



with feeling

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THROUGH THE ARTS

Unit 4 How Can We Work Through Conflict?

Grade Levels 5–8

Introduction to Unit Four

In this unit, students begin to work with concepts about conflict and resolution. This is the most advanced strategy that they work with over the course of the year, and some will find it more difficult than others. Some of the information in this unit is pretty conceptual, which helps older students to think abstractly about difficult concepts. Ultimately, an abstract understand of conflict-resolution leads students to a complex and rich understand of conflict and resolution as they appear in day-to-day life. The most important thing for students to take away from this unit is that conflict is not a bad thing: it is an important part of life. What is critical in moments of conflict – particularly very uncomfortable moments – is what steps are taken to work toward resolution, and the ways in which those actions affect others.

This unit is composed of lessons that explore watercolor, landscape, and other painting techniques. The unit is designed to help students build a painting portfolio, but also work in groups to develop whole-class projects. The challenge here is that the artwork is less abstract and more traditional than in other units. While students explore concepts of conflict-resolution, they must also try to work inside more challenging artistic frameworks. Teachers should use moments of frustration as opportunities to explore intrapersonal conflict, and should emphasize that the nature of the work is challenging, but that there are no wrong answers here. Watercolor pencils are lovely media that allow students to explore watercolor in a unique and interesting way.