

**Purpose:** Use this sample assignment for a better understanding of what is present in a high quality essay about this topic: interpersonal conflict in television. We've included these elements of constructive criticism to demonstrate that even "A" quality work still receives comments to improve the student's thinking and writing on the topic.

Hover over the information symbol ( ) or select the numbers within the text to read about what the student has done well in this assignment and also some areas for improvement.

Interpersonal Conflict in Television

Student's Name

COM 200: Interpersonal Communication<sup>1</sup>

Date – sample April 7, 2015

Instructor: Full Name

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<sup>1</sup> Always include the course title. The student forgot to include that here.

### Interpersonal Conflict in Television

When in a relationship conflict is sure to happen. It is part of having an interpersonal relationship. But the key to conflict is to make sure it is being handled effectively. When watching television you often see conflict and sometimes think of how the situation could have been handled differently. That is exactly what happened when I watched an episode of Scandal recently. I will analyze ways that the conflict could have been handled better by using empathy and listening skills.<sup>2</sup>

Conflict is always going to happen at some point in a relationship no matter how good a relationship is. Whether it's between family, a significant other, friend or colleagues they are bound to happen at some point. And according to one article titled How to inspire healthy conflict<sup>3</sup> they<sup>4</sup> suggest that some conflict specifically in the workplace can be healthy. "When managed properly, constructive dissent offers these positive team-building results: more options to consider, identifies<sup>5</sup> new leaders, and builds a stronger team" (N.A, 2014).<sup>6</sup> I feel that with any relationship conflicts sometimes can be healthy and can possible<sup>7</sup> help resolve other issues. But these conflicts need to be managed properly for there to be a positive end.

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<sup>2</sup> This is an effective introduction as it introduces the key themes that will be covered. It would be nice to see a more declarative thesis. Consider using the thesis generator tool in the Ashford Writing Center: <https://awc.ashford.edu/writing-tools-thesis-generator.html>

<sup>3</sup> Please be sure to use the full title, with quotation marks. Here the student should use "Let them butt heads! How to inspire healthy conflict."

<sup>4</sup> To be clear about the referent, instead of using "they," please use "the authors."

<sup>5</sup> Notice that Microsoft Word is warning the student that there is a grammatical error here. When looking at the original document, I noticed that this was not an exact quote. Be careful to be precise when quoting others. And if there are gaps in your selection of words from a source, please indicate this with the use of ellipses.

<sup>6</sup> If there is no author, use the first words of the title. Also, all quotes should have a page, paragraph or section number. The proper in-text citation is ("Let them butt heads!," 2014, p. 6).

<sup>7</sup> The correct word is "possibly." Watch for proper use of adverbs.

So when a conflict comes about how should it be handled is the big question? Conflict management is one way to maintain a healthy relationship.<sup>8</sup> “Conflict management: using constructive and positive behaviors such as cooperating, listening, and apologizing when in conflict or disagreements with the partner”<sup>9</sup> (Bevan, 2014).<sup>10</sup> Sometimes this can be difficult when in a very heated argument, listening and cooperating when you are upset can be difficult. But there are skills that can be used in a conflict to help you conflict manage.

As mentioned earlier I witnessed one very heated argument while watching the show *Scandal*. Two individuals had an argument because one individual wanted to keep a very large secret that could keep him from prison but sharing the secret could also ruin his reputation. While the female involved pleaded with him that sharing the secret was a better option.<sup>11</sup> This argument ended with the male individual walking away. So how could have this argument been managed better?<sup>12</sup>

The first way this argument could have been handled differently was for the second individual to show the other empathy. “Empathy is defined as putting yourself in another person's shoes or imagining another person's thoughts, feelings, and perspectives” (Bevan, 2014).<sup>13</sup> If she would have stopped and thought about how he felt and tried to understand how

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<sup>8</sup> This is the closest to a thesis this student writes and he or she needed to make much more of a declaration to be stronger.

<sup>9</sup> Good use of the text to introduce some basic conflict management techniques, but this is only half a sentence. Also, all quotes should be introduced or the student should begin the statement for the authors. The student could either say “According to Bevan and Sole...” or he or she could start the sentence by saying “Conflict management involves ...”

<sup>10</sup> This is only half of the authors as the textbook was written by Bevan and Sole. Also, all quotes must have a page or section number.

<sup>11</sup> This is not a complete sentence. Notice that grammar check is highlighting this text to warn the writer of the issue.

<sup>12</sup> Good introduction of a conflict that will be analyzed.

<sup>13</sup> Again, all quotes need both authors' names and a page, section or paragraph number.

telling the secret would affect his life the argument could have gone a complexly<sup>14</sup> different direction.<sup>15</sup> They could have come up with a compromise for the situation. It is very important in any relationship to show empathy for the other individual and when in a conflict continuing that practice of empathy will help in overall conflict management.

The second issue that took place in this conflict was the listening skills used were inadequately.<sup>16</sup> “Listening skills are some of the most important ways in which you express consideration for other people—by making good eye contact, appropriately smiling, being engaged with the other person, and responding with meaningful questions and comments” (Bevan, 2014). In this conflict he should have stopped and listened to what she had to say, they may have been able to come up with a resolution.<sup>17</sup> He did not want to even hear what she had to say and left all together. He should have approached what was being said with an open mind because he may have gained something from what she had to say. “If you do not listen during an interaction, then you cannot understand others, respond appropriately to what they say, or provide helpful feedback” (Bevan, 2014). This is why listening is so important to any interpersonal relationship, you need to take in what they say so you can provide feedback and have the conversation move forward in a positive way.

In conclusion conflict will occur in interpersonal relationships but how they are handled can make all the difference in the world. Conflict management is a big part of making sure that the conflict is resolved in the correct way. Some conflict especially in a work environment if

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<sup>14</sup> The student likely meant to say “completely” instead of complexly. Be sure to watch word choices.

<sup>15</sup> Excellent application of the concept of empathy to deal with a conflict.

<sup>16</sup> The proper term was “inadequate.” This word is being used to describe the noun “skills.” Therefore an adjective (inadequate) is used instead of an adverb (inadequately), which modifies the verb. Inadequately would be used if the sentence read “... listening skills were used inadequately” because it is then referencing the verb “used.”

<sup>17</sup> Great introduction of an idea – the importance of effective listening – and application to a specific scenario in the television show.

executed properly could be beneficial. The conflict that took place in an episode of Scandal showed poor use of empathy and listening skills. Showing empathy and good listening skills are important in any interpersonal relationship and should be executed in conflicts as well.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> This is a nice restatement of the thesis. This would have even been stronger had the student used this thesis in the introduction. Overall, though, this is a very good paper. Nice work!

## References

Bevan, J. L., & Sole, K. (2014). *Making connections: Understanding interpersonal*

*Communication (2nd ed.)*.<sup>19</sup> San Diego, CA: Bridgepoint Education, Inc. This text is a

Constellation™ course digital materials (CDM) title.

Let them butt heads! How to inspire healthy conflict. (2014). *HR Specialist*, 12(7), 6.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Insert [Electronic version]. Retrieved from <https://content.ashford.edu/>. The final reference should look like this:  
Bevan, J. L., & Sole, K. (2014). *Making connections: Understanding interpersonal communication* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)  
[Electronic version]. Retrieved from <https://content.ashford.edu/>

<sup>20</sup> Follow these rules when there is no author: <https://awc.ashford.edu/cd-in-text-citation-guide.html>