PMP® EXAM PREPARATION · COMPANION

Leading Projects Toward Worthy Value

Sample chapter · English edition

Activity and Exam-Prep Companion — training and simulation support for the July 2026 PMP edition

SkolarHub Editorial
Academic Content Authoring Division

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QUESTION BANK · CHAPTER 6

Chapter 6 — Conflict and Team Ground Rules — Manage, Don't Avoid

22 questions · 1 case study · Domain: People

Time budget: 76 seconds per question ≈ 28 minutes for this bank

Answer every question yourself before turning to the key. Note anything you are unsure of, to carry over to the Error Log later.

1 Single response Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

An engineer leads a project to install an offshore wind farm. She believes a mature team is one where no disagreement ever shows, so she keeps differences off the discussion table. Two engineers on the team are quietly disagreeing about the method for siting the towers, but whenever the topic starts to surface she steers the conversation away to protect "team spirit," and she takes a calm surface as proof of leadership maturity. How should this approach be assessed?

A A sound approach: a mature team minimizes friction, a team that looks harmonious shows the leader manages people capably, and raising the technical disagreement now would only politicize an engineering decision and wear away the goodwill the team needs for years to come

B A sound approach on one condition: the leader documents the suppressed disagreement in a private log, so the surface stays harmonious while the documentation protects the project if the siting method later proves wrong

C The approach mistakes a calm surface for health: disagreement kept off the table does not vanish but sinks into eroded trust and unseen risk, so a lack of friction is a warning sign to investigate, not proof of maturity

D The approach is wrong because any technical disagreement must be settled by escalating it immediately to the sponsor, who alone has the authority to choose between engineering methods

2 Single response Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

At a film production company, the director and the director of photography have been in dispute for weeks over "shooting-day scheduling." The line producer has tried to settle the schedule again and again, but each time a schedule is agreed, the disagreement returns in a new form. A closer look shows that the director sees the film as an auteur work whose vision is not up for negotiation, while the director of photography sees it as an industrial product governed by cost and time — a disagreement about what the film itself should be. Why did the repeated scheduling fixes fail?

A Because the producer did not use a digital scheduling tool precise enough to spread the shooting days across locations with the fewest possible conflicts; the disagreement is logistical at its core and a better tool would solve it

B Because the fixes addressed the visible topic (scheduling) while the source was a disagreement over values, so treating the symptom resolves one version of the dispute and invites new ones for as long as the root remains

C Because the producer chose the Collaborating mode when Competing was the better fit for imposing a final schedule, since a decision on scheduling by the leader would have ended the debate in the first session

D Because the two parties had not signed a team charter containing an explicit rule against reopening the schedule once agreed, and the missing procedural rule is what allowed the disagreement to return

3 Single response Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

While a stock-trading platform is running, a fault appears that threatens to execute erroneous orders for millions of units within minutes. The response team splits between halting the platform immediately and keeping it running with a partial fix, and there is no time for a lengthy alignment session. The incident commander has the authority and the information needed to decide. Which mode is best for handling this disagreement at this moment?

A Competing: the commander halts the platform at once, without waiting for consensus, because an urgent crisis where legitimacy and information sit with the leader calls for swift firmness, not consultation

B Collaborating: the commander gathers the team for a joint problem-solving session to reach a decision that satisfies every technical view before taking any step, because decisions that everyone commits to are sturdier

C Compromising: the commander settles on a middle path, keeping half of the platform's services running and halting the other half, a mutual concession that satisfies both sides

D Avoiding: the commander postpones the decision until the picture of the fault becomes clearer, to avoid a hasty decision that could increase the damage

4 Single response Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

A project lead at a national museum is planning a temporary exhibition. The collections curator, the top authority on conserving archaeological artifacts, objects to a lighting layout he proposed: in her specialist judgment, which he cannot match, it exposes two rare pieces to light damage. The disagreement has limited impact on the rest of the exhibition, his professional relationship with her is long-standing and critical for future projects, and she is clearly right on technical grounds. Which mode fits best?

A Competing: the lead insists on his original layout and uses his organizational authority to impose it, since the final design decision is his as the project lead accountable for the output

B Compromising: the lead keeps half of the original lighting layout and revises the half the curator objects to, a middle path that lets both sides save face and ends the debate with the smallest concession

C Avoiding: the lead postpones settling the lighting until a few days before opening, when he picks the layout easiest to implement under time pressure

D Accommodating: the lead takes the curator's view and adopts her layout, since she is technically right, the issue matters more to her, and the long relationship is worth investing goodwill in

5 Single response Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

On a game development team, two designers trade sarcastic comments about each other's taste in colors for a secondary side menu that will appear only on a rarely used settings screen. The friction is superficial and does not touch the workflow, both are exhausted ahead of a major launch, and the emotional energy of a confrontation now far exceeds the value of settling the color of a marginal menu. Which course is best for the team lead?

A Collaborating: holds a dedicated session to understand the roots of the tension between the designers and builds a charter for visual communication with them, since every friction is a chance to build a rule

B Avoiding: the lead leaves this trivial friction alone for now, since its emotional cost exceeds the value of settling it and, in the run-up to launch, energy belongs on what affects the workflow

C Competing: the lead calls in the designers, imposes a specific color on them for the menu, and ends the mockery with a decisive top-down ruling that restores discipline

D Accommodating: the lead gives up his standards in the color review and lets each designer impose personal taste in their own area, to protect their morale before the launch

6 Single response Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

On a payment-platform development project, the front-end and back-end teams disagree about the code-integration method ahead of a quarterly release. The two sides are equal in expertise and influence and agree on the same goal (a stable release on schedule), differing only on how to get there. The remaining time is tight and leaves no room for an open dialogue aimed at an ideal solution. Which mode is best for reaching an actionable decision now?

A Accommodating: one team yields completely to the other's method to preserve the relationship between them and raise the morale of the side whose view was adopted, since harmony matters more than the method

B Avoiding: the leader postpones settling the integration method until after the quarterly release, to avoid friction between two equally matched teams under pressure

C Compromising: the teams build a middle-ground method from practical elements of both proposals through a documented mutual concession, since equal power, tight time, and a shared goal make it a workable solution

D Competing: the leader imposes the method of the team closer to him and ends the debate with a top-down decision, to save the time left before launch

7 Single response Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

A project director leads an alliance between two relief organizations to build an aid-distribution system that will run for the next ten years. Fundamental disagreements arise over distribution priorities, stemming from differences in values and goals between the two organizations. The decision has long-term impact and needs both parties' commitment to succeed, the cost of delay is tolerable because operations have not yet begun, and the schedule allows for in-depth dialogue. Which mode fits best?

