How Fights Start
Arguments

- Anger is the root problem in many arguments or fights.
- The body reacts to anger in the same way that it reacts to stress.
  - Tensed muscles
  - Increased heart rate
  - Increased breathing rate
- Hurt pride and embarrassment also play a large role in arguments or fights.
Revenge

- Revenge can lead to a violent and dangerous cycle of fighting.
- When revenge is the motivator in a fight, the fight can **escalate**, or grow more intense.
- Revenge is a common motive in fights between territorial gangs because they feel responsible for protecting other members of the gang.
Peer Pressure

- It is harder for a lot of people to avoid a fight or argument when bystanders are present.
- **Instigators** - people who encourage fighting between others while staying out of the fight themselves.
- It can be difficult to settle a fight peacefully when there are other people present and yelling their thoughts.
How to Prevent Fights
Choosing Not to Fight

- Learn peaceful alternatives to fighting even if the other person really wants to fight.
- The spreading of rumors or name-calling may go on for days or week before an initial fight.
- It is better to deal with the situation sooner when both people are less angry.
- Once you find that there is a problem there are two general approaches you can take:
  - Ignoring the conflict
  - Confronting the person
Ignoring a Conflict

- This is not a form of cowardice- it is a form of maturity and self-control.
- The cowardly act may be to fight because of pride or to “save face” with your peers.
- Be flexible- if the first strategy in ignoring the conflict doesn’t work you may need to choose another.
- Safety should always be your first concern when deciding to ignore or confront a situation.
Ignore A Situation If:

- **Page 181 Figure 13 Ignore a situation if:**
  - You will probably never see the person again.
  - The person or issue isn’t that important to you.
  - The conflict is based on rumors that can be overlooked.
  - The conflict is about something trivial or silly.
  - A person is trying to get you into trouble by provoking you.

- **Control your anger in a situation.**
  - Thinking with a clear head will allow you to make better decisions.
Confronting A Person Wisely

- Choose a time and place when you can talk face-to-face without an audience.
  - Meet in a public place
  - Avoid a confrontation when someone has been using drugs or alcohol.

- Stay calm
  - Focus on keeping your voice low.
  - Use rehearsal skills.

- Negotiate a solution
  - Do the unexpected
  - Provide a way out
  - Be willing to apologize
Helping Others Avoid Fights

- **Mediation** is a process for resolving conflicts that involves a neutral third party.
  - Never get involved in a situation that may turn violent at any moment.
- Be a bystander:
  - Ignore negative remarks and people
  - Refuse to spread rumors
  - Do not relay a threat or insult from one person to another
  - Stay away from areas where fights may occur
- Use positive behaviors and support apologies given.
When to Involve an Adult

- If a friend reveals plans of violence to you, you should let an adult know especially if they talk about using a weapon.
- Doing this shows that you care enough about your friend that you will not let them be lost to violence.