

GO WILD IN NEW YORK CITY

Conflict resolution

Hey, nice plants! includes the topic of tree conservation (see page 38) that can be utilized for a conflict resolution activity in which students analyze a common problem in urban development. Trees are usually damaged or killed by a wide variety of construction activities. How to solve the conflict between tree preservation and urban development?

The activity can begin with a putative case presented by the teacher. For example, students can be told that a new big store that will employ 1000 workers will be developed in a green area in New York City, killing many trees and leaving the community without one of its green spaces. Students will work in small groups representing different stakeholders in the case, such as:

- The new store's owner
- People who will be hired by the new store
- A local environmental group that advocates for more green spaces in the neighborhood

Students must discuss the case and propose other stakeholders in the conflict, and then select which one they want to play. Then, they will have to prepare a presentation for the rest of the class. In order to support their position in their presentation, students will research the local regulations for construction and tree preservation and find out other relevant information, such as real cases which occurred in other communities related to this topic.

Finally, each group will present their position in front of the others and engage in a debate scaffolded and moderated by the teacher, who will play the part of the "judge." After the presentations, all students will become the "jury" and, also guided by the teacher, reflect on what they should do in this particular case based on the evidence provided by each stakeholder, and finally make a decision.