A Collaborating, with mediation where needed: uses the available time for a solution that serves both sides' core interests, since the decision is long-lasting, everyone's commitment is a condition of success, and values disagreements are not settled by concession

B Compromising: the distribution priorities are split equally between the two organizations' visions, a quick middle path that satisfies both sides and avoids a drawn-out discussion

C Competing: the director imposes the better-funded organization's priorities to settle the debate, since the party with the larger share should decide

D Avoiding: postpones settling the priorities until operations begin, when the real priorities are expected to become clear on their own from field experience, so gathering operating data comes before an early decision that could prove right or wrong before the full field picture matures

8 Multiple response **Select all that apply** Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Medium

A project lead faces a sharp disagreement between an external supplier and an internal team over the delay of a critical component. Before choosing a resolution strategy from the Thomas-Kilmann modes, he wants to apply a sound, layered diagnosis. Which two steps accurately apply the diagnostic logic that comes before choosing a mode?

A First identifies the conflict source — whether the disagreement is over facts, methods, goals, or values — because each source calls for a radically different resolution strategy, and treating the visible topic without its source leaves the disagreement to keep recurring

B Quantifies the cost of delay (financial, team, organizational) and reads the context — time pressure, the weight of the future relationship, and the balance of power — before recommending a mode, since without a quantified cost one drifts into default avoidance

C Goes straight to the Collaborating mode as the highest-quality mode for all disagreements, then diagnoses the source and context later if needed to fine-tune execution

D Adopts the mode that worked in his last similar disagreement with a supplier, since repeating what worked before is more reliable than a re-diagnosis that slows the decision under delay pressure, and it spares him re-examining the source, context, and cost of delay while the earlier solution is at hand and ready to apply at once

9 Single response Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

After a series of frictions on a biologic drug development team, the leader issued a "team charter" that she wrote herself and emailed to everyone for approval. It includes clauses such as "We respect each other," "We commit to quality," and "We communicate transparently." Two months later, the team's behavior had not changed. What is the most accurate diagnosis of why this charter was ineffective?

A The charter came without a system of financial or administrative penalties for violating its clauses, and without a written deterrent any charter stays a dead letter, however well its clauses are worded and however often they are repeated

B The charter was issued after the frictions, not before them; charters only help when they are set on day one of the project, before any disagreement arises among members

C The charter was written as general slogans imposed by the leadership rather than specific behaviors built collectively; clauses like "We respect each other" bind no one and establish no violation, and imposed wording loses the team's ownership

D The charter was emailed instead of presented in an in-person meeting, and had its clauses been read aloud to the team, they would have gained the force of obligation that they lack

10 Single response Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

On an architecture team whose charter requires a different colleague to review every drawing before submission, the lead notices three different cases: one engineer forgot the review once under pressure, another skips it repeatedly because he believes it slows the work, and a third skips it deliberately and hides it despite being warned. Which approach is best for handling these three violations?

A Applies the most severe response to all three cases alike (a documented, top-down intervention that reasserts the requirement), since equal punishment is fairer and prevents any sense of unequal treatment among members

B Overlooks all three cases without confrontation to protect relationships in a small team working under pressure, since a general reminder of the importance of review in a meeting is more effective than holding individuals to account

C Scales the response to the type of violation: a gentle reminder for the incidental lapse, a root-cause talk for repeated skipping, and a firm, documented reassertion of the rule for deliberate, concealed skipping

D Cancels the mandatory review rule since three members break it in different ways, and replaces it with an optional review that reduces friction and shows more respect because it is voluntary

11 Single response Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

A project lead at a logistics company is in a tense conversation with a warehouse supervisor who bypasses the agreed inventory-count procedure. She opened by affirming a shared goal, then laid out the facts she had observed and her tentative understanding, and asked for his view. But he suddenly slid into defensiveness and counter-accusation, and the shared goal began to collapse. What is the best verbal step to rescue the conversation?

A Switches to imposing the procedure as a final decision and ends the discussion: since the other party has attacked, the dialogue is lost and nothing is left to her but to settle the matter by authority

B Rebuilds the shared goal: she recommits to finding a purpose that unites them, recognizes the reason behind their differing approaches, creates a broader shared goal with him, and then the two brainstorm their way to it

C Ends the conversation at once and postpones it for a full week until both sides calm down, since postponing under tension is safer than continuing a dialogue that has slid into accusation

D Meets accusation with accusation and presents his record of past breaches to prove he is the party at fault, since confronting an attack with irrefutable facts restores the balance in her favor

12 Single response Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Medium

At a digital marketing agency, an editor misses an internal delivery deadline once. The project lead goes straight to the agency director and raises it as a formal escalation requesting disciplinary action, without having had any conversation with the editor or documented any repeated pattern. How should this action be assessed under the logic of the tiered escalation playbook?

A A sound action: early escalation saves time and shows the lead's seriousness about protecting deadlines, and the earlier the escalation, the less often deadlines are missed across the whole team

B A sound action on condition that the lead attaches to the escalation a request for a lighter penalty, not dismissal, since scaling the penalty within the escalation makes the tiering of levels before it unnecessary

C A sound action because missing deadlines is a breach that deserves direct senior-management intervention; governance is the natural level for any violation that touches the schedule

D A wrong action: he jumped to institutional escalation before exhausting the first level (diagnosis and a team conversation), spending his authority and straining the relationship over an incidental breach that should be handled internally

13 Multiple response Select all that apply Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

An infrastructure project lead manages a contract involving a prime contractor, suppliers, and an external regulator. He believes conflict management is purely an internal matter among his own team members. An expert colleague wants to correct this view by pointing out that the principles of conflict management extend to external stakeholders. Which three practices correctly apply conflict management to external stakeholders?

A Tells the contractor and suppliers in advance about the agreed mechanism for escalating disputes and the principles for resolving them, so each external party knows how disagreements are handled before they arise

B Diagnoses the conflict source with the external regulator (facts, methods, goals, or values) using the same layers he applies inside his team, since diagnosis does not stop at the organization's boundary

C Aligns with the suppliers on shared working rules for their interface points and a mechanism for handling breaches of them, since the shared-rules environment includes external partners, not the internal team alone

D Confines all communication about disagreements to his own team and bars any discussion of conflict-management principles with external parties, to protect the project's image in front of the suppliers, and keeps the escalation path confidential within the team

14 Matching Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

The five Thomas-Kilmann modes are not ranked from best to worst; each is chosen according to the context in which it works. Match each mode (1-5) to the context that suits it (a-e). Modes: (1) Competing; (2) Collaborating; (3) Compromising; (4) Avoiding; (5) Accommodating. Contexts: (a) a major, long-term decision that needs everyone's commitment, with time available; (b) an urgent crisis that cannot tolerate debate, where legitimate authority sits with the leader; (c) the other party is actually right, or the issue matters more to them, or the relationship comes first; (d) a trivial situation, or the emotional cost is higher than the value of resolving it; (e) equal power on both sides and tight time, in a disagreement over methods. Which matching is completely correct?

