



Grade 4 – Lesson 6

# Entertainment Today: Cooperation and Competition

## Objectives

*The student will be able to:*

- *Distinguish between cooperation and competition.*
- *Discuss times when cooperation is more effective than competition.*
- *Demonstrate the effectiveness of cooperation and the ineffectiveness of competition in a conflict situation.*

## Character Education Traits

*This lesson promotes the following character traits:*

- *Cooperation*
- *Respect*

## Activities

- 1 *Entertainment Today* ..... 15 min.
- 2 *A Puzzling Activity* ..... 20 min.
- 3 *When Not to Compete* ..... 10 min.

## Materials

- *Workbook, page 7*
- *8 Winning Solution jigsaw puzzles (in your kit) and Answer Key, page 80*
- *A 20' rope with the ends tied together*

## Home Workout

*See page 81.*

## Rationale

*Research shows that our culture is so competitive that most children tend to compete even when competing is against their best interests. This makes solving conflicts more difficult, because children tend to approach conflicts as win-lose situations, when in fact, many conflicts can be resolved so that everyone wins.*

## 🍎 Before You Start...

*This lesson uses the words “competition” and “cooperation” frequently. Slow down when you say the words and point to them on the board, in order to help students differentiate between them.*

Make one copy of the Home Workout, page 81, for each student to take home to share with a parent.

Be sure to keep the pieces from each Winning Solution jigsaw puzzle together in separate bags. Do not mix pieces of different puzzles. There may be slight variations in puzzle pieces, so they are not interchangeable.

# 1 Entertainment Today

Today, we'll read the news on the entertainment page of *A Peaceable Press*. Turn to page 7 for today's television schedule. Let's read the broadcast highlights out loud.

♥ Select a student to read each of the following program descriptions.

## DAY IN COURT

🎧 Judge Walker hears the case of Sharon Gray vs. Jay Turner. A young inventor goes to court against a man she claims used her idea for a new video game.

## THE WINNERS' CIRCLE

🎧 Tune in to this quiz show, in which a sixth grade Arizona girl plays the final game of the championship against a seventh grade boy from Maine.

## BUSINESS NEWS

🎧 *Kid Business*. Tips for competing against your classmates to win top prizes. Last year's winner tells how to sell more candy than anyone else in the class.

## BASEBALL

🎧 *Mets vs. Braves*. See New York against Atlanta in the final game of the Little League World Series. After the game, stay tuned for interviews with the winners.

## FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

🎧 *Fight to the Finish* stars Pat Hall and Sam Page as brothers who vie against each other in a very funny attempt to win the affections of the girl next door.

What do all these shows have in common? ♥ Encourage your students to guess.

There is one word that appears in every program description. Can you find it?

🎧 The word is "against."

Each show is about an event or situation in which there are two opposing sides, or two sides against each other. Each program will have winners and losers.

In each of these TV programs, people "compete" against each other.

Write "competition" in the blank beneath the Broadcast Highlights in your workbook. That's what all these shows have in common.

♥ Draw a T-chart on the board. Write the heading “competition” on one side, leaving enough space to list competitive activities beneath it. Later, you will put the heading “cooperation” on the other side of the line and list cooperative activities on that side.

What does “compete” mean? 🧐 Work or play against someone else to find out who wins.

Let’s brainstorm activities in which people compete against each other.

♥ Write them on the board under the word “competition” as the students name them. They usually name many different sports, games, and contests. Most classes fill the board with competitive activities.

All the broadcast highlights on this page are about competition. Is that unusual for the entertainment section? 🧐 No. Today’s TV schedule looks a lot like this. TV viewers can choose from many programs about competing.

Competing is not the only way people interact. They also cooperate. ♥ Write “cooperation” for the second heading on the T-chart. Draw a line to separate the list of competitive activities from the cooperative ones you are about to list.

What does “cooperate” mean? 🧐 When you cooperate, you work together to accomplish a goal.

Do any of the programs in this TV schedule show cooperating? 🧐 No.

Let’s brainstorm activities in which people cooperate with each other.

♥ Write them on the board under the word cooperation. Students usually mention group assignments, family projects, cooperative games, etc.

Were you able to list more times when people compete or cooperate? 🧐 Compete.

We compete and cooperate with each other every day. But in the United States, we compete more often than we cooperate. On TV and in the movies, we see and hear more examples of competition.

We are used to thinking about sporting events, businesses, courtrooms, and game shows as having winners and losers. In fact, we are so used to thinking about competing, that we sometimes forget all about cooperating.

