

Task sheets for theme group: Violence

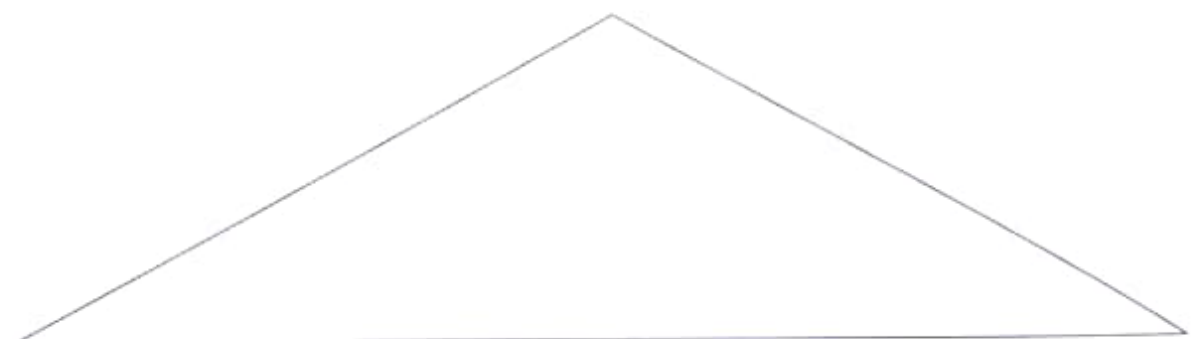


1. Getting started: Violence starts with thoughts

"Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit."

Martin Luther King Jr.

- a. In your group, explain the meaning of this quote. Describe the development of violent conflicts you know from your own experience, from the news or from literature and films.
- b. Make a graph or chart which shows how a conflict ending in death might develop. You can use the pyramid and the phrases given. Work on your own, then compare the different versions within your group.



intimidating – armed assault – pushing physically – attacking verbally – teasing / ridiculing sb's appearance or behavior – threatening – committing murder / suicide – standing in sb's way – ignoring and excluding sb – spreading rumours – physical assaults – harassment by groups – shoot out

2. Watching the movie: Escalating violence

- a. While watching, note down scenes that lead directly to or show increased violence. Use your results from task 1 to comment on the level of violence that is reached in each scene. Compare findings in the group.

Characters involved	Violent behavior	Your comment

- b. Discuss what Walt could have done to prevent the conflict from escalating.

3. Watching closely: Walt as a hero of violence

- a. Re-watch the first part of chapter 7 (DVD: 00:23:20 – 00:25:46/YouTube: *Gran Torino* (clip 5 – part 1) “Get off my lawn”). Analyze the film techniques used to create atmosphere. Compare your findings in your group (word bank below!). Discuss other techniques that could have been used to create suspense.

Action	Atmosphere	Film techniques (camera movements, lighting, sounds/music)
The Hmong gang show up at the Van Lor's house and verbally put pressure on Thao to join their gang.		
Gang members violently force Thao to get into their car.		
Walt shows up and chases the intruders away, threatening them verbally and with his rifle.		

Word bank: tense, aggressive, turbulent, playful, gloomy (dark), cold, hostile, terrifying, threatening, merciless, alarming, chaotic, panicky, nervous, worried, lively, ambivalent, frantic, frightening, out of control

- b. In your group discuss the validity of the following statements (at least two).

“The ‘Get-off-my-lawn’ scene ...

- ... is an urban version of a typical western.”
- ... illustrates the US American belief in self-reliance and self-defense.”
- ... turns Walt Kowalski into a hero of violence for the neighborhood.”
- ... is one of the funniest scenes in the movie.”
- ... is an example for the usefulness of the “Castle Law”, which permits a homeowner to use deadly force to defend himself or herself against an intruder.

4. Exploring further: Representation of violence in films

Films are often mirrors of the culture that produces them. Discuss if and why *Gran Torino* can be seen as an expression of American concepts, beliefs and values – especially as related to the topic of violence.

Discuss what a German version of *Gran Torino* might look like.