A 1-b · 2-a · 3-e · 4-d · 5-c: Competing for the crisis, Collaborating for the major long-term decision, Compromising for equal power, Avoiding for the trivial, and Accommodating where the other party is right

B 1-b · 2-a · 3-d · 4-e · 5-c: Same as A, but with Compromising assigned to the trivial situation, and Avoiding to equal power and tight time in a disagreement over methods

C 1-a · 2-b · 3-e · 4-d · 5-c: Same as A, but with Competing assigned to the major long-term decision, and Collaborating to the urgent crisis that cannot tolerate debate

D 1-b · 2-a · 3-e · 4-c · 5-d: Same as A, but with Avoiding assigned to where the other party is right, and Accommodating to the trivial situation that does not merit effort

15 Hotspot Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

You are shown a Thomas-Kilmann grid drawn on two axes: the vertical axis is assertiveness and the horizontal is cooperativeness, with five numbered regions placed in their correct positions on the grid. Regions: [Region 1] high assertiveness · low cooperativeness = Competing. [Region 2] high assertiveness · high cooperativeness = Collaborating. [Region 3] medium assertiveness · medium cooperativeness = Compromising. [Region 4] low assertiveness · low cooperativeness = Avoiding. [Region 5] low assertiveness · high cooperativeness = Accommodating. The situation: a disagreement over values with a partner whose relationship with you goes back many years; time allows in-depth dialogue, and the cost of delay is high, calling for a solution both parties commit to together. Which region (give its number) represents the best-fitting mode for this situation?

A Region 4 — low assertiveness · low cooperativeness (Avoiding)

B Region 1 — high assertiveness · low cooperativeness (Competing)

C Region 3 — medium assertiveness · medium cooperativeness (Compromising)

D Region 2 — high assertiveness · high cooperativeness (Collaborating)

16 Single response Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

The leader of an aircraft maintenance team takes pride in the fact that his team "never disagrees": meetings are calm, no objections are raised, and everyone agrees quickly. He regards this calm as proof of maturity and high psychological safety on his team. But a review revealed repeated technical errors that no one reported, even though several technicians knew about them. How should he read this situation through the concept of psychological safety?

A The absence of objections is not psychological safety and may even signal its lack: psychological safety is a team's ability to raise disagreement and error without fear, not an absence of disagreement; a team that hides its conflict does not tell its leader what he needs to hear

B The situation is healthy: quiet meetings and quick agreement are conclusive evidence of psychological safety, and the technical errors are a separate technical matter, unrelated to team climate, to be addressed with additional technical training that has nothing to do with a culture of reporting

C The problem is that psychological safety is higher than necessary on this team, which made the technicians lax about reporting errors because of their excessive confidence that errors will be caught automatically

D The situation shows that psychological safety does not suit high-risk technical teams, where fear of punishment must prevail to ensure accurate reporting of every error

17 Single response Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Medium

At a medical-supplies distributor, the Warehousing and Shipping departments are in dispute over the only loading dock in the morning. Warehousing insists on reserving the dock from 7:00 to 10:00, and Shipping insists on the same window. On closer inspection, what Warehousing actually needs is to unload incoming trucks before the cooling ice melts, and what Shipping needs is for its orders to leave before the carrier's morning run — two needs that do not necessarily conflict in time. What is the leader's best approach?

A Splits the dock window evenly: an hour and a half for each department, a fair compromise that ends the dispute quickly with the least argument, since dividing a contested resource equally is the fairest way out

B Gives priority to the more productive department according to last month's figures, since favoring the higher-productivity side settles the dispute on objective, measurable grounds

C Separates the two stated positions from the interests beneath them and builds a schedule that unloads trucks before the cooling ice melts and sends orders out before the morning carrier, meeting both needs without splitting the dock

D Postpones the decision and lets the two departments take turns at the dock at random each day until they work out an arrangement on their own that suits them both, without any intervention from the leader

18 Matching Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

The conflict source determines the strategy for resolving it; what works for a disagreement over facts fails in a disagreement over values. Match each conflict source (1-4) with the approach that suits it best (a-d). Sources: (1) disagreement over facts; (2) disagreement over methods; (3) disagreement over goals; (4) disagreement over values. Approaches: (a) amend the team charter, or escalate to stakeholders for alignment; (b) data and documentation, or an arbitrating third party; (c) the hardest: Collaborating through mediation, or accepting that it is managed, not resolved; (d) the parties agree on the goal but differ on the path; Compromising or a quick round of Collaborating works. Which matching is fully correct?

A 1-d · 2-b · 3-a · 4-c

B 1-b · 2-d · 3-a · 4-c

C 1-b · 2-d · 3-c · 4-a

D 1-c · 2-a · 3-d · 4-b

CASE STUDY 1

Read the scenario once, then answer its linked questions

A consortium of contractors is building a railway tunnel beneath a sea strait linking two countries (38 kilometers long), commissioned by a binational authority that oversees the project. The first contractor, "North-Tech," digs from the north side and the second, "Merid," digs from the south side; the two crews meet at a junction point beneath the strait floor. The approved project duration is five years, the operating date is fixed in a treaty between the two countries and cannot be extended, and the estimated cost of delay is 4 million currency units per month (debt interest). At kickoff, the two teams built a joint team charter with three rules, the most prominent being Rule 2: "Any technical decision affecting the junction point is documented and signed by both parties' engineers within 48 hours." However, the project record shows that this rule was breached seven times during the first year, with no remedial action on any occasion. The oversight report attributes the coordination breakdown to a "personal clash" between the northern party's engineer, Lina, and the southern party's engineer, Marco. But the facts run deeper: North-Tech is paid on completing intermediate stages, so it pushes toward a slow, conservative sequence that piles up stages, whereas Merid is paid only on completion, so it pushes toward a faster sequence. And both parties, when asked separately, acknowledge that two things matter to them: that the two drives meet with no rework at the junction point, and that the treaty date is met — two shared aims hidden behind two opposing stated positions on the speed of the sequence.

REFERENCE DATA

Summary of the facts shared by the set's questions: two contractors (North-Tech in the north, Merid in the south) + a binational oversight authority; one junction point beneath the strait; a 5-year duration and a treaty date that cannot be extended; cost of delay 4 million/month. A joint charter of three rules; Rule 2 = joint signature within 48 hours on junction-point decisions, breached 7 times with no remedial action. Asymmetric incentive structure: payment on stages (North-Tech) versus payment on completion (Merid); two opposing stated positions on the speed of the sequence conceal two shared interests (no rework at the junction + meeting the treaty date).

19 Case study Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

Referring to the strait tunnel project: the oversight report attributes the coordination breakdown to a "personal clash" between the two parties' engineers, Lina and Marco, and recommends relational mediation to improve the chemistry between them. Applying conflict source diagnosis, which is the most accurate assessment of this diagnosis?

A The diagnosis is correct: every indicator points to a personal mismatch between the engineers, to be handled with relational mediation and trust-building sessions between them; once the personal chemistry improves, the breakdown disappears at its root, with no need to touch the contract structure or the contractors' incentives

B The diagnosis is wrong: the source is a disagreement over goals arising from conflicting incentives (payment on stages for North-Tech, on completion for Merid), not a personal clash; calling it personal treats a symptom and leaves a structural root that produces the breakdown however much the engineers' relationship improves

C The diagnosis is wrong: the source is a disagreement over facts about the exact location of the junction point, settled by a joint engineering survey that ends the dispute

D The diagnosis is wrong: the source is a disagreement over methods only, about the speed of the sequence, resolved by a quick Compromising on a speed midway between the contractors' approaches

20 Case study Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Moderate

Referring to the joint charter: Rule 2 (joint signature within 48 hours on junction-point decisions) was breached seven times in the first year, with no remedial action on any occasion. How should the effect of this uncorrected repetition be read, and what is the correct first step?

