

Escalation

TEACHER'S PREP:

Research the events that took place between the Crown and the Colonists that led to the Revolutionary War. There are many excellent resources available on the Internet, including “Continental Congress and Constitutional Convention, Timeline, 1764-1775.” (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/bdsds/timeline.html>) If you do not have access to a computer, or if this website can't be found, use an American history textbook.

During the discussion, one factor that may arise is perception. Perception—the way we see things—is a critical factor. However, it will be dealt with in depth in the next section. Therefore, while you may add it to the list of factors, don't dwell on it as a primary cause.

CONCEPTUAL BASE:

If students understand how words, actions, and body language can escalate conflict, they can learn to monitor their own behavior to avoid escalating situations into conflicts.

OBJECTIVES:

Students will recall the role of emotions in a conflict.

Students will identify the words, actions and body language that can escalate a conflict.

Students will recognize cause and effect relationships.

Students will identify a sequence of historical events that show escalation.

Students will propose steps that could have been taken to de-escalate the problem.

TIME:

Two periods

INTRODUCTION:

“You now know that there are three elements in each conflict. The intensity of your emotions, how strongly you believe in an issue, and the importance of the relationship all influence your choices. You can be willing to solve a problem (work for the common good) or choose to react in a way that may escalate the conflict and possibly lead to a violent outcome.

“Escalation is the process of intensifying a conflict, that is, making the conflict worse. To see what escalation looks like, let's go back to the conflict between the Colonists and the Crown. We'll look at some of the events that led to the Revolutionary War and evaluate the results.”

ACTIVITY:

1. Determine the relationship and the fundamental issues between the Colonists and the Crown and how each side felt.

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2. Have students refer to page S-15 and have them look over the Crown's and the Colonists' actions that escalated their conflict to war. Discuss each briefly.
3. Have students form pairs.
4. Have each pair use an American history textbook or the Internet to research in depth one of the acts by the British. Ask them to note what each act involved, the reaction of the Colonists, and the subsequent reaction of the Crown. Have them record their findings in the space provided on page S-16.
5. Explain to students the concept of "cause and effect." Give examples. (Cause and effect are not written in stone. What one side considers an effect or response the other side may see as a cause. When an action or incident occurs, we make choices about our reaction. There is always an effect, but it may or may not escalate a conflict.)
6. As a class, use the timeline to create on chart paper a large cause-and-effect chart that shows the process of the escalation between the Crown and the Colonists. Have students use the cause-and-effect chart on page S-16 as an example.

DISCUSSION:

"What factors led to the escalation?"

"What role did the issue, relationship, and emotions have on the escalation?"

"How did feelings of fear and pride affect the decisions and actions of each side?"

"Why does one effect tend to become the next cause?" (For each action, there is a reaction. The reaction becomes the cause for the next action.)

"What could each side have done to de-escalate the conflict?"

"What did each side want?"

"What would each side give?"

"At what point, if any, could either the Colonists or the Crown have modified their position to avoid the war?" (At any point either side **could have** modified their actions, reactions, and demands. However, given the changing circumstance for each side, the relationship, and the needs of the people involved, we may find it hard to imagine that anything could have realistically changed the outcome to avoid war.)

CLOSURE:

"Once we recognize the behaviors that typically escalate conflict, we can help prevent or at least minimize it in our own conflicts. We'll look at this topic more closely in our next lesson."

JOURNAL:

A time I saw a conflict escalate was... The outcome might have been better if they had...

Words, actions, or body language that I often notice escalating conflicts are....

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LESSON TRANSFER:

When you notice conflicts beginning between students, encourage them to consider the chain of cause and effect. Help them recognize behaviors which may escalate or de-escalate the incident. Remind them of the choices and help them generate peaceful alternatives.

EXTENSION:

Observe the words, actions and body language of political leaders as they make speeches or interact with each other. Discuss how these may trigger and escalate international conflicts as they do in personal conflicts. What are some types of interventions that can be done on an international level to prevent escalation and war?

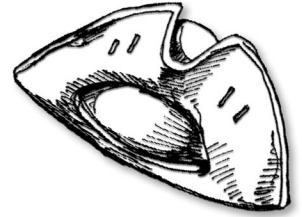
Use newspapers or television shows to identify escalating factors. Encourage students to generate de-escalating actions.

Have cooperative learning groups chart the sequence of events and the cause and effect of escalation and de-escalation in any or all of these conflicts:

1. Civil War
2. Cuban Missile Crisis
3. Vietnam War
4. Gulf War
5. Any current national or international conflict



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BRITISH ACTS

COLONIST ACTS

1764:

- 👑 Sugar Act
- 👑 Currency Act

1765:

- 👑 Quartering Act
- 👑 Stamp Act

1766:

- 👑 Declaratory Act

1767:

- 👑 Townshend Act

1770:

- 👑 Townshend Acts cut back
- 👑 Boston Massacre

1773:

- 👑 Tea Act

1774:

- 👑 Coercive Acts
- 👑 Quartering Act

1775:

- 👑 New England Restraining Act
- 👑 Lexington and Concord
- 👑 Bunker Hill

1764:

- 🌀 Protest
- 🌀 Nonimportation

1765:

- 🌀 Organized protest

1766:

- 🌀 Resistance to Quartering Act in New York

1767:

- 🌀 Nonimportation

1768:

- 🌀 Massachusetts Circular Letter (*Samuel Adams*)

1769:

- 🌀 Virginia's Resolutions

1770:

- 🌀 An end to nonimportation
- 🌀 Conflict between citizens, British troops in NY

1772:

- 🌀 Attack on the "Gaspee"
- 🌀 Committees of Correspondence

- 🌀 Boston Tea Party

- 🌀 First Continental Congress
- 🌀 Minute Men organized in Massachusetts

1775:

- 🌀 Second Continental Congress
- 🌀 George Washington named Commander-in-Chief
- 🌀 Olive Branch Petition
- 🌀 Congress Creates Treaties with Indians
- 🌀 Congress Searches for Foreign Aid