

# Responsibility

This week students will learn about how to handle their responsibilities when there is a conflict between responsibilities, whether there are too many of them at the same time or they have a conflict of interest or morals regarding their responsibilities. If students are not prepared for the potential conflict that comes with increased expectations, they may get stressed and not know how to handle the situation. The lessons this week help them think through these types of situations to arrive at positive decisions.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

## Main Lesson

### Whole Class Lesson

30 minutes



### Conflicts in Responsibility

Conflict often comes up when we have responsibilities and it can be challenging to know how to handle it. This lesson introduces students to two types of conflict that can develop with responsibility. Students will have an opportunity to evaluate different situations, identify the conflict, and then make a choice and evaluate the consequences of their choices. (See page 3 for lesson details.)

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## Mini Lessons

### For Small Groups

15 minutes



### Pros and Cons

A great way to help you make decisions, especially when you have two things that you need or want to do and cannot do both, is to make a pros and cons list. In two groups, one labeled “pro” and one labeled “con”, have students list out their respective pros or cons to an issue of conflicting responsibilities that you assign. Ideally these conflicting responsibilities will be directly applicable to your group of students, though you could assign a broader conflict such as: You need to visit your grandpa in the nursing home on Saturday but you want to go to your friend’s birthday party instead. Or, you need extra help in math and should attend the study sessions after school because you have your state math test the next day, but you have soccer practice after school to get ready for the big tournament on Saturday. Have the two groups explain their lists after a few minutes of brainstorming and then have the class vote on which responsibility they will choose.

**For Partners**  
15 minutes



### **Prioritizing our Responsibilities**

Sometimes we have conflict with our responsibilities because we have not kept ourselves organized or have put our responsibilities into a particular order. Another way to say this is that we haven't prioritized our responsibilities; we haven't decided which ones are most important and which can wait until later. It is important to know how to prioritize your responsibilities to avoid conflict and stress.

On a piece of paper, list out all of the responsibilities you have in a typical day, including responsibilities you have to yourself, at school, at home, on a team or in a group/organization, etc. List them out in any order. Then, consider each one and prioritize them. List them from most important to least important.

As you do this, think about which responsibilities take the most time, have the greatest impact on others, and have the biggest consequences if they aren't completed. Those that have the greatest impact and/or consequence should probably be toward the top of your list! When you are done, share your list with your partner and have them critique how you prioritize your responsibilities. Maybe they have some suggested changes to make you even more efficient and less conflicted!

**For Individuals**  
15 minutes



### **My Most Important Responsibilities**

In your journal or on a piece of paper, list out your most important responsibility in the following categories:

- Self
- School
- Family
- Community

**Technology-Focused**  
15 minutes



### **Conflicting Tech Responsibilities**

Large group discussion: In what ways do your views about responsible technology use differ from your parents' or guardians' view of responsible technology use? In what ways are they the same? If you have conflicting views, how do you talk about it and come to a resolution?

# Conflicts in Responsibility

Conflict often comes up when we have responsibilities, and it can be challenging to know how to handle it. This lesson introduces students to two types of conflict that can develop with responsibility. Students will have an opportunity to evaluate different situations, identify the conflict, and then make a choice and evaluate the consequences of their choices.

## Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

## Required Materials

- ☐ Whiteboard for designating the conflict type sections (if using large motor movements)

## Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

## Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Identify two types of conflict of responsibility.
- Evaluate how to make a decision when there is conflict in responsibilities.

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Sometimes the volume of responsibilities that we have can be overwhelming. We can feel like there is too much to do and we don't have enough time. The flip-side, of course, is the honor of our responsibilities. Think about how many parents have entrusted their kids to you. Think about the future world your students will build. You have one of the greatest responsibilities of all in shaping your community, state, country, and world. You have a direct line to the future! What a privilege! Even on the hard days, remember how much power and influence you have through your responsibilities as a teacher. It is also good to take time to remember why you got into teaching in the first place. At that time you likely didn't know how much responsibility you would have. You didn't fully know the long days, long nights, fast weekends, and myriad of student needs, abilities, and interests. So, remind yourself of the best parts of the job. What is your favorite teaching responsibility?