A The rule is written and signed, so it is binding by its nature; repeated breaches are an individual matter, handled with a gentle passing reminder and no change to the enforcement mechanism, since a clause that stands in the document remains in force by itself, however many times it is overstepped

B The fix is to add new, stricter rules to the charter to compensate for the weakness of Rule 2, since the more written rules there are, the greater the discipline at the junction point and the fewer the breaches

C Rule 2 should be dropped as long as it is not being applied, since an unenforced rule is a bureaucratic burden that weighs on the team, and it is better to leave coordination at the junction point to the engineers' judgment case by case

D Repeated breaches without remedy taught the team that the rules are not binding, so the charter collapsed as a system; the first step is to reactivate the existing rule by addressing the breach and applying proportionate accountability, not by writing a new rule

21 Case study Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Medium

Referring to the facts: each contractor, when asked separately, acknowledges that two things matter to it — that the two drives meet with no rework at the junction point, and that the treaty date is met — while each publicly holds to a sequence speed opposite to the other's. Which conflict-resolution approach puts this disclosure to the best use?

A Compromising: adopts a sequence speed midway between the two contractors' positions, since the fair solution is the midpoint of the two stated proposals as long as each insists on its own speed

B Competing: the authority imposes the stronger party's sequence as a contractual position and ends the argument as quickly as possible, since a ruling by the party with the upper hand saves more time than prolonged negotiation

C Collaborating: separates the stated positions from the shared interests beneath them (no rework at the junction + meeting the treaty date) and builds a sequence that serves both aims rather than splitting the difference

D Avoiding: postpones deciding the sequence until the drives approach the junction point, when the optimal speed will become clear on its own from field excavation data

22 Case study Attempt 1 Attempt 2 Medium

Referring to the project once these facts have accumulated: the joint leader handled the dispute inside the team through diagnosis and conversations (Level 1), then signed a written resolution strategy with the contractors, with review dates (Level 2), but the breaches continued at the junction point despite documentation of both levels. The cost of delay is 4 million per month, and the treaty date cannot be extended. What is the most appropriate action now?

A After exhausting Levels 1 and 2 with full documentation, and with a high cost of delay threatening the treaty date, escalates now to the binational authority through the governance path, framed as a documented request for a result and not as an attack on a party

B Never escalates: escalating to the authority is an admission that the leader failed to manage the team, and the safer course is to stay at Level 1 and repeat the conversations however long the breaches continue, to preserve the long relationship with the contractors and avoid straining the partnership before a higher body

C Should have escalated to the authority from the first breach at the junction point, since a high cost of delay justifies skipping Levels 1 and 2 to save time from the outset

D Escalates it as a formal complaint against the breaching contractor personally, to hold it responsible before the authority and seek a contractual penalty against it

ERROR LOG

Write down every error so it never repeats

After scoring this chapter's bank, move every question you got wrong into this table. An error whose cause and correct rule are written down, and whose review date is set, rarely repeats in the mock exam or the real exam. Review each row twice — after three days, then after a week — and mark each review's box once it is done.

Question (number)	Why I got it wrong	The correct rule	Review (date)	After 3 days	After a week
				☐	☐
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				☐	☐
				☐	☐

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 6

Chapter 6 Key — Conflict and Team Ground Rules — Manage, Don't Avoid

Score your answers, then read the rationale for every option — correct and incorrect alike. The rationale is where the real learning happens, not the answer number.

1 Correct answer **C** Difficulty estimate 4/10 · Single response

A ✗ This equates the absence of disagreement with team health, and the two are not the same. A team whose disagreement disappears from its leader's view is not more mature but less transparent; and appealing to "goodwill" to justify suppression turns the Avoiding mode from a situational choice into a blanket rule, accumulating deferred cost instead of preserving a relationship.

B ✗ Confidential documentation of a suppressed disagreement treats the symptoms of avoidance, not their root: the disputed siting method stays unresolved, and the team keeps working on a live, undiagnosed disagreement. Preserving an appearance of harmony while postponing treatment is the very fallacy that moves the conflict to a deeper layer with a higher cost.

C ✓ The correct view is that avoidance does not eliminate conflict but moves it from a visible interaction that can be addressed into hidden interactions: eroding trust, undisclosed siting risks, and possibly the most skilled team member leaving in protest. So a calm surface is not a sign of health but a place to investigate; a competent leader diagnoses a quiet disagreement instead of reading it as maturity.

D ✗ Jumping to escalate every technical disagreement to the sponsor is an overreaction that wastes the leader's authority and disables the team's ability to resolve things internally; a disagreement over methods between engineers is handled first by diagnosis and conversation, not by immediate referral. The problem with the approach is the suppression of disagreement, and its remedy is diagnosis, not automatic escalation.

Why this option attracts

Avoiding conflict within the team preserves harmony and serves productivity

Fix: The ECO 2026 P-T2 enabler explicitly says to manage and rectify ground rule violations — that is, addressing them is a required act of leadership, not an option. Avoiding moves the conflict from the visible surface to a hidden interaction that eats away at trust, and it blows up later at a higher cost. Example: a digitization team in a government ministry. A senior engineer repeatedly breaks the code review rules. The leader avoids confrontation to preserve the relationship. The result after six months: the team loses trust in the rules entirely, slides into low quality at every code review checkpoint, and two key engineers leave in protest. The final cost of avoidance is several times the cost of early confrontation.

Review: Teaching Volume, Chapter 6

2 Correct answer **B** Difficulty estimate 5/10 · Single response

A ✗ Attributing the dispute to a lack of a scheduling tool treats it as a disagreement over methods (how to organize the days), whereas the facts reveal a disagreement over what the film should be in the first place. A more precise tool would improve how days are allocated but would not touch the clash between the two visions, so the dispute returns in another form.

B ✓ The conflict topic is what the parties apparently argue about (the schedule), and the conflict source is the root that produces it — here a disagreement over values: auteur-driven work versus an industrial product. Whoever treats the topic without the source resolves one version of the dispute and invites another, and that is exactly what happened: every agreed schedule collapsed because the underlying values disagreement was never touched. A values disagreement is not resolved by data or concession but managed through mediation or an explicit alignment of vision.

C ✗ Imposing a schedule through Competing may silence the argument for a moment but does not touch its source; a values disagreement settled by a top-down decision returns stronger because the losing side's values have not changed. The problem here is not an absence of decisiveness but an absence of diagnosis: the right mode is determined by the conflict source, and a values disagreement calls for dialogue, not imposition.

D ✗ A rule preventing the schedule from being reopened would only have frozen the symptom without treating the root: both sides would comply with the schedule in form while the vision dispute keeps flaring up in every other creative decision. A procedural rule works for controlling repeated behavior, not for dissolving a values disagreement, which requires a different kind of treatment.

