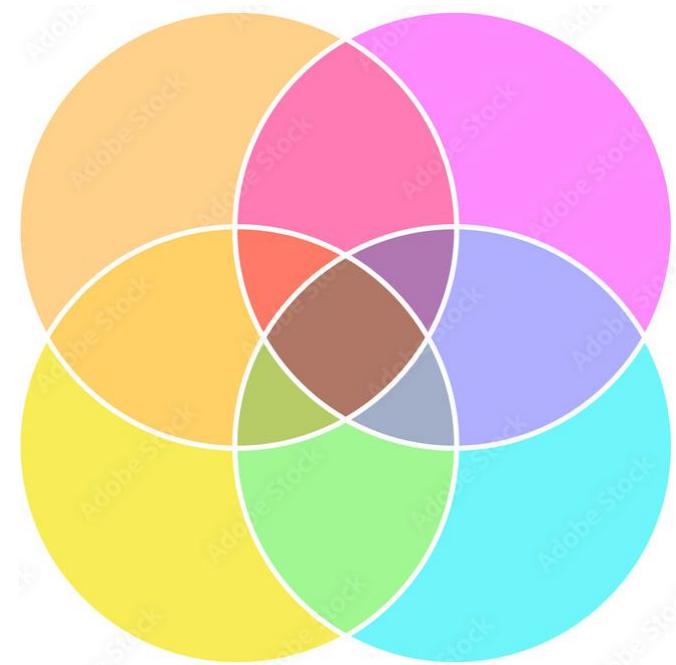
Explore one schema, or try them all:

- Game Theory**
- context
- perspective
- change
- conflict
- rights
- cooperation
- connection
- trust
- creativity

Taken together, students build tools needed to navigate any social studies class with discerning minds.



Conflict



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For parents & teachers: Welcome!

BRAVE games, including JAMs, are consistent with Science of Reading instructional guidelines. Tightly-scoped, this inquiry-led method puts knowledge in the foreground to cut across a range of K4-5 standards, meeting all learners where they are to get everyone in the game!

We take learning seriously. And for fun.

JAMs break from typical programming insofar as they're consistent with cognitive science. First, human connection sparks intrinsic motivation, incentivizing skilled reading. The beauty of this method is that players *want* to grapple with embedded vocabulary, engage in healthy discussion, and solve group problems. It's fun. This means students embrace the thrill of collaborating, reasoning with facts, sequencing, and testing truths.

Writing extensions provide explicit instructions to support students as they process, integrate, and store new knowledge. This last step is key because, according to Cognitive Load Theory, it effectively clears one's working memory, laying a foundation of knowledge to excel in equivalent classes at higher grades.

Messy? R&D revealed students thrive with this inquiry-led approach because it's intriguing. At that rate, they're positioned to soar beyond our wildest dreams.

VOCABULARY

anonymous unknown name; whose name is withheld

conflict to come into collision or disagreement; be contradictory, at variance, or in opposition; clash

dilemma a situation requiring a choice between equally undesirable alternatives

discern catch sight of; recognize and understand; detect; determine; distinguish; differentiate; perceive

empathy understanding what/why others are thinking

inevitable sure to occur, happen, or come

interdependent depending on each other

meta-cognition watching one-self think; higher-order thinking that enables understanding, analysis, and control of one's cognitive processes esp. when learning

redress setting right of what is wrong; amend, atone; remedy; restore; restitution; rectify

transcend to outdo or exceed in excellence, elevation, extent, degree; surpass; rise above;

strategy a plan of action

symptom sign of illness or problem; evidence; indication; expression; warning

4. SUMMARY

Like change, conflict is a natural part of life. Engaging in conflict, however, is learned. The advantages of learning how to manage conflict means deepening our personal well-being, relationships, communities and democracy.

Managing conflict starts with learning how to control your body when you're feeling discomfort. Taking deep breaths supports the flow of oxygen into your system, helping you think clearly. Still, you might need to temporarily walk away from a situation before you engage to avoid increasing conflict. Either way, **metacognition**, examining your perspective by separating feelings from thoughts, will provide clarity. Just remember, humans can't control what emotions rise; no shame there! We can, however, learn how to read emotions. This process, combined with putting the conflict into context, helps us to locate the source of the conflict and map symptoms. If so, we can respond wisely.

If you're still unable to find the root cause of the conflict, don't worry. Stay calm. Stay connected. Conflict is very difficult to manage. You shouldn't trust everyone, but learning how to speak your truth safely, and in a way that others can hear you will help your search for allies, persons who will recognize your humanity in search of a solution.

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VOCABULARY

Conflict is inevitable.

How we choose to engage in conflict is often our choice.

What are you waiting for?! Dig in!

