Mode: Expository Writing
Form: Feature Article
Prompt: *'The ability to compromise is important when responding to conflict.'*

[Headline]

When Mikhail Gorbachev met with Ronald Regan, bringing an end to the decades-long 'Cold War', this could perhaps be seen as one of the greatest compromises on the world stage. Gorbachev's policies of Glasnost and Perestroika and the disassembling of the Soviet bloc brought about a relatively peaceful resolution to a grand conflict. This makes evident the power of compromise, in its ability to bring about resolution to conflicts even as large as the Cold War. But it may be difficult for individuals, or groups, involved in a conflict to reach compromise, for compromise usually involves giving up something as a concession.

Usually this 'something' is quite important – be it a desire to own land or a political ideology. Furthermore, although compromise may be reached, there may still be ongoing conflict; this makes evident that compromise does not necessarily entail an end to the conflict. However, usually, compromise is the best alternative conducive to the resolution of conflict.

A conflict is sparked by an opposition of opinions, values and what one holds dear. Often, it is difficult for one to let go of these cherished values or ideas, for they are so ingrained in an individual's psyche. This makes compromise, and the resolution that it leads to, difficult, for this usually involves a concession of these values or ideas.

The Secret River by Kate Grenville highlights how the inability to concede one's desires can create, and exacerbate, conflict. William Thornhill, a convict who comes to the penal colony of new South Wales after stealing from the gentry in London, when emancipated has a 'hunger in his guts' to obtain the plot of land he calls 'Thornhill''s Point'. This desire, however, is in opposition to that of his wife, Sal, who yearns to return to England after this 'service to be endured ' is completed. It is Sal who concedes five years to Thornhill, who promises they will be 'on the first ship to London' after that time elapses. But Thornhill cannot give up on his land, and eventually a 'body of silence' grows between himself and Sal, as this conflict continues. 'Silence is only argument carried out by other means' Che Guevarra once said, and this is indeed applicable to Sal and Thornhill's situation, for Thornhill's inability to compromise has created this silence that is a representation of the conflict between them. At the end of the novel, we see that the conflict still lingers, with Sal's yearning evident in her attempts to make a garden like England. Thornhill's inability to compromise shows how resolution was not achieved as a result and further highlights its importance.

When compromise is achieved, however, whether conflict resolution occurs completely is questionable. But some aspects of the conflict may be quelled, and this shows that compromise indeed brings beneficial outcomes, and is important indeed.

Apartheid in South Africa represents a time in which the government virtually sanctioned racial discrimination, and this indeed brought about conflict between the 'Whites', 'Coloured', 'Blacks' and 'Asians' of the nation. Many individuals were displaced from their home to live in autonomous regions where they were segregated from the rest of society, and often certain groups were given poor education, health and other public services. It is only individuals such as Nelson Mandela, who

Comment [AC1]: This piece needs a headline, sub-heading and by-line in order for it to employ the correct structure for a feature article.

Comment [AC2]: Interesting hook, directly addressing the key idea contained in the prompt.

Comment [AC3]: Development of ideas – compromise does not always resolve conflict.

Comment [AC4]: Further development of ideas – compromise can be difficult because it involves letting go of deeply held views and values.

Comment [AC5]: The set text is used to develop an idea about the consequences of an inability to compromise.

Comment [AC6]: It is not necessary to use quotes from the set text.

Comment [AC7]: Quote from famous South American revolutionary fighter used to add another perspective.

Comment [AC8]: Further perspective about the benefits of compromise offered.

Comment [AC9]: An historical example of conflict is used to develop an idea about the benefits of compromise.

had an ideal which he would die for, an ideal that all individuals in South Africa would 'live in harmony and with equal opportunities', that were able to bring about change and compromise. Mandela's ANC party was able to reach compromises with the then-governing Nationalist Party of de Klerk, and an election, where any individual in South Africa, no matter their skin colour, could vote, occurred. With Mandela winning, he brought about many policies that disassembled apartheid and brought about much more equity between the people of the 'Rainbow Nation'.

The ability of compromise to resolve conflict is indeed powerful, but often it is not enough if the conflict is large and only a small number of individuals are prepared to make some kind of compromise. Much of the time it is necessary for large groups to reach a compromise in a conflict as a whole if a resolution is to be found, as occurred in South Africa.

Comment [AC10]: A further point is made that compromise is only effective in resolving large scale conflicts if the majority of people are involved.

The characters of Tom Blackwood and Dick Thornhill in Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* represent how conflict resolution between the convict settlers of New South Wales and the native Aborigines was achievable through compromise. But with only these two individuals doing so, the conflict continued to escalate until it culminated in the massacre at the end of the novel. Tom Blackwood deemed the Aborigines 'peaceful folk' and compromised by learning their customs and language, and even having a child with one of the Aborigine women, causing little conflict between himself and Aborigines to occur, if at all. Dick, as a youth, is also able to appreciate and respect the Aborigines and play with the aboriginal children, even being described by Thornhill as like their 'pale cousin'. Yet these two individuals, the few represented in the novel who are willing to compromise, are eclipsed by the majority of settlers who deem the Aborigines 'black insect(s)' too be '(ex)terminated' and are indeed uncompromising. Despite compromise and acceptance occurring in some individuals, it was necessary for a large majority to compromise if 'what the worst of men do' was to be avoided.

Comment [AC11]: The set text is used to develop this idea. (Note: It is not necessary to discuss the text in more than one paragraph; a single reference to the text is sufficient.)

Compromise is indeed important in a conflict for it has the potential to resolve it, if it is undertaken. However, its ability to resolve conflict is detrimental in that it is reliant, in certain conflicts, for compromise to be undertaken en masse. Furthermore, the conflict it attempts to resolve may not be entirely finished. But compromise should be pursued, no matter how hard it is to chase, for it is one of the greatest tools we have in disassembling a conflict. And without this tool the machine of conflict may only continue and grow, harming many.

Comment [AC12]: A summary of the ideas discussed throughout the piece is provided in the conclusion. A strong final statement is made.

<u>Assessor Comments:</u>

- This is an upper-range response (8+/10 marks).
- Demonstrates complex thinking in relation to prompt and Context.
- Interesting, conceptually sophisticated and moves easily from selected text to other ideas, keeping the prompt clearly in view from beginning to conclusion.
- Knowledge of text enables strategic selection of ideas from it. Articulate, confident, strong, precise vocabulary and clear expression.
- Cohesive, detailed and clear.