Review: Teaching Volume, Chapter 6

3 Correct answer **A** Difficulty estimate 4/10 · Single response

A ✓ In an urgent crisis that cannot tolerate discussion, where legitimacy rests with the leader, information is sufficient, and time is decisive, Competing works: high assertiveness with low cooperativeness. Delaying the decision for consultation here is a cost, not a virtue. Note that Competing is not a shunned mode but the right choice in its context; the correctness of a mode is set by diagnosis, not by always preferring cooperation.

B ✗ Collaborating is an excellent mode for major, long-lasting decisions when time allows for dialogue, but here it is the wrong choice for the context: burning minutes in a consensus session while erroneous orders keep executing moment after moment turns the virtue of participation into a missed window for decision.

C ✗ Compromising works when power is balanced and time is tight in a dispute over methods, but a "half shutdown" during a fault that threatens to execute erroneous orders may combine the worst of both options: neither full protection nor safe continuity. The crisis calls for a decisive ruling, not splitting the difference in a sharp technical decision.

D ✗ Avoiding is legitimate when the conflict is trivial or when postponement is needed to gather information, and both conditions are absent here: the fault is serious and the information is sufficient. Delay in this context is not caution but default avoidance, accumulating damage in a window that cannot tolerate waiting.

Review: Teaching Volume, Chapter 6

4 Correct answer **D** Difficulty estimate 4/10 · Single response

A ✗ Using authority to impose an arrangement already proven technically wrong puts the leader's position ahead of technical correctness and exposes two rare pieces to real damage. Competing works when legitimacy and correctness lie with the leader, and here both lie with the curator; so insisting is stubbornness that costs the project and the relationship alike.

B ✗ Splitting the difference on an artifact-conservation question produces the worst outcome: half of the wrong arrangement still exposes the pieces to damage. Compromising suits a disagreement over methods when power is balanced, not a situation in which one party is clearly right on technical grounds; a partial concession here haggles over the safety of a collection piece.

C ✗ Postponing the decision until the crunch just before the opening is avoidance: the decision is reached by muddling through, not by diagnosis, and may end up favoring the easiest option rather than the safest. As things stand, the curator is right, and delay adds no information but accumulates risk to rare pieces.

D ✓ When the other party is actually right, the topic matters more to them, and the long relationship is critical, Accommodating works: low assertiveness with high cooperativeness. Taking the curator's view is not weakness but a correct reading of the context — it protects the pieces and builds relational capital. Competence lies in matching the mode to the situation, not in favoring assertiveness because the leader holds the authority.

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5 Correct answer **B** Difficulty estimate 4/10 · Single response

A ✗ Collaborating is a time-expensive tool reserved for important, long-lasting decisions, and spending it on the color of a marginal menu just before a major launch is using the mode in a situation that does not merit the effort. Turning every trivial friction into a charter-building session is overkill that wears the team out at the wrong moment.

B ✓ Avoiding is a legitimate mode within its limits: when the conflict is trivial, when the emotional cost exceeds the value of resolving it, or when postponement is needed. All three conditions meet here — a marginal topic, a team worn out just before a launch, a negligible value in deciding. The deciding point is that this is a diagnosed choice for a particular situation, not a default mode generalized to every disagreement.

C ✗ Imposing a color by authority on a trivial dispute spends the leader's authority capital where it is not warranted and turns a passing friction into a formal confrontation. Competing is for crises and critical decisions, not for sarcastic banter over a menu that rarely appears.

D ✗ Giving up review standards to calm a trivial friction sets a precedent that individual taste overrides standards, a price greater than the situation warrants. Accommodating suits cases where the other party is right or the topic matters more to them, not when the matter is marginal and does not call for a concession of principle at all.

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6 Correct answer **C** Difficulty estimate 5/10 · Single response

A ✗ A full concession by one team to the other (Accommodating) wastes the practical knowledge in the abandoned proposal and creates a sense of grievance between equals, with no reason to favor either method. The mode fits when the other party is right or the issue matters more to them; neither holds between two evenly matched teams that disagree only on the route.

B ✗ Deferring the integration method until after launch (Avoiding) empties the decision of its meaning, because the integration method is a condition of the launch itself, not something that follows it. There is no trivial issue here and no information still to come in; this is an immediate decision that avoidance stalls.

C ✓ When the two parties are equal in power, agree on the goal, differ only on the route, and are short on time for an ideal solution, Compromising works: mutual partial concession produces a practical, sufficient method. Documentation protects the agreement from reinterpretation. This is the right place for Compromising — a disagreement over methods, not over values, and not a crisis.

D ✗ Imposing the method of the team closer to the leader (Competing) between two evenly matched teams wastes the leader's legitimacy and leaves a team whose view was suppressed carrying out a method it does not own. Assertiveness backed by authority is for crises, or for cases where legitimacy rests in the leader's position; it is not for settling a methods dispute between peers, where a documented mutual concession is enough.

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7 Correct answer **A** Difficulty estimate 5/10 · Single response

A ✓ The three layers together recommend Collaborating. The source is a conflict over values and goals (not settled by data or concession), the context is a long, pivotal relationship whose success depends on both parties' commitment, and the cost of delay is tolerable and time allows. A values conflict may need third-party mediation. This is where investing time pays off: in a solution that meets the core interests of both parties.

B ✗ Splitting the priorities down the middle (Compromising) fails in a values conflict: conceding half the value leaves both parties dissatisfied and yields a system that runs for ten years on a solution nobody believes in. Time is available and the impact is long-lasting, so cutting the dialogue short with a split-the-difference deal sacrifices the commitment the alliance needs.

C ✗ Imposing the priorities of the better-funded organization (Competing) breaks the other party's commitment in a relationship whose effects span a decade, and turns a values conflict into a grievance that erupts later. Assertiveness backed by authority is for urgent crises, not for a strategic decision whose success depends on both partners accepting it.

D ✗ Deferring the values conflict until after go-live (Avoiding) guarantees that it will erupt in the field, where the cost is higher, and it will not "clear up" on its own because its root is about values, not information. The conditions that would justify deferral are absent; deferring here is default avoidance, postponing a resolution that cannot be skipped before launch.

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8 Correct answer **A, B** Difficulty estimate 6/10 · Multiple response

A ✓ Identifying the source is the first layer of diagnosis, and separating the apparent topic from its root is a prerequisite: a conflict over facts is settled with data, while a conflict over values calls for mediation — two radically different strategies. Treating the symptom without the source resolves one instance and invites more, so this is a sound diagnostic step that comes before choosing a mode.

B ✓ Quantifying the cost of delay and reading the context (pressure, relationship, balance of power) are the second and third layers of diagnosis. A quantified cost settles the strategy; without it the leader slides into default avoidance, because nothing resists the temptation to postpone. Together the two layers produce a mode recommendation grounded in the situation, not in habit.