It is important to be able to tell the difference between competing and cooperating, and to remember that you have a choice. There are some situations in which competing is not the best choice.

Choosing between competing and cooperating will depend on your goal.

What is the goal of competing? 🧐 To win. For example, you might compete to win a tether-ball game or a spelling bee.

What is the goal of cooperating? 🧑🏫 For everyone to succeed or win together. For example, you might cooperate with classmates to create a class mural.

When you compete, the goal is for one person or side to win. Everyone else loses. But when you cooperate, everyone helps and encourages everyone else. There are no losers. No one is best, and everybody wins.

Whether to compete or cooperate is a choice you make, depending on the situation and on your goal.

## 2 A Puzzling Activity

Here is a conflict situation:

Marla and Toby are doing a social studies project together. They have finished researching the project and now they may choose how they want to present the information to the class. Marla wants to do an oral report. Toby wants to make posters. He doesn't like talking in front of groups.

There is a problem, and there are two sides. What is the problem?

🧑🏫 How to present the social studies report. What are the two sides?

🧑🏫 Marla's side and Toby's side.

We're going to do an activity now, in groups, to decide whether the two sides should compete or cooperate to solve the problem.

🧡 Divide the class into eight groups. Give each group a bag containing one Winning Solution jigsaw puzzle.

Lay out the puzzle pieces so that each piece has a sentence showing. Read each sentence and, as a group, decide if the sentence shows competing or cooperating. Divide the pieces into two piles. Put the puzzle pieces that show competing back in the bag. When your group is finished, raise your hands so I'll know when we're ready to go on to the next step.

🧡 Allow several minutes for groups to complete this task. When everyone has finished separating the competitive from the cooperative statements, continue.

You should have only cooperating statements now, because you have removed the competing ones and put them back into the bag. Turn over each of the pieces you have left. Put them together to solve the puzzle and find the Winning Solution to the conflict.

🧡 Allow several minutes for groups to complete their puzzles. See the Winning Solution Answer Key, page 80. Monitor and intervene, if necessary. When everyone has completed the puzzle, signal for students to refocus their attention for a class discussion.

What did your group create when you solved the puzzle? 🧠 A trophy.  
Does that tell you anything about solving conflicts? 🧠 When we cooperate to solve conflicts, everybody wins.

What happened if you tried to solve the puzzle by using the competitive pieces? 🧠 You couldn't solve the puzzle. You couldn't solve the puzzle by using competition. Competing got in the way.

Conflicts are the same way. If you try to solve a conflict by competing against the other person, that makes it hard to solve the conflict. If you compete against the other person, someone is bound to lose. If you cooperate, it is often possible for everyone to win.

Read the solution to the conflict. 🧠 When the puzzle is complete, there is a solution in which both sides win: Toby will make posters to illustrate the information Marla will present orally.

In a conflict, when both sides cooperate, everyone can win! In this case, Toby got what he wanted, and Marla got what she wanted. This is called win-win.

Can you think of any other possible win-win solutions to this conflict?

### 3 When Not to Compete

It is important to learn when to compete and when to cooperate. Many of us compete without even thinking about it. We compete even when there is no contest.

There are many times when competition isn't helpful or appropriate. Look at the No Contest section of page 7 in your workbook. There are examples of situations when there is no need to compete. Let's read the situations and decide which responses are competing and which are cooperating. Star the cooperative ones.

They are the winning responses.

♥ Answer key:

1. a. Cool! What music do you like? I'll share my CDs with you!
2. b. Awesome! Let's have a pizza party to celebrate.
3. a. That's terrific! Would you help me study next time?

Why isn't competing helpful or appropriate in these situations?

🧠 It isn't necessary or helpful to compete against someone who isn't an opponent.

When you compete, you and the other person are opponents who are against each other. When you cooperate, you are together on the same side.

Have you ever played Tug-o-War? Is that an example of competing or cooperating? 🧑🏫 *Competing.* How did you feel about the other players? 🧑🏫 *You want them to lose so you can win. In Tug-o-War and other competitive situations, the other side is the opponent.*

I need six volunteers to play a game called Tug-o-Peace. ❤️ *Select six students to come to the front of the room.*

In this game, you sit in a circle on the floor facing each other. You all hold the rope in your hands in front of you. The goal of the game is for all six people to stand up together, without anyone letting go of the rope. You must each keep both hands on the rope at all times. Should you compete or cooperate to play this game? 🧑🏫 *Cooperate.*

❤️ *This game is harder than it sounds. Allow several minutes for play. Did you enjoy the game? How did you cooperate in order to reach your goal? How did you feel about the other players? 🧑🏫 They are on your side, they're like friends, not enemies.*

Whether to compete or cooperate depends on your goal. In a conflict, the goal is to solve the problem peacefully. Instead of attacking the other person, attack the problem together. Cooperate to find a solution that lets both of you win.