1. CONFLICT: AN OPPORTUNITY

Conflict, a disagreement or collision, is natural and **inevitable**; it's going to happen. Therefore, why not learn how to engage wisely? In truth, everyone is unique and has their own perspective, their own way of seeing the world, of thinking and being in the world. Problems arise when we don't like how different people's choices affect our lives. Plus, we know from JAM 4 that when change happens too fast, or too slow, or without consent, we're bound to feel upset, or conflicted.

It is important to understand that conflicts are a **symptom**, evidence of a problem that's already gone wrong. This presents us with a gift: a chance to reveal the conflict's root causes and solutions.

1. **WHY?** Conflict serves as an invitation that brings us "to the table" to **dialogue**; a humanizing task.
2. **WHAT?** Problem solving rests on **building context**, background knowledge that identifies stakeholders' viewpoints, needs, goals, and dreams.
3. **HOW?** Once we've put conflict into its full context, and in consideration of our own perspective, we're ready to **redress** the situation by co-creating potential plans to accomplish stated goals. *It's as easy as 1,2,3*

DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONFLICT

GUIDING QUESTIONS CLASS DISCUSSION

Facing conflict that has less obvious sources might feel like walking into a hall of mirrors. *It's tricky.* Learning how to **discern**, or sort everyone's intentions, actions, needs & goals is an **ART**.

1. **RE-TELL** Name two categories we could use to organize different kinds of conflict.
2. **REVIEW** What's the difference between direct and indirect conflict? Which one is easier to identify? Why?
3. **REASON** What's harder: learning how to work through conflict honestly with a frenemy OR resorting to conflict with the silent treatment, cruelty or violence? Explain.

3. DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONFLICTS



Facing conflict can be difficult for many reasons, often because conflict appears in many forms. For example, someone might argue that what you see as a problem seems normal to them. Except humans are **interdependent**, we are tied to each other in millions of ways. Therefore, if someone senses a problem, it's crucial others are willing to consider the facts. We'll organize facts into two categories:

DIRECT CONFLICT is somewhat easier to identify. It includes physical acts of violence, including war or battles in which one or more sides vie for an upper hand. In this case, a person may be trying to address a problem, or they're trying to prevent someone from doing so.

INDIRECT CONFLICT is more challenging to diagnose because it harms or benefits specific people in hidden ways. For instance, bullying, teasing, or excluding someone can be dangerous since the person(s) causing damage often does so **anonymously**, as an unknown player. That, or their actions are not aligned with their stated goals, making their intentions hard to name and therefore manage. This individual or group might act intentionally or unintentionally. If their behavior is intentional, they may think others earned their suffering, or that others' suffering makes them stronger. If unintentional, they might not realize their actions are harmful, or they don't want to reveal their motivations.

CONFFLICT: AN OPPORTUNITY

GUIDING QUESTIONS CLASS DISCUSSION

1. **RE-TELL** According to the reading, conflict is a gift that offers stakeholders three opportunities. List them.
2. **REVIEW** Conflict sounds awesome! In truth, conflict is very difficult. Awkward. Brutal. Challenging. Explain how the three-step process mentioned above could deepen relationships and support community building.
3. **REASON** If conflict is a symptom of a problem that's already gone wrong, infer why the author believes you should separate emotions from thoughts before you begin working through conflict with a frenemy or perceived enemy.

2. REACT OR RESPOND? CONFLICT DONE WELL

Conflict is inevitable, however, you may choose how you respond. But honestly, it's not as easy as 1,2,3. That's why we need a **strategy**, plan of action, to do it well.

For example, what happens inside your body when you realize you're heading toward conflict? Does your breath quicken? Do your palms sweat? Do you feel bees buzzing in your brain, preventing you from thinking clearly? Yo! *This is normal!* Your brain is designed to alert you ahead of danger. Think, "stranger danger." Other times, you'd be wise to slow down, take a few deep breaths, then try to form an intelligent response by negotiating your way out of sticky situation. *But only if the person in question is trustworthy.* Even so, you may need to walk away from conflict until you know you're thinking clearly.

Learning how to respond to conflict intelligently can help deepen relationships since healthy communication enhances honesty, context, clarity, and therefore trust.

Strategies for responding require a universal set of tools you probably already have, including deep breathing, taking a temporary break from an intense situation, organizing feelings as opposed to thoughts, organizing thoughts, respectful dialogue. If so, these strategies will help you transform conflict into a working resolution.

REACT OR RESPOND: CONFLICT DONE WELL GUIDING QUESTIONS CLASS DISCUSSION

1. **RE-TELL** Conflict is inevitable. And often it's frightening, very frightening. But it need not be. List some strategies to calm your body when your brain realizes it's heading into a conflict.
2. **REVIEW** Transforming conflict starts with believing you can co-create a suitable outcome for all stakeholders. What are signs you can trust adults to work through conflict? What are signs you can trust friends to work through conflict?
3. **REASON** Consider how the process of working through conflict might help deepen relationships.