C ✗ Jumping to Collaborating before diagnosis inverts the sound sequence: the mode is the result of diagnosis, not something that precedes it. Collaborating is costly in time and may be the wrong choice (for example, a conflict over facts that quick data would settle); treating it as "always the highest quality" is the fallacy of generalizing a single mode, which layered diagnosis dismantles.

D ✗ Carrying a mode that worked in a previous conflict over to a new one ignores that the source, context and cost of delay may differ entirely; what worked in a methods conflict may fail in a values conflict. Repeating a mode without diagnosis is precisely the behavior of a learner who has mastered one mode, not of a leader who diagnoses before recommending.

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9 Correct answer **C** Difficulty estimate 5/10 · Single response

A ✗ The absence of a penalty system is not the root defect; an enforcement mechanism can be procedural, interactive or periodic, not necessarily punitive. More important, vague slogan-style clauses ("we respect each other") cannot even be shown to have been violated, so no penalty can attach to them. The flaw lies in how the clauses are worded and who owns them, before it lies in the penalty.

B ✗ The timing of the charter's release after friction is not the cause of failure; charters are built and revised through the very conflicts that get resolved, and every conflict handled generates a new rule. The problem lies in the nature of the clauses (imposed slogans), not in the moment they were written; a charter built collectively after friction is more useful than slogans on day one.

C ✓ An effective charter rests on three elements, and it falls if any one of them falls: specific behaviors that can be shown to have been violated, collective building that gives ownership, and an enforcement mechanism. This charter lacks the first two together: "we respect each other" is a slogan that neither binds nor allows a breach to be measured, and its wording, imposed by leadership, strips it of the team's ownership. The keyword is "shared," not "imposed."

D ✗ The delivery channel (email versus meeting) is a symptom, not a root; imposed generic slogans read aloud are still slogans that do not bind. The core defect is that the clauses are vague and not built collectively, which no change in the way they are presented can fix.

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10 Correct answer **C** Difficulty estimate 5/10 · Single response

A ✗ Applying the harshest response to all three cases conflates violations with different sources: treating an incidental lapse as deliberate and concealed is unfair, alienates people and wastes trust. "Fairness" does not mean identical punishment; it means punishment proportionate to the type of breach. A single response to every case ignores the diagnosis that determines the fitting mode.

B ✗ Overlooking all three violations is precisely the avoidance that undermines the environment the leader claims to be building: a team that sees a breach go uncorrected rightly concludes that the rule is not binding, and the charter collapses as a system. A general reminder does not address a deliberate, concealed breach; remediation is a required act of leadership, not an option.

C ✓ Remediation is a leadership act driven by diagnosing the type of violation: an incidental lapse needs only a brief, gentle reminder; a repeated violation calls for a conversation about the root cause (perhaps the rule itself needs adjusting); a deliberate, concealed violation calls for reaffirming the obligation through firm, documented intervention. This gradation matches the severity of the response to the nature of the breach and keeps the rule alive, with neither excess nor laxity.

D ✗ Dropping the rule because it is being violated rewards the violation and signals that repeated breaches void the rules, so the whole charter collapses. Reviewing the drawings is a core quality control, and making it optional hollows it out; the remedy is to reinstate the rule with a graduated response, not to abandon it to appease those who break it.

Why this option attracts

Avoiding conflict within the team preserves harmony and serves productivity

Fix: The ECO 2026 P-T2 enabler explicitly says to manage and rectify ground rule violations — that is, addressing them is a required act of leadership, not an option. Avoiding moves the conflict from the visible surface to a hidden interaction that eats away at trust, and it blows up later at a higher cost. Example: a digitization team in a government ministry. A senior engineer repeatedly breaks the code review rules. The leader avoids confrontation to preserve the relationship. The result after six months: the team loses trust in the rules entirely, slides into low quality at every code review checkpoint, and two key engineers leave in protest. The final cost of avoidance is several times the cost of early confrontation.

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11 Correct answer **B** Difficulty estimate 5/10 · Single response

A ✗ Switching to enforcing the procedure at the first slip abandons the conversation at the very moment the tool was designed to rescue it; the counterattack signals that the shared goal has collapsed, not that dialogue is impossible. A top-down ruling here ends the tension on the surface and leaves the root of the violation unaddressed.

B ✓ When the shared goal slips into defense or attack, the conversation is restored through a stepwise verbal sequence: committing to seek a shared purpose, then recognizing the reason behind the difference between the two strategies, then inventing a new shared goal, then brainstorming to reach it. This sequence rescues the conversation from collapse by returning it to a footing of cooperation rather than hostility, which is the purpose of the verbal tool when a conversation falters.

C ✗ Postponing for a week is an escape from the very moment when a tool for rescuing the conversation is at hand; leaving both parties with an unresolved accusation for a week entrenches hostility rather than dissolving it. Postponement helps when information is missing, not for fleeing a verbal slide that can be handled on the spot.

D ✗ Answering an accusation with an accusation and laying out the record of violations escalates the hostility and destroys the shared goal the conversation started with, turning it into a trial. Proving the other party wrong wins a point and loses the conversation; the tool calls for restoring common ground, not winning the duel.

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12 Correct answer **D** Difficulty estimate 6/10 · Single response

A ✗ Early escalation does not save time; it squanders the leader's authority and strains relationships needlessly. A team that sees institutional escalation over a single incidental breach reads the leader as unable to deal with it directly. Seriousness about protecting deadlines shows in proportionate internal handling, not in a leap to governance.

B ✗ Softening the requested penalty does not fix the structural defect: the problem is that institutional escalation itself is premature, not the severity of the penalty within it. Graduating through the levels (team, then signed strategy, then governance) is a requirement, and graduating the penalty within a level that was reached prematurely does not substitute for it.

C ✗ Not every breach that affects the schedule belongs at the governance level by nature; the great majority of violations are resolved at the first level, within the team, through diagnosis and conversation. Treating governance as the default level for any lapse cancels the logic of graduation and floods the organization with interventions that could have been settled locally.

D ✓ The escalation playbook requires exhausting each level before climbing to the next; a single incidental breach belongs at level one: diagnosis and a conversation with the editor, and an entry in an internal log. Jumping straight to institutional escalation, with no conversation and no documentation of a repeated pattern, squanders the leader's authority and strains the relationship, and the escalation itself will collapse on review for lack of documentation of the two earlier levels.

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13 Correct answer **A, B, C** Difficulty estimate 5/10 · Multiple response

A ✓ Informing the contractor and suppliers in advance of the escalation mechanism and the principles for resolution embodies the extension of conflict management to external stakeholders: communicating conflict-management principles is not limited to the team but explicitly includes outside parties, since each party knowing how disagreements will be handled before they arise prevents them from erupting later.

B ✓ Applying the same diagnosis layers (source × context × cost of delay) to a disagreement with an external regulatory body confirms that diagnostic competence does not stop at the organization's boundary. An external disagreement deserves the same diagnosis; it is a valid extension of the principle beyond the team.

C ✓ Aligning shared working rules with suppliers at the interface points, together with a mechanism for handling breaches of them, extends the shared-rules environment to external partners. Shared rules are not the exclusive property of the internal team; extending them to suppliers protects the interface points where the most serious conflicts arise.

