

Conflict Cool-Down Posters – Levels F-3

CREATIVE

To help students identify and express healthy ways to calm down when they feel angry, frustrated, or upset during a conflict. By creating their own Conflict Cool-Down Poster, students will begin to understand that calming strategies, like deep breathing, asking for help, or finding a quiet space, can help turn problems into peaceful moments, just like the Playful Astronauts learn on Mercury.



Learning Intentions

Students will learn to reflect on what helps them feel calm when they are upset or frustrated. This encourages them to recognise their own emotional responses and develop healthy coping strategies.

Students will practise using drawing to express ideas that help them feel calm and in control. This supports emotional literacy through creativity and personal expression.

Students will learn to share their calming strategies with others and discover new ways to manage conflict peacefully. This helps build a classroom culture of understanding, empathy, and supportive problem-solving.



Success Criteria

I can draw or write something that helps me cool down when I feel upset. This ensures students are engaging in self-awareness and creating a visual reminder for self-regulation.

I can talk about my picture and explain how it helps me feel better. This promotes verbal communication and emotional expression.

I can listen to other students' calming strategies and try them when I feel upset. This builds empathy, active listening, and a toolkit of ideas to manage conflict calmly.



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Objective:

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Players:

Ideal for 4–26 students working individually, then sharing as a group.

Materials:

- A4 or A3 paper
- Coloured pencils
- Optional: calming word cards or visual aids (e.g. “Take a breath,” “Count to 5,” “Hug a soft toy”) (You could brainstorm this list as a whole class on the board prior to starting).
- Display space for posters in a “Cool-Down Zone”

Time Required:

10–15 minutes

Setup:

Begin by gathering students and reviewing the *Mercury* page from *The Playful Astronauts* book. Explain that Mercury teaches us how to manage hot and cold moments, just like we sometimes feel angry or sad, then calm again. Remind students that it's normal to feel upset sometimes, especially during a disagreement.

Introduce the idea that we all need tools to help us cool/calm down, and today, they'll be creating a special poster with their own cool-down strategies.

Gameplay:

Explain the Activity:

Ask students: “What helps you feel calm when something goes wrong or when you're having a disagreement?”

Offer examples to help them think:

- “Taking three deep breaths.”
- “Talking to a teacher or adult.”
- “Sitting quietly in a cosy spot.”
- “Cuddling a teddy.”
- “Having a drink of water.”



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Invite students to draw one or more of their ideas on a poster. They can use colours, pictures, and even write simple words if they are ready (e.g. “breathe,” “talk,” “hug”). Encourage them to personalise their posters and be proud of their unique calming strategies.

Sharing and Discussion:

After the posters are complete, give each student a chance to share their drawing with the group or with a partner. Ask:

- “What did you draw?”
- “How does it help you feel better?”

As students share, they’ll learn new ideas they may want to try next time they feel upset.

Encourage Emotional Safety:

Let students know it’s okay to have different ways of calming down. What works for one person might not work for another, and that’s perfectly okay. The important thing is finding something that helps *you*.

Winning the Game:

There is no winner. Every student’s poster is a valuable contribution to the classroom’s emotional toolkit. The goal is to explore and express calm-down strategies that help during conflict and strong feelings.

Variations:

Younger Students: Provide printed outline posters with pre-drawn calming icons (e.g., a cloud for breathing, a heart for kindness) for colouring and decorating.

Collaborative Edition: Create a large “*Whole-Class Cool-Down Poster*” where each student contributes one calming idea to form a shared resource for the group.

Reflection Edition: Revisit the posters later in the term, students can add new strategies they’ve discovered, showing their emotional growth over time.

Sensory Edition: Encourage the use of textured materials like cotton balls (for clouds), tissue paper (for waves), or sandpaper (for rough feelings) to make the posters tactile and multi-sensory.

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For Wheelchair Users / Accessibility:

- Ensure tables or easels are at accessible heights for all students.
- Provide adaptive drawing tools such as thicker pencils, grip aids, or markers for easier control.
- Allow digital poster creation on tablets or devices for students who prefer or require assistive technology.
- Offer visual communication support, students can choose symbols or photos of their calming strategies instead of drawing.
- When sharing, ensure a peer or adult can assist in holding or displaying posters if needed.

Notes for Inclusion:

- Model vulnerability by sharing your own calm-down strategy (e.g., “When I feel upset, I like to take deep breaths or go for a short walk”).
- Emphasise that everyone’s emotions are valid, there are no “wrong” feelings, only healthy ways to handle them.
- Praise effort and honesty over neatness or artistic ability, focus on expression and meaning.
- Encourage kindness and curiosity when students share (“That’s a great idea, I might try that next time!”).
- End with a group affirmation:
- *“We all have the power to cool down, calm down, and choose kindness, just like the Peace Pals on Mercury.”*

Additional Notes:

“Conflict Cool-Down Posters” is a powerful creative activity to help students build emotional awareness and self-regulation. It gives students ownership of their feelings and equips them with strategies to manage conflict. By linking to the lessons of planet Mercury, students are reminded that even in moments of emotional ‘heat’, they have the power to cool down, reflect, and respond kindly.

