

Social Studies

Community in Crisis: An Exercise in Conflict Resolution

Objectives/Standards met:

Washington	California	Oregon
<p style="text-align: center;">History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand historical time, chronology, and causation. • Analyze how historical conditions shape ideas and how ideas change over time. <p style="text-align: center;">Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe patterns human make on places regions. • Identify and examine people’s interaction with and impact on the environment. • Analyze how the environment and environmental changes affect people. • Examine cultural characteristics, transmission, diffusion and interaction. • Comprehend key economic concepts and economic systems. 	<p style="text-align: center;">6th Grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students describe what is known through archaeological studies of the early physical and cultural development of humankind from Paleolithic era to the agricultural revolution. <p style="text-align: center;">7th Grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students analyze the historical developments of the Scientific Revolution and its lasting effect on religious, political and cultural institutions. • Students analyze political and economic change in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries (Age of Exploration, the Enlightenment, and the Age of Reason). <p style="text-align: center;">8th Grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students understand the foundation of the American political system and the ways in which citizens participate in it. 	<p style="text-align: center;">8th Grade Benchmark</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe personal, political, and economic rights of citizens in the United States. • Describe the participatory responsibilities if citizens in the community and in the political process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the consequences of humans changing the physical environment and how human changes in one place affect other places. • Understand how differing points of view, self-interests, and global distribution of natural resources play a role in conflict over territory. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the geographic results of resource use and management programs and policies. • Understand that resources are limited. • Define and clarify an issue so that its dimensions are well understood.

(continued)

Objectives (continued):

Washington	California	Oregon
<p data-bbox="363 331 456 363" style="text-align: center;">Civics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="245 394 574 527">• Understand individual rights and their accompanying responsibilities. <li data-bbox="245 562 565 667">• Explain how citizen participation influences public policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="672 331 1016 541">• Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the changes they faced, with emphasis on the Northeast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1057 338 1446 457">• Explain various perspectives on an event or issue and the reasoning behind them. <li data-bbox="1089 489 1442 583">• Identify, analyze, and select a course of action to resolve the issue.

Materials:

- Sea otter background information articles from reading section
- Public meeting announcement from *The Daily News*
- Activity worksheets:
 1. Working It Out
 2. Resolving Conflict, Finding Balance
 3. The Stakeholders
 4. Compromises and Creative Solutions
 5. Roundtable
 6. Revised Group Solution to the Reintroduction Proposal
 7. Roundtable Proposal
 8. Conflict Resolution: What Makes It Happen?
- Eight Perspective Cards
- Paper and pencil

Additional Resources:

Books found in the Sea Otter Trunk:

- Sea Otters* by Glenn VanBlaricom
- Sea Otters* by Peter Murray
- Saving Sea Otters: Stories of Survival* by Elin Kelsey
- Sea Otters* Zoobook
- Sea Otters* by Marianne Riedman
- The Sea Otter* by Alvin, Virginia and Robert Silverstein
- The Monterey Bay Shoreline Guide* by Jerry Emory

Websites

Defenders of Wildlife

<http://www.defenders.org/sea-otter/basic-facts>

Monterey Bay Aquarium Sea Otter Research and Conservation Program

<http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/conservation/research/saving-sea-otters>

Marine Wildlife Veterinary Care and Research Center

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/ospr/Science/marine-wildlife-vetcare/>

Background:

The issue of sea otter translocation and creation of a sea otter management zone was very controversial. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service legally ended the translocation program, including the management zone, in December 2012. Even so, the program stirred strong feelings from all stakeholders involved during its almost 15 year span. It is important to understand all the stakeholders and facts involved in this issue. Make sure your students have read the articles in the reading section to gain background information about sea otters for this lesson.

Procedure:

- Follow the activity sheets to proceed through the lesson. The first activity sheet “Working it Out,” introduces students to conflict resolution by having them recall and discuss instances of conflict and compromise in their own lives.
- The article from the fictional newspaper, *The Daily News*, introduces students to the sea otter translocation issue and announces an upcoming roundtable discussion on the topic. Assign (or have students choose) various stakeholder positions and participate together in the roundtable to arrive at a solution.
- Instructions are given on each of the activity sheets. The perspective cards are included to introduce students to the wide variety of opinions on this issue.

Extension:

Invite a speaker such as a marine biologist or someone who works for an advocacy organization to talk to your class. This is a chance for students to learn about issues firsthand.

Assessment:

The student worked well in a group.

5 4 3 2 1 0

The student completed all required activity sheets.