D ✗ Confining communication about disagreements to the team and barring discussion of conflict-management principles with external parties is the very misunderstanding the colleague wanted to correct; conflict management is a competency that also faces outward to stakeholders, not only inward. Hiding the principles from suppliers leaves the interface points without agreed rules, so conflict erupts where it could have been controlled in advance.

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14 Correct answer **A** Difficulty estimate 4/10 · Matching

A ✓ The correct matching reflects the condition under which each mode works: Competing (1-b) for a crisis, where assertiveness is high and legitimacy rests in the leader's position; Collaborating (2-a) for a major, long-lasting decision where time allows and commitment is a condition; Compromising (3-e) for equal power and tight time in a methods dispute; Avoiding (4-d) for a trivial matter or when the emotional cost outweighs the value of resolution; Accommodating (5-c) when the other party is right or the issue matters more to them. The matching underscores that competence lies in moving among the modes according to the diagnosis.

B ✗ It gets 1-b, 2-a and 5-c right but swaps 3 and 4: it assigns Compromising to the trivial matter (d) and Avoiding to equal power in a methods dispute (e). The correct answer is the reverse: mutual concession for equal power and tight time, avoidance for the trivial matter. Swapping the two contexts applies each mode in the wrong place.

C ✗ It swaps the first two modes: it assigns Competing to the major, long-lasting decision (a) and Collaborating to the urgent crisis (b). Assertiveness backed by authority in a long-lasting decision breaks the commitment that is needed, and prolonged collaboration in an urgent crisis misses the moment for decisive action — the opposite of what the diagnosis recommends.

D ✗ It gets 1-b, 2-a and 3-e right but reverses 4 and 5: it assigns Avoiding to the case where the other party is right (c) and Accommodating to the trivial matter (d). Avoiding when the other party is right throws away a correct solution, and accommodating on a trivial matter is a concession for no reason; the correct pairing is Accommodating when the other party is right and Avoiding for the trivial matter.

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15 Correct answer **D** Difficulty estimate 4/10 · Hotspot

A ✗ Region 4 (Avoiding) is low assertiveness and low cooperativeness; it works for a trivial matter or when delay is needed to gather information. A high cost of delay and the need for shared commitment make avoidance the worst choice here, so region 4 contradicts what the diagnosis recommends.

B ✗ Region 1 (Competing) is high assertiveness with low cooperativeness; it works in an urgent crisis where legitimacy rests in the leader's position. Imposing a solution in a values conflict with a long-term partner breaks the commitment required and inflames the dispute, so it is the wrong region for this context.

C ✗ Region 3 (Compromising) works in a methods conflict when power is equal and time is short, but it fails in a values conflict: conceding half the value leaves both parties dissatisfied. Time here allows a deeper solution than splitting the difference, so region 3 falls short of what the situation demands.

D ✓ The situation combines a conflict over values (not settled by concession or data), a long relationship whose success depends on both parties' commitment, time that allows, and a high cost of delay — exactly the context for Collaborating (high assertiveness · high cooperativeness), region 2. The most suitable mode is derived from layered diagnosis, and region 2 is the position of full collaboration on the grid.

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16 Correct answer **A**

Difficulty estimate 5/10 · Single response

A ✓ Psychological safety is a shared belief that a person will not be punished or embarrassed for an error, a question or a difference of opinion — that is, the team's capacity to tolerate conflict, not its absence. Perfect calm and no reporting of errors that several technicians know about signal a shortage of safety, not an abundance of it; the less transparent team produces more undetected errors, and a team whose conflict stays hidden from its leader does not tell the leader what needs to be heard.

B ✗ Reading calm and quick consensus as conclusive evidence of psychological safety confuses the absence of conflict with the capacity to tolerate it. And the concealed errors are not a separate technical matter but a direct symptom of a climate in which technicians do not feel safe to report; technical training does not fix a silence caused by fear of raising an error.

C ✗ There is no such thing as “too much psychological safety” that produces hidden errors; that inverts the concept. Real psychological safety increases reporting because people do not fear embarrassment, while hiding known errors is a symptom of too little safety. Attributing the laxity to an abundance of safety reverses the causal relationship.

D ✗ The inference that high-risk teams need a climate of fear contradicts the evidence: teams ruled by fear hide errors rather than report them, and produce undetected failures at higher rates. Psychological safety is more necessary, not less, in critical contexts, because catching an error early guards against catastrophe.

Why this option attracts

Avoiding conflict within the team preserves harmony and serves productivity

Fix: The ECO 2026 P-T2 enabler explicitly says to manage and rectify ground rule violations — that is, addressing them is a required act of leadership, not an option. Avoiding moves the conflict from the visible surface to a hidden interaction that eats away at trust, and it blows up later at a higher cost. Example: a digitization team in a government ministry. A senior engineer repeatedly breaks the code review rules. The leader avoids confrontation to preserve the relationship. The result after six months: the team loses trust in the rules entirely, slides into low quality at every code review checkpoint, and two key engineers leave in protest. The final cost of avoidance is several times the cost of early confrontation.

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17 Correct answer **C** Difficulty estimate 6/10 · Single response

A ✗ Splitting the dock down the middle (Compromising) treats the two stated positions as if they were the real interests, leaving both parties with half of what they need: an hour and a half may not suffice to unload inbound deliveries before the ice melts, or to get orders out before the carrier's run. Splitting the difference looks fair but wastes a solution that fully satisfies both sides when the interests are compatible.

B ✗ Giving priority to the more productive department (Competing) creates a winner and a loser in a dispute that does not call for one: the two needs do not conflict in time, so dropping one department's need creates a loser for no reason and leaves the resource monopolized. A top-down ruling is unnecessary when a solution serves both interests.

C ✓ The two stated positions (reserving the dock in the same window) conceal two compatible interests: unloading inbound deliveries before the ice melts and getting orders out before the carrier's run. Separating position from interest reveals that both can be met together through smart scheduling, not by splitting the dock. This is the essence of a collaborative solution: building an option that serves both aims instead of bargaining over the stated positions.

D ✗ Random rotation without intervention (Avoiding) leaves the two compatible interests exposed to failure every day: a day may come when inbound deliveries are not unloaded before the ice melts, or orders do not leave before the carrier's run. Avoidance wastes the chance to apply a solution that is already known, and turns a dispute that collaboration could solve into operational chaos.

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18 Correct answer **B** Difficulty estimate 4/10 · Matching

A ✗ It gets goals (3-a) and values (4-c) right but swaps the two easiest: it assigns the methods approach to a conflict over facts (d) and the data-and-arbitration approach to a conflict over methods (b). A conflict over facts is settled with data, not with a quick concession, so this is a remedy applied in the wrong place.

B ✓ The correct matching pairs each source with its remedy regardless of display order: conflict over facts (1-b) is settled with data and documentation, or by an arbitrating third party; conflict over methods (2-d), where the parties agree on the goal and differ on the route, calls for Compromising or a quick Collaborating; conflict over goals (3-a) calls for amending the charter or escalating to stakeholders for alignment; conflict over values (4-c), the hardest, calls for mediation or an acknowledgment that it is managed, not resolved.

