In a paragraph of not more than 100 words, sum up what the writer says about the causes of conflict.

The causes of conflict

The evidence taken from the observation of the behavior of apes and children suggests that there are three clearly separable groups of simple causes for the outbreak of fighting and the exhibition of aggressiveness by individuals.

One of the most common causes of fighting among both children and apes was over the *possession* of external objects. The disputed ownership of any desired object - food, clothes, toys, females, and the affection of others - was sufficient ground for an appeal to force. On Monkey Hill disputes over females were responsible for the death of thirty out of thirty-three females. Two points are of particular interest to notice about these fights for possession.

In the first place they are often carried to such an extreme that they end in the complete destruction of the objects of common desire. Toys are torn to pieces. Females are literally torn limb from limb. So overriding is the aggression once it has begun that it not only overflows all reasonable boundaries of selfishness but utterly destroys the object for which the struggle began and even the self for whose advantage the struggle was undertaken.

In the second place it is observable, at least in children, that the object for whose possesion aggression is started may sometimes be desired by one person only or merely because it is desired by someone else. There were many cases observed by Dr Isaacs where toys and other objects which had been discarded as useless were violently defended by their owners when they became the object of some other child’s desire. The grounds of possessiveness may, therefore, be irrational in the sense that they are derived from inconsistent judgments of value. Whether sensible or irrational, contests over possession are commonly the occasion for the most ruthless use of force among children and apes.

One of the commonest kinds of object arousing possessive desire is the notice, good will, affection, and service of other members of the group. Among children one of the commonest causes of quarrelling was ‘jealousy’ - the desire for the exclusive possession of the interest and affection of someone else, particularly the adults in charge of the children. This form of behaviour is sometimes classified as a separate cause of conflict under the name of ‘rivalry’ or ‘jealousy’. But, in point of fact, it seems to us that it is only one variety of possessiveness. The object of desire is not a material object - that is the only difference. The object is the interest and affection of other persons. What is wanted, however, is the exclusive right to that interest and affection - a property in emotions instead of in things. As subjective emotions and as causes of conflict, jealousy and rivalry are fundamentally similar to the desire for the uninterrupted possession of toys or food. Indeed, very often the persons, property which is desired, are the sources of toys and food.

Possessiveness is, then, in all its forms a common cause of fighting. If we are to look behind the mere facts of behaviour for an explanation of this phenomenon, a teleological cause is not far to seek. The exclusive right to objects of desire is a clear and simple advantage to the possessor obit. It carries with it the certainty and continuity of satisfaction. Where there is only one claimant to a good, frustration and the possibility floss is reduced to a minimum. It is, therefore, obvious that, if the ends of the self are the only recognized ends, the whole powers of the agent, including the fullest use of his available force, will be used to establish and defend exclusive rights to possession.

Another cause of aggression closely allied to possessiveness is the tendency for children and apes greatly to resent the intrusion of a stranger into their group. A new child in the class may be laughed at, isolated, and disliked and even set upon and pinched and bullied. A new monkey may be poked and bitten to death. It is interesting to note that it is only strangeness within a similarity of species that is resented. Monkeys do not mind being joined by a goat or a rat. Children do not object when animals are introduced to the group. Indeed, such novelties are often welcomed. But when monkeys meet a new monkey or children a strange child, aggression often occurs. This suggests strongly that the reason for the aggression is fundamentally possessiveness. The competition of the newcomers is feared. The present members of the group feel that there will be more rivals for the food or the attention of the adults.

Finally, another common source of fighting among children is a failure or frustration in their own activity. A child will be prevented either by natural causes such as bad weather or illness or by the opposition of some adult from doing something he wishes to do at a given moment - sail his boat or ride the bicycle. The child may also frustrate itself by failing, through lack of skill or strength, to complete successfully some desired activity. Such a child will then in the ordinary sense become ’naughty.’ He will be in a bad or surly temper. And, what is of interest from our point of view, the child will indulge in aggression - attacking and fighting other children or adults. Sometimes the object of aggression will simply be the cause of frustration, a straightforward reaction. The child will kick or hit the nurse who forbids the sailing of his boat. But sometimes - indeed, frequently - the person or thing that suffers the aggression is quite irrelevant and innocent of offence. The angry child will stamp the ground or box the ears of another child when neither the ground nor the child attacked is even remotely connected with the irritation or frustration.

Of course, this kind of behaviour is so common that everyone feels it to be obvious and to constitute no serious scientific problem. That a small boy should pull his sister’s hair because it is raining does not appear to the ordinary unreflecting person to be an occasion for solemn scientific inquiry. He is, as we should all say, ‘in a bad temper.’ Yet it is not, in fact, really obvious either why revenge should be taken on entirely innocent objects, since no good to the aggressor can come of it, or why children being miserable should seek to make others miserable also. It is just a fact of human behaviour that cannot really be deduced from any general principle of reason. But it is, as we shall see, of very great importance for our purpose. It shows how it is possible, at the simplest and most primitive level, for aggression and fighting to spring from an entirely irrelevant and partially hidden cause. Fighting to possess a desired object is straightforward and rational, however disastrous its consequences, compared with fighting that occurs because, in a different and unrelated activity, some frustration has barred the road to pleasure. The importance of this possibility for an understanding of group conflict must already be obvious.

(From *Personal Aggressiveness and War* by E. F. M. Durbin and John Bowlby)

Suggested answer:

The author found three main causes of fighting among apes and children. The first was the desire for possession: the resulting fighting could lead to the destruction of the toy or animal desired. Among children, a possession might be valued, and fought for, only when another child wanted it. Jealousy is a form of possessiveness. A second cause was aggression against a strange child or animal, but not against a member of another species. And finally, frustration can lead to aggression against a totally innocent object or person; the author sees this as an important cause of conflict.