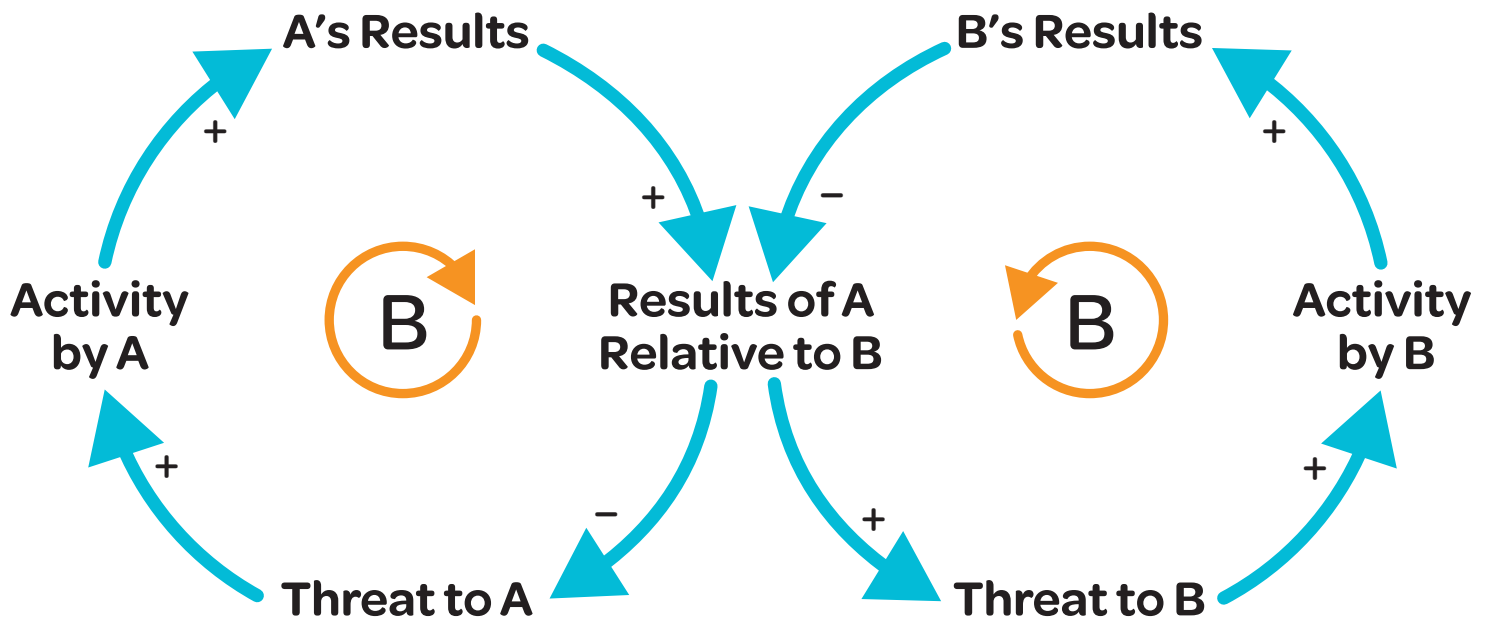


## Escalation

*When two competing parties feel threatened by one another and choose actions that result in escalating competitive or aggressive behavior*



### Description

In an escalation scenario, there are two competing parties of seemingly equal power. Because of perceived or actual threat, each of the parties take actions to generate a more powerful position. Actions escalate over time resulting in the motivation to gain a more powerful position.

### Examples

- An arms race, e.g. the Cold War
- Conflict between two students or between a student and a teacher

### Ways out

The best way out is to avoid getting into this dynamic altogether. However, once in an escalation scenario, choose to withhold action that might generate further perceived threat. Or, facilitate a mutual agreement to cease actions. Dialogue is a tool to help reach a mutual agreement. If neither party ceases, then eventually one party or both will certainly lose out because the reinforcing dynamic cannot go on forever.

### As a tool for prevention

The escalation archetype is a valuable tool to use when examining potential competitive relationships between two entities. It is important to examine the perspective of the other party in order to predict reactions to proposed actions.

### Questions to ask

- What is the nature of the relationship between the two parties?
- What is the potential that a party will perceive actions as threatening?
- How might delays contribute to misunderstanding about a party's intentions?
- What are the deep-rooted assumptions that serve as the foundation for decisions that lead to actions?