❤️ *Give each student one copy of the Home Workout, page 81, to take home to share with a parent.*



**Teacher Tip:** Traditionally in this country, competition is used not only in sports and commerce, but also in classrooms, where the results often do more harm than good. Competition in the classroom may lead to one-upping, cheating, and put-downs.

*Using cooperative games, adapting competitive games so that no one is excluded, and using cooperative learning activities all help to create a more positive classroom climate. Structuring your classroom this way may prevent many conflicts, and enable your students to solve the ones that do arise more peacefully.*

*You can also create a more peaceful classroom atmosphere by training upper-level elementary students to organize and facilitate cooperative and non-competitive games for younger students during recess.*

*When your students compete inappropriately in class, remind them that the class goal is for everyone to learn. It doesn't make sense to try to get more right answers than someone else, or to finish faster than someone else.*

## Looking for More?

### Supplemental Activities & Resources



#### Physical Activity Extender

Play a cooperative game called Islands. You will need the following materials: music, carpet squares or hula hoops (one for each student). The object of the game is to include everyone. Play music and give the children instructions, such as skip, hop, pretend you're a bird, etc. When music stops, everyone should get on an island. Each time the music starts again, remove one island. As the game continues, there will be fewer and fewer islands. Use teamwork to get as many children as necessary on your island. Anyone who does not include others must sit out of the game.



#### Language Arts Extenders

##### *What's in a Word?*

Write the word "competition" on the board. Have your students work independently, using the letters in competition, to make as many smaller words as possible in five minutes. The words must have two or more letters each, and may not be proper names or abbreviations. Then write the word "cooperation" on the board. Have the students work together, using the letters in cooperation, to make as many smaller words as possible in five minutes. The words must have two or more letters each, and may not be proper names or abbreviations. Students are usually able to create more words by cooperating than competing.

##### *Hug o' War*

Read the poem, "Hug o' War," by Shel Silverstein in *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. Have your students write a paragraph that compares and contrasts cooperation and competition.



#### Recommended Reading

*Ernestine and Amanda*, by Sandra Belton. Aladdin, 1998. Amanda and Ernestine compete for the friendship of a fellow piano student. In alternating chapters, each girl gives her point of view, often on the same event, so that readers see what the two girls don't: how much they actually have in common.

*Winners Take All*, by Fred Bowen. Peachtree Publishers, 2000. When Kyle fakes a catch, his baseball team goes on to win the league championship, but Kyle doesn't feel good about winning by cheating.

*Summer Wheels*, by Eve Bunting. Voyager Books, 1996. The Bicycle Man lends bicycles to the neighborhood kids. When a new kid doesn't return a bike, Lawrence and his friend find the boy and make him take it back. They discover that the boy's toughness masks a need for adult attention, and that the Bicycle Man cares more about kids than bicycles.

*Maggie Marmelstein for President*, by Marjorie Sharmat. Harcourt, 2000. Maggie and her friend Thad compete for the presidency of the sixth grade class. This book promotes discussion of the relationship between friendship and competition.

# Winning Solution

## Answer Key

*The sentences on the puzzle pieces are listed in the column on the left below.*

*The column on the right is an answer key. If groups sort the puzzle pieces correctly, they discard 3, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 12. They use 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 11 and 13 to put the puzzle together.*

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Maybe there is a way to do both. Any ideas?   | <b>cooperative</b> |
| 2. Would you like me to help you?  | <b>cooperative</b> |
| 3. Your idea stinks.   | <b>competitive</b> |
| 4. It will be more fun if we work together.  | <b>cooperative</b> |
| 5. We can work this out.   | <b>cooperative</b> |
| 6. I want to do it my way.   | <b>competitive</b> |
| 7. How can we both get what we want?   | <b>cooperative</b> |
| 8. Everyone knows reports are more interesting than papers.                              | <b>competitive</b> |
| 9. I'm not working with you. You always have to have your way.                           | <b>competitive</b> |
| 10. My idea is better than yours.  | <b>competitive</b> |
| 11. Maybe we can think of something we both want to do.                                  | <b>cooperative</b> |
| 12. Oral reports are really lame. We're doing a paper.                                   | <b>competitive</b> |
| 13. You don't like to do oral reports? Do you like to draw? Maybe we could make posters. | <b>cooperative</b> |



