

# Scriptwriting Skill Module

## Conflict

### STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Identify and analyze conflict in plots
- Give added life to scripts by sharpening conflicts in plotlines

### RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- *You Try It!* Student Worksheet – Add Conflict, and Stir!

#### Additional Online Support:

- [www.holtmcdougal.hmhco.com](http://www.holtmcdougal.hmhco.com)
- [www.BlueNoseEd.com](http://www.BlueNoseEd.com)

## Teach the Skill

**1. Introduce Conflict:** Invite students to recall stories, novels, movies, videogames, and/or TV shows they have recently read or viewed. Have them name the **conflicts** that the main characters faced. List the answers on the board. Explain that having good conflicts in their scripts will cause **tension** and **suspense**, because readers and viewers will want to see how the conflicts are resolved.

**2. Teach Conflict:** First, review the following academic vocabulary.

### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

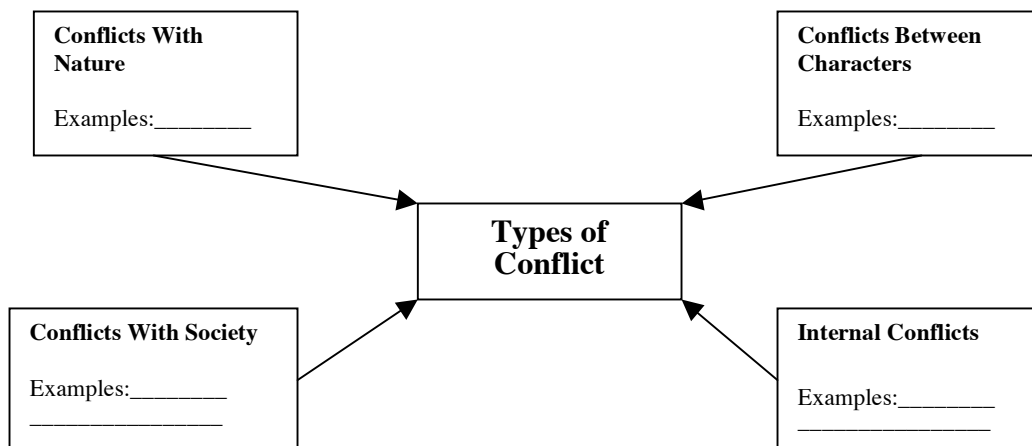
**conflict:** a struggle between opposing forces in a narrative. This struggle creates suspense and tension in the story or script. A conflict may be within a character, between two or more characters, or between a character and an outside force, such as nature or society.

**external conflict:** a struggle between a character and an outside force. The outside force could be another character, a social force or practice, or a force of nature.

**internal conflict:** a struggle within a character's mind. An internal conflict may occur when a character faces a difficult decision or conflicting feelings.

- Now, copy on the board the following graphic organizer. Explain that it shows the four types of conflicts that characters face in scripts.
- Invite volunteers to suggest examples of each type of conflict, and list their suggestions on the board.
- Point out that three of the conflicts—with a Force of Nature, with Another Character, and with Society, are external conflicts. The fourth, Internal Conflict, names struggles that characters have within themselves.

### EXAMPLE



- Finally, draw on the board the table below, **without** the answers that are provided in italics.
- Quiz the students, asking them to identify whether the conflict is external or internal.
- If the conflict is external, have the students tell which type of external conflict it is (conflict with society, conflict with nature, or conflict between characters).

Example	Type of Conflict
Two three-year olds fight over the same toy dump truck.	<i>[Answer: External conflict between two characters.]</i>
An 80-year-old wants to attend his grandson’s graduation in another state, but is afraid that his health won’t take the stress of the trip.	<i>[Answers: Internal conflict within the grandfather. Also, external conflict, between the grandfather and the forces of nature, represented by aging.]</i>
Two teens on a hike get lost in a blizzard.	<i>[Answer: External conflict with a force of nature.]</i>
During World War I, a young man with religious beliefs against fighting is drafted into the army.	<i>[Answer: External conflict with society.]</i>

- 3. Apply Conflict:** Distribute copies of the You Try It! Worksheet: “Add Conflict, And Stir!” This is an individual writing exercise, but after the students have finished with it, it may be helpful to discuss their answers as a class.

**QUICK CHECK** Ask students to define conflict, and to articulate the four main types of conflict. Have them explain why well-managed conflict can add tension and suspense to their scripts.

# YOU TRY IT!

## Add Conflict, and Stir!

### GOAL

**Conflict** is an essential part of any good plot. Learning when to introduce conflict, and being more aware of the main types of conflict that you can use, will give the script you submit to the Blue Nose Scriptwriting Contest an extra jolt of tension and suspense.

### DIRECTIONS

#### Add Conflict, and Stir: Giving Plots a Pick-Me-Up

**DIRECTIONS** First, read each item below. Next, think of a plausible, exciting conflict of the type described in boldface. Write out the conflict on the lines, and explain how the introduction of this conflict affects the story.

1. Rashid sighed. So far it had been a perfect day for a picnic. Everyone in his family had been having a great time. But suddenly . . .

**External Conflict With Nature:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Tabitha wasn't sure what to do. Friday night was Suki's party, and she had already told her she was going. Unfortunately, . . .

**Internal Conflict:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. When Oliver found the shoe department, there was only one pair of size 13 sneakers left on the sale rack. As he reached out to grab them, so did another person, a man with metal teeth who appeared to be at least eight feet tall. The sneakers were tied together by their laces. "Excuse me," said Oliver, holding tight to one of the sneakers, . . .

**External Conflict With Another Character:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. When Akiko decide to take up wrestling, she had difficulty finding an instructor who would help her. Until now, all the wrestlers as her school had been boys, and . . .

**External Conflict With Society:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Self-Check**

Look back over the conflicts that you imagined for the situations above. Which type of conflict do you like to write about most? Are there parts of your scripts that could be more interesting? How could the addition of more conflict give your scripts more life?