C ✗ It gets the two easiest right (facts 1-b and methods 2-d) but reverses the two hardest: it assigns the values approach to a conflict over goals (c) and the goals approach to a conflict over values (a). A values conflict is the most intractable: it is managed through mediation or accepted as unresolvable, whereas a goals conflict is handled by amending the charter or aligning stakeholders.

D ✗ A complete inversion of the difficulty ladder: it makes the conflict over facts the hardest (c) and settles the values conflict with data and arbitration (b). A conflict over facts is the easiest, settled with data, and a values conflict is the hardest; an inverted matching strips the diagnosis of its function.

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19 Correct answer **B** Difficulty estimate 5/10 · Case study

A ✗ Accepting the "personal clash" label addresses the apparent topic and leaves the source: the facts show that the two engineers are acting under the pressure of two conflicting contractual structures, not in a dispute of temperament. Relational mediation may improve the tone, but it does not remove the incentive that drives each party toward a different sequence, so the breakdown returns in new forms.

B ✓ The actual source is a conflict over goals built into the contract itself: North-Tech is paid on completing stages, so it prefers a slow sequence that accumulates them, while Merid is paid on completion, so it prefers a faster sequence. Calling it personal misses the first layer of diagnosis and treats a symptom; as long as the root of the incentives stands, the conflict will renew itself however much the personal chemistry improves. A diagnosis of goals points toward alignment that touches the incentive structure, or escalation to stakeholders, not relational mediation.

C ✗ Nothing in the facts points to a conflict over facts about the location of the junction point; the two parties do not disagree about engineering figures but about the speed of the sequence, driven by conflicting incentives. Reading the conflict as a dispute over facts would send it to an engineering survey that does not touch the root of the goals, so the breakdown remains.

D ✗ Treating this as merely a disagreement over methods overlooks that the sequencing difference itself comes from two different contractual goals (maximizing payment on stages versus maximizing payment on completion). Compromising on a middle speed treats the surface and leaves the two opposing incentives to reproduce the dispute; a conflict of goals is not resolved by splitting the difference in method.

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20 Correct answer **D**

Difficulty estimate 5/10 · Case study

A ✗ Believing that a written rule is binding in itself ignores that a rule with no enforcement mechanism is a joke; a team that watches seven breaches go uncorrected rightly concludes the clause is not binding. A gentle, passing reminder answers an incidental lapse, not a pattern repeated seven times; and leaving the enforcement mechanism unchanged keeps the collapse going.

B ✗ Adding stricter rules does not repair the fault: the problem is not too few rules but that the existing ones are not enforced. A new rule on top of an unenforced one inherits the same fate and adds burden with no effect; a team that has learned that breaches are never corrected will treat the new rules like the old.

C ✗ Dropping the rule because it is being violated rewards the breach and removes an essential control over the project's riskiest point (the junction point where the two drives meet). Leaving coordination to individual judgment at a point where one error threatens costly rework multiplies the risk rather than reducing it; the remedy is to enforce the rule, not drop it.

D ✓ A team that watches a violation go uncorrected concludes the rules are not binding, so each member chooses what to hold themselves to and the charter collapses as a system — which is what the seven unaddressed breaches did. Addressing violations is a required act of leadership, not an option, and the first step is to reactivate the existing rule with accountability proportionate to the type of breach, not to write a new rule to pile onto a dead clause. Reviving the existing rule comes before any expansion of the charter.

Why this option attracts

Avoiding conflict within the team preserves harmony and serves productivity

Fix: The ECO 2026 P-T2 enabler explicitly says to manage and rectify ground rule violations — that is, addressing them is a required act of leadership, not an option. Avoiding moves the conflict from the visible surface to a hidden interaction that eats away at trust, and it blows up later at a higher cost. Example: a digitization team in a government ministry. A senior engineer repeatedly breaks the code review rules. The leader avoids confrontation to preserve the relationship. The result after six months: the team loses trust in the rules entirely, slides into low quality at every code review checkpoint, and two key engineers leave in protest. The final cost of avoidance is several times the cost of early confrontation.

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21 Correct answer **C**

Difficulty estimate 6/10 · Case study

A ✗ Splitting the difference between the two speeds (Compromising) bargains over the stated positions and ignores that the two real interests are compatible, not opposed. A middle speed may guarantee neither junction integrity nor meeting the treaty date, leaving both parties with half of what they want when both of their goals could have been achieved together.

B ✗ Imposing the stronger party's sequence (Competing) usually creates a winner and a loser in a project that needs both parties' commitment for years at a shared junction point, and it ignores that both interests can be achieved together. Deciding by authority here sacrifices the cooperation the project requires and leaves the losing party resisting every later decision.

C ✓ The two stated positions (opposite sequencing speeds) conceal two shared interests that each party declared separately: junction integrity and meeting the treaty date. Separating position from interest makes it possible to build a sequence that serves both goals (for example, a sequence that ensures junction accuracy in the critical phases and speeds up the rest). That is the core of Collaborating: creating an option that meets the underlying interests instead of bargaining over positions. Uncovering the two compatible interests makes a collaborative solution both possible and necessary.

D ✗ Postponing the sequencing decision until the two drives approach each other (Avoiding) risks the sequencing conflict surfacing late, when rework at the junction costs more — exactly what the shared interest fears. Avoiding wastes a ready disclosure of two compatible interests and keeps the project hostage to two stated positions that have no need to conflict.

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22 Correct answer **A**

Difficulty estimate 6/10 · Case study

A ✓ The escalation playbook permits moving to governance when levels one and two are exhausted without a result, which is what happened here, with full documentation. The high cost of delay (4 million/month) and the treaty date that cannot be extended make escalation timely now, not premature. The right approach is to frame it as a documented request for a result, based on the file from the two earlier levels, not as an attack on a party — escalation uses institutional authority to resolve what could not be resolved internally.

B ✗ Rejecting escalation outright swings to the opposite extreme from jumping ahead: repeating conversations after the two levels have been exhausted without a result leaves the team collapsing, the cost of delay accumulating and the treaty date drawing closer. Escalation in its proper place is not an admission of failure but protection of the intended value; and excessive delay here endangers the whole project to preserve a superficial harmony.

C ✗ Escalating from the first breach wastes the leader's authority and strains the partnership over a breach that could have been handled internally; a high cost of delay does not justify skipping the two lower levels but makes documenting them more important, so that the escalation holds up later. The playbook's distinguishing value is that it exhausts the local level before involving the institution; jumping ahead removes that discipline.

D ✗ Framing escalation as a personal complaint against the contractor turns it into an attack on a party instead of a request for a result, which provokes defensiveness and weakens the leader's position before the authority. Sound escalation rests on the file from the two earlier levels and is worded around the outcome required (securing the junction point and meeting the treaty date), not around condemning an individual — especially since the root of the dispute is structural, in the incentives, not personal.

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