5 4 3 2 1 0

During the roundtable, the student:

- Participated

5 4 3 2 1 0

- Read slowly and carefully

5 4 3 2 1 0

- Paused frequently to allow other students to take notes

5 4 3 2 1 0

- Made eye contact with other students while speaking

5 4 3 2 1 0

- Asked if there were any questions or anything needed to be repeated at the end of the talk

5 4 3 2 1 0

Based on the student's reflection in the "What I learned" section of the Roundtable Proposal activity, the student has thoughtfully recorded skills he/she has learned and realizations he/she has made.

5 4 3 2 1 0

The Daily News

Conflict in the Community Public Meeting Announcement

California fishing groups are holding a town meeting this Wednesday to bring attention to the issue that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is discontinuing its removal of sea otters that migrate into the management zone back to their parent range.

In response to concerns about conflicts between sea otters and fishing groups, a law was passed in 1986 calling for maintaining an “otter-free” management zone. This law states that FWS is to capture any otters found straying into the management zone and return the otters back to their parent range.

Fisheries groups and conservation organizations are at odds with each other on this issue. Fisheries groups argue that otters compete for the abalone, sea urchins and other shellfish that they harvest for a living. They are losing money and argue that FWS is breaking the law by not moving the otters back to the parent range.

Conservation groups argue that not only do otters not compete with the shellfish industry, also their numbers are dangerously low due to population declines over the last five years.

Conservation groups along with government agencies and researchers are concerned because past translocation efforts in California have failed and sea otters have died, disappeared or swam back to their point of capture in the management zone.

Sea otters are protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which means it is against the law to kill or harm them. Conservation groups maintain that translocation efforts violate the ESA because the stress of the translocations kills many sea otters. They believe natural range expansion into the management zone is necessary for the recovery of the southern sea otter.

The town meeting will begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall building located at 133 Main Street.

1. Working It Out

With a small group, a partner, or on your own, write a definition for each of the following words. Then look them up in the dictionary. Then, with the rest of your class, decide on a group definition for each word.

1. **Conflict**

My Definition:

Dictionary:

Group

Definition:

2. **Compromise**

My Definition:

Dictionary:

Group

Definition:

3. **“wants”** and **“needs”** - What is the difference? My definition of “wants”:

Dictionary (look for noun form):

Group Definition:

My definition of **“needs”**:

Dictionary (look for noun form):

Group Definition:

4. **Negotiate**

My Definition:

Dictionary:

Group

Definition:

5. **Stakeholder**

My Definition:

Dictionary:

Group

Definition:

6. **Solution**

My Definition:

Dictionary:

Raft Definition:

Working It Out...2

Spend one to three minutes recalling a time when you had a conflict with another person or group. This could be a conflict with a brother, sister, parent or friends. **Focus on a situation where you and another person or persons wanted different things or different outcomes.**

1) In just a few words, briefly summarize this event:

I remember the time when

2) On a separate piece of paper, write a first-person narrative account of this event. Identify the conflict and tell how it began and ended. Focus on the following questions: Was it resolved? Unresolved? Was there a “winner” and a “loser?” Why? Were you happy with the outcome? Did you have to give anything up?

- Share your personal experiences with a small group (four students maximum). Write down any suggestions that your group members had about how your conflict could have been solved.
- With your group members, create a recipe for conflict resolution. For example: stir in compassion, add a lot of listening, melt in some understanding, etc. You can create a poster displaying your recipes.

2. Resolving Conflict, Finding Balance

How can the issue of sea otter translocation be resolved? Your challenge is to work out ways that stakeholders can have their needs and wants met and live together in harmony. To be successful, two things must happen:

1. Each stakeholder must assess needs and wants carefully and be sure they are **reasonable**.
2. Each stakeholder must assess needs and wants carefully and be sure they are **not harmful to the well-being of others**.

YOUR CHALLENGE

- Divide into groups of three or four students.
- Draw a perspective card from the pile your teacher has placed face down on a table. NOTE: YOUR TEACHER WILL REPRESENT THE SEA OTTER'S PERSPECTIVE
- From the perspective of the stakeholder represented by the card your group drew, work through the exercises on the following pages. Be prepared to share your work with the entire class. Eventually you will come together to negotiate a solution to the proposed sea otter translocation.

3. The Stakeholders

Sea otter translocation arouses strong feelings and opinions from a variety of stakeholders. A stakeholder is a person or a group who has a strong concern about a particular issue. Stakeholders often have a “vested interest” in an issue; that is, they expect some private benefit from the resolution of the issue in their favor. This benefit can be economic, aesthetic, philosophical or spiritual.

Before you read the stakeholders’ perspective cards, try this! Have your group list all the stakeholders you can think of – people and groups who are in some way affected by a sea otter translocation.

