Six Steps to Mediation

1. Introduction
The mediator should make the parties feel at ease and explain the ground rules.
The mediator’s role is not to make a decision but to help the parties reach agreement.
The mediator explains that he or she will not take sides.

2. Telling the Story
Each party is given an opportunity to tell his or her version of what happened. No interruptions are allowed.
The other party then explains his or her version of the facts. Again, no interruptions are allowed.
Any of the participants may take notes during the process.
The mediator’s notes are destroyed at the end of the process to ensure confidentiality.

3. Identifying Facts, Issues, and Interests
Next the mediator attempts to identify any agreed upon facts and issues and the items that are important to each person.
The mediator listens to each side, summarizes each party’s view, and checks to make sure that each party understands the other’s view. This is a key element. Understanding is the key to resolving conflict.

4. Identifying Alternative Solutions
During this step, the participants (with help from the mediator) think of all the possible solutions to their problem. Because the opposing sides of the dispute probably arrived at the mediation session with a desired outcome in mind, it is often difficult for them to consider other options.
The mediator makes a list of solutions and asks each party to explain his or her feelings about each one.

5. Revising and Discussing Solutions
On the basis of feelings expressed by each party, the mediator revises the list of possible solutions and tries to identify a solution that both parties agree to.

6. Reaching an Agreement
The mediator helps the parties reach an agreement by choosing a solution that has been discussed and that both parties accept.
The agreement should be put in writing.
The written agreement should be as specific as possible, stating exactly what each party has agreed to do and when he or she will do it.
The agreement should also explain what will happen if either disputant breaks the agreement.
Once it is finalized, the agreement is signed by both parties.
1. **That’s my girlfriend/boyfriend!**
   Two teenagers found out they are both dating the same person. Both are angry and upset at the other person and demand that the other break up with the boyfriend/girlfriend. Neither one wants to budge. How can this conflict be resolved peacefully?

2. **Give that back!**
   Lisa lets Carly borrow money to buy lunch, but Carly refuses to pay Lisa back. In retaliation, Lisa steals Carly’s jewelry out of her locker. How can Lisa and Carly reach a peaceful end to their problem?

3. **I’m the starting quarterback!**
   Shawn was the starting quarterback for his middle school football team, but he was benched for a game after he was suspended from school. Anthony, the backup quarterback, played a great game in Shawn’s place and is now the starting quarterback. Shawn has turned the entire team against Anthony and has threatened to fight Anthony unless he quits the team. What can be done to end this conflict before it turns violent?

4. **The class president is going to be me!**
   Robert is running for 3rd grade class president against Stephanie, who has been class president for the past two years. Robert is more of a competitive threat than Stephanie thought, so she rips down his posters. Robert retaliates by starting rumors about Stephanie. The election is getting out of control. How can this situation be resolved?