## Share

5-7 minutes

Last week we talked about the different sources of responsibility. Can anyone tell us what the eight categories of responsibility are? (Invite student response.)



## Inspire

3-5 minutes

This week, we are going to talk about what to do when we find our responsibilities conflict or compete with each other. Sometimes you may find yourself in situations where you have a couple of responsibilities that you need to fulfill, but you can't do them all. How do you choose which responsibility to fulfill? We'll work on that today.

According to the Center for Civic Education, there are two types of conflict (or competition) that could arise when we are trying to fulfill all of our responsibilities. One is that we have too many responsibilities competing with each other all at once; we can't do them all, so we need to pick which one to do, which means something is left out. Second is that we have a conflict with what we have been told to do (the responsibility) and what we believe to be right (morals) or what we want to do based on what we like/prefer (interests).

I will give you a couple of examples:

1. Max has agreed to babysit his neighbor's young son after school, but he forgot that he has piano lessons. He has already committed his time to two different people and for two different activities. He has responsibilities to both and they are now competing with each other.
2. Max has agreed to babysit his neighbor's young son after school, but at lunch time, his best friend asks if he wants to go to get ice cream after school. He has a responsibility to his neighbor but he is much more interested in getting ice cream with his friend. His responsibility is conflicting with what he really wants to do.

Does anyone have any questions about how our responsibilities might be in conflict? Has anyone ever experienced this before? (Invite student responses.)



## Empower

15 minutes

I am now going to read some more examples. We are going to stand up and move based on what type of responsibility conflict we have going on: Too Many or Morals/Interests.

On the board, draw a line down the center and on one side write "Too Many" and on the other write "Morals/Interests". After you read each example, ask students to move to the side they think the example represents. You can modify this to hand-raising or other means of indicating their choice if large physical movement isn't ideal, possible, or preferred.

1. All the 8th graders have iPads to use in their classes. There is a strict school policy that you cannot share your iPad or password with anyone else. There is too much risk that the iPad could get broken, stolen, or that someone could use your iPad irresponsibly and then you would get in trouble for it. Your best friend left her iPad at home and she needs to finish her Civics homework on the classroom portal. She asks you if she can borrow your iPad next hour during her library time when you are at the gym, where you won't need your iPad. What type of responsibility conflict is this? (Invite students to quietly move to the side of the room that represents the conflict. Then ask for

volunteers to ask why they identified the side they did and ask students what they would do if they were in this situation.) What are the possible consequences for this choice?

2. Everyone was in such a rush in the morning that no one put the garbage out on the curb for the garbage service to haul away. Mom texted you during lunch that you need to clean out the fridge and take out all the trash as soon as you get home, to catch the garbage truck before it passes by at 4 pm. Shortly after, you get a message from your teacher that your Dad called the school office to tell you that he needs you to walk down to his mechanic shop after school to help him take inventory so he can finish his parts order that is due today. What type of responsibility conflict is this? Repeat the student action from #1.
3. Aiden has basketball practice after school on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. He has practiced really hard this year to get better and his coach has commented that he appreciates his commitment and hard work this year. This weekend, his family is going to visit his grandma because it is her 80th birthday. Grandma lives four hours away, though, so his mom tells him that they are going to leave right after school on Friday so they can get there before it gets too late. Aiden is upset because he is going to miss practice, but he knows it is important to visit his grandma. What type of responsibility conflict is this? Repeat the student action from #1 and #2.



## Reflect

5-7 minutes

It is important to realize that sometimes we have to choose between two things that we need to do but can only do one, or between options where there is a clear good choice and a clear poor choice, but it's hard to tell which one is the right one to pick. When we feel a conflict with our responsibilities, what are some things we can do to help us make the best or right choice? (Let students brainstorm for a minute or two. Some ideas could include asking someone for their advice/help, writing a pros/cons list, thinking of an alternative or compromise between the choices, or re-organizing time/structure so that both responsibilities can be fulfilled.)

Keep these things in mind this week if you find yourself in conflict with what you need to do!