Stakeholder	Perspective (point of view)
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

4. Compromises and Creative Solutions

Name of stakeholder on perspective card:

List the needs and wants of your stakeholder. The perspective card will help you, but you should also include your own ideas. **MAKE SURE YOUR NEEDS AND WANTS ARE REASONABLE AND ARE NOT HARMFUL TO OTHERS.**

<u>Needs</u>	<u>Wants</u>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Solution

With your group members, draft a solution to the issue of sea otter translocations. Your solution should be in line with the reasonable needs and wants you have listed above.

5. Roundtable

Arrange the classroom so that the entire class can sit in a large circle and listen carefully to each stakeholder and ask questions if necessary for clarification. Take notes as each stakeholder speaks.

- Select one person to speak for the stakeholder your group represents. When you speak:
 1. Identify the group of stakeholders you represent. Pause to let the members of the roundtable write it down.
 2. Slowly and carefully read your list of needs and wants. Pause to let the roundtable take notes.
 3. Read your stakeholder's solution. Read slowly and carefully, pausing to look at the other roundtable members.
 4. When you have finished, ask if there are any questions or if you need to repeat anything you have said.
- After listening to other stakeholders' positions, you should be prepared to compromise so that a solution can be reached and other stakeholders' needs and desires can be met as well as your own. In your stakeholder group, meet again and work on the compromise section below.

Compromises

6. Group Solution to the Proposal

Now that you have made your list of compromises, write your group solution to the sea otter translocation proposal. Be prepared to negotiate in the final roundtable session so that a final plan can be developed and a vote taken.

Revised Group Solution

Stakeholder:

7. Roundtable Proposal

The roundtable will reconvene. Each stakeholder group will present its final proposal. As the speaker for the group presents the solution to the roundtable, he or she should note the compromises made by the stakeholder group.

AS EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP PRESENTS THE LIST OF GROUP PROPOSALS, THE TEACHER WILL WRITE THE PROPOSALS ON THE BOARD. VOTE ON THE PROPOSALS AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN LISTED.

What I Learned

Compromising and negotiating are not easy. They are, however, necessary if creative solutions to issues are to be achieved. Write a paragraph stating what you achieved through this conflict resolution exercise. What skills have you learned? What realizations have you come to? Compile a list of what the class has learned and achieved.

8. Conflict Resolution: What Makes it Happen?

In the space below, write down the steps involved in making conflict resolution successful. You can create a poster illustrating the steps needed to reach a conflict resolution.

Shellfish Fisherman

My income depends on the success of my shellfish harvests. Humans have harvested shellfish for thousands of years and we have strict regulations on commercial fishing. In fact, our commercial fishing laws are some of the most tightly regulated in the world! For example, we have a limited area in which to harvest shellfish.

Sea otters eat a lot of shellfish. One hundred sea otters can consume one-half to one million pounds of abalone, sea urchin, crab and lobster per year. California has almost 3,000 sea otters right now, that is 15 to 30 million pounds of shellfish that sea otters are eating per year! We may know how to regulate commercial fishing but sea otters do not. They will keep reproducing and depleting this precious food source.

To protect California's commercial shellfish harvesting opportunities, an "otter free" management zone was established. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) was mandated by law to capture all sea otters venturing into the management zone and to relocate them back to their parent range. But now that FWS has discovered translocation efforts can be fatal to some sea otters, they are ending the program and not removing the sea otters. This has resulted in the loss of millions of dollars for the commercial shellfish industry. Since I get paid by how many pounds of shellfish I catch, my salary has dropped so much that I can't make it from day to day.

Perspective Card

Researchers

The southern sea otter is listed as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act, and is also protected under California state law and by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Sea otters derive their nutritional needs from shellfish. By limiting the numbers of invertebrates, especially sea urchins, that feed on kelp, sea otters help to keep kelp forests healthy. Kelp beds provide habitat for fish and other invertebrate species and act as a nursery, protecting young fish.

As researchers, one of our jobs is to assess the status of the California sea otter population. This population hasn't grown much and has even declined in certain years. This concerns us because sea otters are indicators of the health of the ecosystem, when they are in trouble it means the entire ecosystem is suffering. The causes for the slow growth in the population aren't entirely understood, but some of the apparent impacts are getting caught in abandoned fishing gear, habitat loss and degradation, and disease. In order to get a better assessment of the status of the California sea otter population, critical research funding is needed. In addition, we now believe that allowing for natural range expansion of this population is the key to their recovery.

