

**Segment:** Moving From Positions to Interests

**Lesson Title:** Lesson 1: Common Ground

**Grade Band:** 6-12

**Approximate Time to Complete:** 45 minutes plus 25 minute extension

**Objectives:** Students will be able to identify the idea of “common ground” in conflicts.

**Materials/Set up:**

- Common Ground Venn Diagram Worksheet (one per student)\*
- Common Ground Conflict Scenarios (one per student)
- Common Ground Conflict Scenarios (Educator’s Resource)

\*The lesson extension requires an additional copy of the Common Ground Venn Diagram per student. Alternatively, use the interactive tool – [ReadWriteThink Venn Diagram](#) instead of the Worksheet.

**Resources:**

- Online Video Clip - [James Baker: The Man Who Made Washington Work: The Diplomat](#) (Watch 0:00-7:03)

**Overview**

Reaching agreement in a dispute or in a negotiation requires one or both parties to identify areas where their interests overlap and, within a certain range, both parties can accept a solution. Determining these areas of “common ground” utilizes the skills of active listening, effective communication, and problem identification offered in earlier lessons. Students will read and discuss a dispute. The exercise includes independent work and group discussion, with an optional homework activity.

**Instructional Plan**

1. Write the words “Common Ground” where the class can see them.
2. In a large group discussion, ask, “What does it mean to have common ground?”
3. Engage in a class discussion about the meaning of the term, eliciting key points.

4. Common ground is an area where the interests and needs of two or more parties in a dispute or negotiation overlap. Potential areas of agreement exist where shared interests or shared needs overlap.

To counter-act our natural thought process in conflict and find areas of common ground, people need to begin to listen to understand instead of listening to reply or react. Refer back to Segment 4 Lesson 1: Listening and Information Gathering and Segment 5 Lesson 1: The Questioning Game. Building upon the listening and questioning skills of earlier lessons, common ground can be identified when people are truly listening and ask open ended questions to get more information.

5. Ask, "In a dispute how can we learn our areas of common ground?" Acknowledge, through discussion, that individuals in a dispute do not always state explicitly where they might agree with the other party. People in conflict are often self-absorbed. This limits the ability to truly hear the other person even if the other person has the same needs and interests. Information provided by the other person is discredited, simply because the idea came from the other person (reactionary devaluation).
6. Distribute one copy of the "Common Ground Venn Diagram" graphic organizer to each student.
7. Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students. Inform the class that each group will be assigned a story to read that describes a conflict between two people.
8. Distribute the Common Ground Conflict Stories to each student. Assign half of the groups the story of Bob and Ray and the other half of the groups the story of Dorothy and Samir.
9. Ask students to label the circles on the Common Ground Venn Diagram with the names from their story (The group with Bob and Ray will label one circle "Bob" and the other circle "Ray". The groups with Dorothy and Samir will label one circle with "Dorothy" and the other circle with "Samir")
10. Ask students read their assigned story they should record what is important to each of the individuals (Bob/Ray or Dorothy/Samir) in the appropriate circles. If there is something important to both of them, that idea should be written in the overlapping area.
11. Provide a about 8-10minutes for the groups to complete their Common Ground Venn Diagram.

12. Addressing each story separately, read the story aloud and review the answers provided by the class. Offer the following questions to prompt the discussion, as necessary:
- a) “What things are important to both people? What will happen if they can’t resolve their conflict? How important do you think it is to each of them to be on the team (or to complete the project)?”
  - b) Engage in a brainstorm for possible solutions for the parties in one of the common ground scenarios. Challenge the class come up with at least 10 different strategies for how they could work together.
13. Play the online clip to show James Baker’s efforts during the Bush administration to obtain peaceful resolutions to the reunification of Germany. Online Video Clip - [James Baker: The Man Who Made Washington Work: The Diplomat](#) (Watch 0:00-7:03). Note how the same approach to finding common ground applies to countries, as to people.

## Common Ground Conflict Stories

### Bob and Ray

Bob and Ray have lived in the same neighborhood for several years, but they don't get along. In school and in the neighborhood they have been rivals, especially when it comes to sports. They would often get into shouting matches, and sometimes shoving matches, just to "show each other up" in pick-up games around the neighborhood and at school. The truth is, they are both pretty good athletes and they each love sports. Through middle school they had never been on the same teams before, but now they are both on the high school soccer team. They do not work well together, on or off the field, and it is affecting the team. The coach has told them that if they don't get things straight between the two of them, they are both off the team.

### Dorothy and Samir

Dorothy and Samir are lab partners in chemistry class. They have been classmates for a few years, but would not describe themselves as friends (they don't hang out outside of chemistry). The teacher has assigned lab work that involves two days of in-class lab work and about one hour of outside of class work. Dorothy and Samir both participated equally on the assignment during class. For two days Dorothy has tried to set up a time to complete the remaining outside of class work on the assignment. Dorothy has texted Samir, called, and tried to talk during school. Samir has not responded. Frustrated, Dorothy posts on Instagram a photo of herself and her desk and an empty chair, "Just sitting around because my lazy lab partner will not show up to finish the assignment."

## Common Ground Conflict Stories: Educator's Resource

### Bob and Ray

Bob and Ray have lived in the same neighborhood for several years, but they don't get along. In school and in the neighborhood they have been rivals, especially when it comes to sports. They would often get into shouting matches, and sometimes shoving matches, just to "show each other up" in pick-up games around the neighborhood and at school. The truth is, they are both pretty good athletes and they each love sports. Through middle school they had never been on the same teams before, but now they are both on the high school soccer team. They do not work well together, on or off the field, and it is affecting the team. The coach has told them that if they don't get things straight between the two of them, they are both off the team.