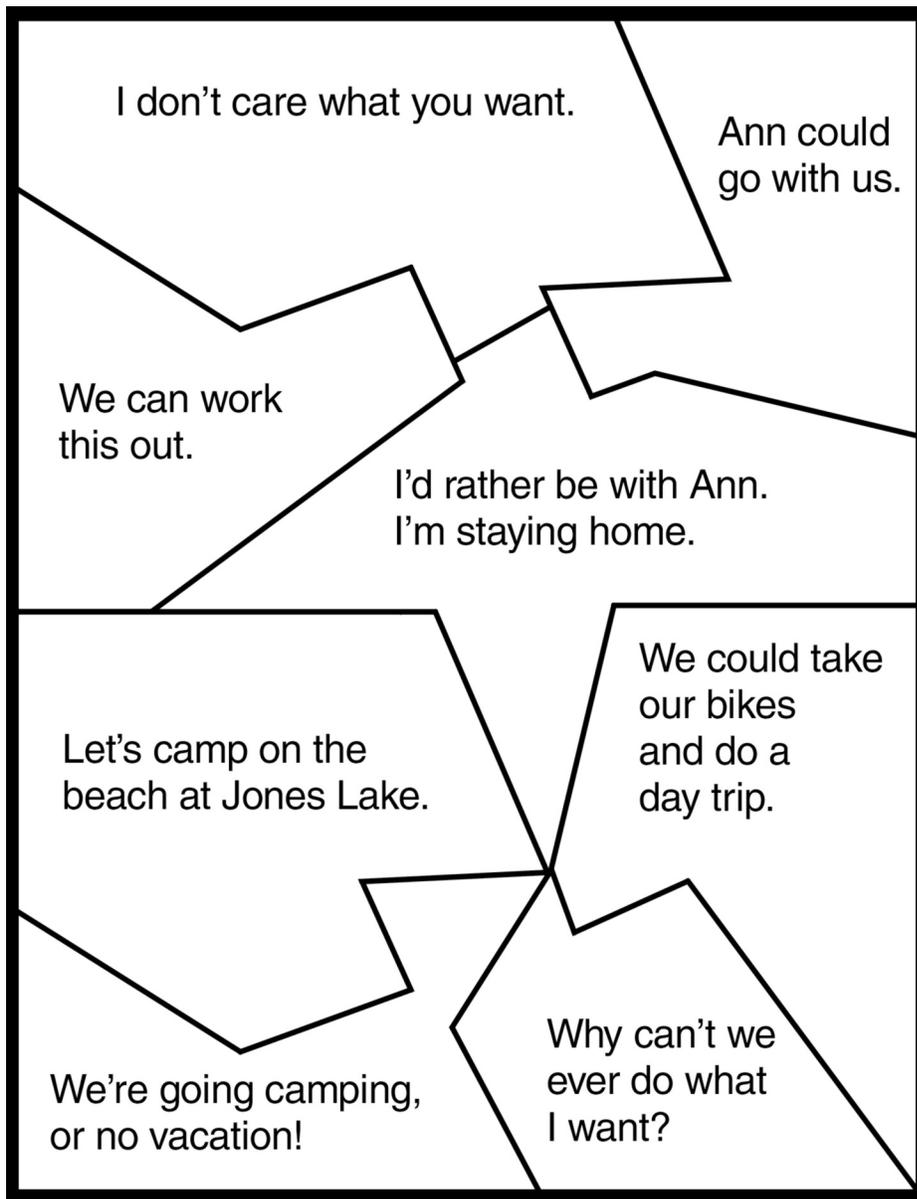
# Too Good for Violence Grade 4

## Home Workout

for Parents and Kids

In our *Too Good for Violence* lesson today, we discovered that cooperating makes it easier to solve conflicts, while competing makes it harder. You can help your child to learn this important skill by doing this activity together. Read about the family conflict. Cut out the puzzle pieces. Read the statement on each puzzle piece. Throw the competitive statements away. Use the cooperative statements to complete the puzzle. When completed, the puzzle forms a square.

The Kings had a conflict about their family vacation. Dad wanted to go camping. Mom wanted to go to the beach. Tom wanted a biking trip, and Sue wanted to be with her friend Ann.



***When you have family conflicts, instead of competing against each other, cooperate to solve the problem!***