Conservation Groups

Sea otters are keystone species and their effect on the ecosystem is disproportionate to how many sea otters there are, meaning that very few sea otters can have a large effect. They also serve as important habitat modifiers, keeping sea urchins and other kelp grazers from destroying the kelp forest. Sea otters are indicators of the health of their ecosystem.

It is true that a compromise was reached on the creation of the management zone (as the fishing groups wanted) as part of the agreement to translocate otters to San Nicolas Island in the Channel Islands (as the conservation groups wanted). However, capturing and releasing otters has proven to be far more difficult than anticipated. Some of the otters translocated to San Nicholas Island died. Some swam back to the parent range. More than half of them disappeared. In addition, it is believed that moving otters from the management zone back into the parent range was stressful for the otters already living there. We believe that the management zone and translocation program violated the Endangered Species Act because it was likely to jeopardize the continued existence of this species. We support the FWS decision to discontinue the program. The shellfish industry should support efforts to maintain a healthy otter population since sea otters are an indicator of the health of the ecosystem which in turn affects the quality of the shellfish they harvest. A healthy sea otter population means a healthy marine ecosystem for all to enjoy.

Perspective Card

Government Agency

I am a sea otter management expert with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). We are the agency that is assigned to oversee management and recovery for the southern sea otter. We work with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and other agencies, to ensure that sea otter recovery is a priority.

We can't please both the fishing community and the conservation groups all the time. Because of the conflicts between shellfish groups and the sea otter, a management zone was established in 1986 as a way to appease the fishing industry. Any sea otters found in the management zone were to be translocated back into the parent range. This helped the fishing industry in two ways. It reduced the competition for shellfish and it protected the fishermen from accidentally killing a sea otter in their fishing gear. However, statistics showed that sea otter deaths were higher than anticipated as a result of translocation efforts. In addition, sea otters already in the parent range might have become stressed when sea otters from the management zone were brought back into the parent population. These reasons, along with the belief that allowing for natural range expansion will be the key to recovery for the southern sea otter, support our initial evaluations and decision to abandon the California translocation program and refrain from further captures of any sea otters found in the management zone.

Perspective Card

Public

I am confused about this issue. On one hand, I enjoy eating seafood and personally have friends who are fishermen who have lost money because of the decline in harvests. But on the other hand, sea otters are an important part of the ecosystem and I do not believe that sea otters should die just because they have ventured out of a specific area. Sea otters are such cute and intelligent animals. They are also a big tourist attraction and bring in lots of money for the tourism industry which benefits our local economy. Is there a way that fishermen and sea otters can live together in harmony?

Perspective Card

Sea Otter

I am a male sea otter looking for better habitat and more food resources. We may have run into problems in the main part of our range. It seems that many of us are dying from disease and some of us still get caught in those fishing nets. We depend on many animals such as abalone, crabs, sea urchins, and other invertebrates for our food.

We keep the nearshore marine ecosystem healthy by making sure that sea urchins and other animals that graze on kelp don't destroy the magnificent kelp forests we have in California. We have never caused the extinction of any species. We have been blamed for declines in populations of the shellfish we eat, but from our perspective, that is an unfair accusation. Why would we cause our own extinction by eliminating our food source?

Our role is vital for the health of the ecosystem. We are a keystone and indicator species, essential to the health of our nearshore system. If we are dying from disease due to the food we eat, what does that mean for all of you? You should pay attention to us and what we might be trying to tell you.

Perspective Card

Kayaker/Diver/Tourist

We really enjoy visiting the coastal area. There are so many things to do here that allow us to be closer to nature. In fact, the beauty of this area is what brings us back time and time again. When we visited this area many years ago, there were lots of sea otters that were fun to watch. When we went scuba diving, the kelp forests were healthy and there was a variety of marine life. We don't see sea otters as often anymore and there seems to be less kelp. The sea otters are obviously an important part of the ecosystem. Without them, visiting the coast just isn't the same.

Perspective Card

Tourism Industry

We are a coalition of businesses along the coast of California. Tourism in this area is dependent on weather and the health of the magnificent environment in which we live. The weather is great, but lately the health of our coastal ocean is a big concern. If human activities and contaminants affect the quality and safety of our coastal waters, our businesses suffer. After all, much of what brings tourists to our area is the beautiful coast and its diverse marine life such as kelp forests, marine birds, migrating whales, and, of course, the sea otter. Sea otters are featured in logos, magazine advertisements, and the names of businesses. We truly believe that the sea otter is a big draw to tourists. And, along with sea otters come healthy kelp forests. This translates into the tourist activities such as kayaking and diving. We love to see the sea otter doing well because it means our tourist economy will do well. We must do everything to make sure the sea otter population grows at a greater rate. This will mean a healthier coastal ecosystem and a healthier tourist economy.