Bob: play better than Ray

Ray: play better than Bob

Both: love sports, not get in trouble, coach happy with them, play in the games, stay on the team

### Dorothy and Samir

Dorothy and Samir are lab partners in chemistry class. They have been classmates for a few years, but would not describe themselves as friends (they don't hang out outside of chemistry). The teacher has assigned lab work that involves two days of in-class lab work and about one hour of outside of class work. Dorothy and Samir both participated equally on the assignment during class. For two days Dorothy has tried to set up a time to complete the remaining outside of class work on the assignment. Dorothy has texted Samir, called, and tried to talk during school. Samir has not responded. Frustrated, Dorothy posts on Instagram a photo of herself and her desk and an empty chair, "Just sitting around because my lazy lab partner will not show up to finish the assignment."

Dorothy: getting Samir to respond to her

Samir: reputation

Both: completing the assignment, getting a good grade, being able to work together again

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## CONFLICT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

### Instructions

Find an article (on the internet, in a newspaper, or magazine), photograph, or cartoon which describes or depicts a conflict. Use the article, photograph, or cartoon to answer the questions below. If obtained from a source other than the internet, then copy or print the article, photograph, or cartoon and attach it to this Worksheet. If obtained from the internet, then include the URL below.

### What Is The Conflict About?

### What Type Of Conflict Is It? (check one)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intrapersonal: conflict within an individual         | <input type="checkbox"/> Interpersonal: conflict between two or more individuals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intergroup: conflict between organizations or groups | <input type="checkbox"/> International: conflict between nations or countries    |

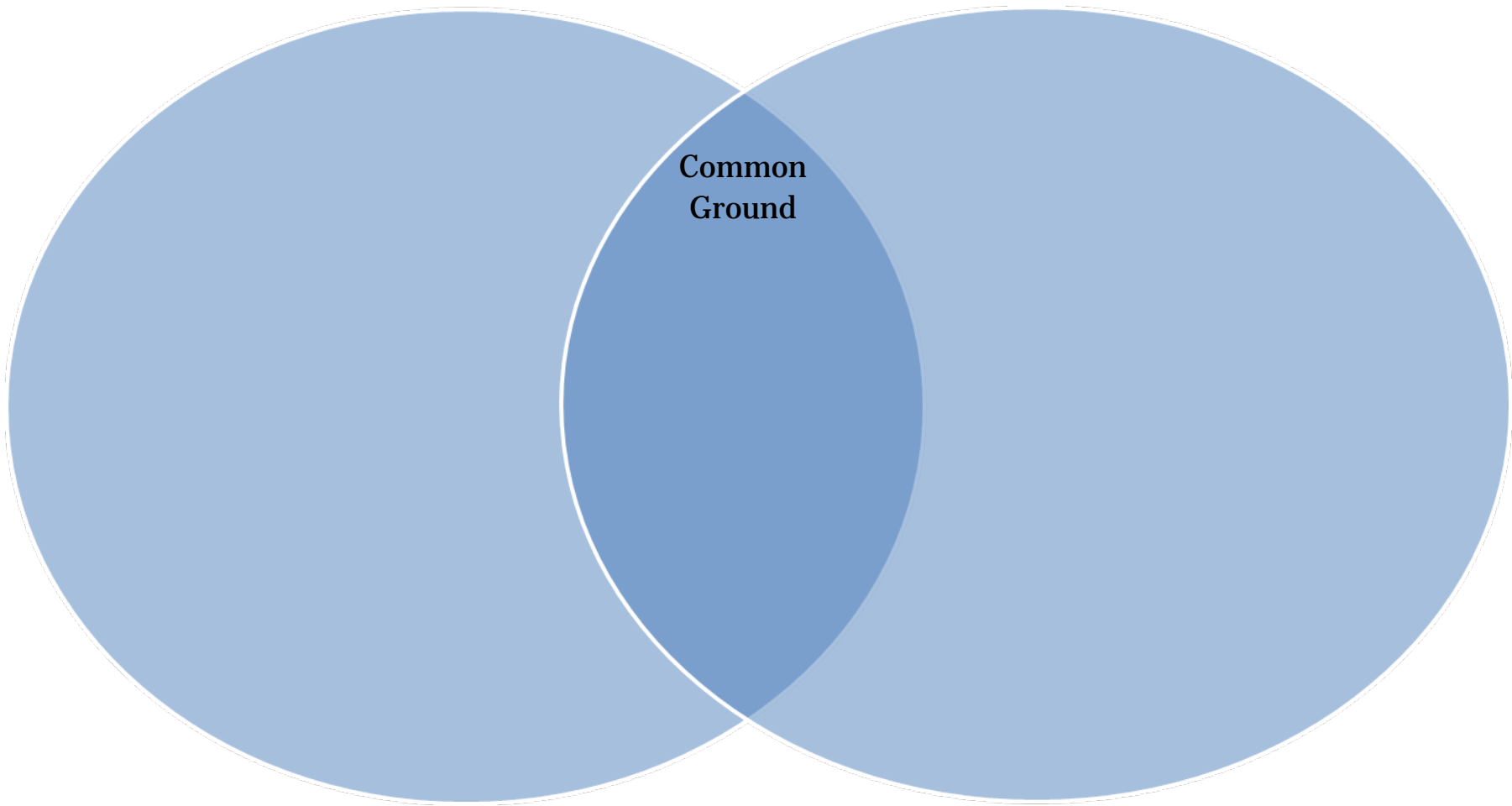
### Who Is Involved In This Conflict?

### What Does Each Of The Parties In The Conflict Want?

### What Do You Think Will Happen?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



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