1. Use the systems theory to analyze the case study.
 What system theory am I using?
2. Use three questions from **either** the Wilmot-Hocker Conflict Assessment Guide **or** The
 Difficult Conversations Guide to assess the conflict in the case.
3. Length of the paper should be 475 – 675 words.

write a response paper between 475 – 675 words. Using the case study, assess the conflict using the systems theory approach. Specifically, choose any three questions from **either** the Wilmot-Hocker Conflict Assessment Guide

**Question 1 – Nature of the Conlict**Briefly describe what is going on
 **A.** What are the “triggering events” that brought this conflict into mutual

awareness?
**B.** What is the historical context of this conflict in terms of (1) the ongoing

relationship between the parties and (2) other, external events

within which this conflict is embedded?

**C.** Do the parties have assumptions about conflict that are discernable by

their choices of conflict metaphors, patterns of behavior, or clear expressions

of their attitudes about conflict?

**D.** Conflict elements:

**1.** How is the struggle being expressed by each party?

**2.** What are the perceived incompatible goals?
**3.**What are the perceived scarce resources?

**4.** In what ways are the parties interdependent? How are they interfering

with one another? How are they cooperating to keep the

conflict in motion?

**E.** Has the conflict vacillated between productive and destructive phases? If

so, which elements were transformed during the productive cycles? Which

elements might be transformed by creative solutions to the conflict?

**Question 2 – Styles**What are styles?
*Conflict-habituated* relationships, in which conflict recurs constantly but has little

productive effect; the fighters “don’t get anywhere.” Page 223 Wilmot/Hocker

avoidance, toleration, fighting, or processing Wilmot/Hocker page 225

**A.** What individual styles did each party use?

**B.** How did the individual styles change during the course of

the conflict?

**C.** How did the parties perceive the other’s style?

**D.** In what way did a party’s style reinforce the choices the other party

made as the conflict progressed?

**E.** Were the style choices primarily symmetrical or complementary?

**F.** From an external perspective, what were the advantages and disadvantages

of each style within this particular conflict?

**G.** Can the overall system be characterized as having a predominant style?

What do the participants say about the relationship as a whole?

**H.** Do the participants appear to strategize about their conflict choices or

remain spontaneous?

**I.** How does each party view the other’s strategizing?

**J.** What are the tactical options used by both parties?

**K.** Do the tactical options classify primarily into avoidance, competition, or

collaboration?

**L.** How are the participants’ tactics mutually impacting on the others’

choices? How are the tactics interlocking to push the conflict through

phases of escalation, maintenance, and reduction?

**Question 3 – Negotiation**

**A.** Are the parties able to negotiate with one another? Why or why not?

**B.** What is done to equalize power?

**C.** Do the parties use primarily competitive tactics, collaborative tactics, or

some combination?

**D.** Were the parties able to reach agreements that are durable?

 **Conflict Assessment Guide**

The **Conflict Assessment Guide** will help you map all of the central elements of your

conflict.

**I. Nature of the Conflict**

**A.** What are the “triggering events” that brought this conflict into mutual

awareness?

**B.** What is the historical context of this conflict in terms of (1) the ongoing

relationship between the parties and (2) other, external events

within which this conflict is embedded?

**C.** Do the parties have assumptions about conflict that are discernable by

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**1.** How is the struggle being expressed by each party?

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**3.**What are the perceived scarce resources?

**4.** In what ways are the parties interdependent? How are they interfering

with one another? How are they cooperating to keep the

conflict in motion?

**E.** Has the conflict vacillated between productive and destructive phases? If

so, which elements were transformed during the productive cycles? Which

elements might be transformed by creative solutions to the conflict?

 **II. Orientation to the Conflict**

**A.** What attitudes toward conflict do participants seem to hold?

**B.** Do they perceive conflict as positive, negative, or neutral? How can you

tell?

**C.** What metaphoric images do conflict participants use? What metaphors

might you use to describe the conflict?

**D.** What is the cultural background of the participants? What is the

cultural context in which the conflict takes place?

**E.** How might gender roles, limitations, and expectations be operating in

this conflict?

 **|III. Interests and Goals**

**A.** How do the parties clarify their goals? Do they phrase them in individualistic

or systemic terms?

**B.** What does each party think the other’s goals are? Are they similar or

dissimilar to the perceptions of self-goals?

**C.** How have the goals been altered from the beginning of the conflict to

the present? In what ways are the prospective, transactive, and

retrospective goals similar or dissimilar?

**D.** What are the topic, relational, identity, and process goals?

**E.** How do the TRIP goals overlap with one another?

**F.** Which goals seem to be primary at different stages of the dispute?

**G.** Are the conflict parties “specializing” in one type or the other?

**H.** Are the identity and relational issues the “drivers” of this dispute?

**I.** Are any of the goals emerging in different forms?

**J.** How do the goals shift during the prospective, transactive, and

retrospective phases?

 **IV. Power**

**A.** What attitudes about their own and the other’s power does each party

have? Do they talk openly about power, or is it not discussed?

**B.** What do the parties see as their own and the other’s dependencies on

one another? As an external observer, can you classify some dependencies

that they do not list?

**C.** What power currencies do the parties see themselves and the other possessing?

**D.** From an external perspective, what power currencies of which the participants

are not aware seem to be operating?

**E.** In what ways do the parties disagree on the balance of power between

them? Do they underestimate their own or the other’s influence?
**F.** What impact does each party’s assessment of power have on subsequent

choices in the conflict?

**G.** What evidence of destructive “power balancing” occurs?

**H.** In what ways do observers of the conflict agree and disagree with the parties’

assessments of their power?

**I.** What are some unused sources of power that are present?

 **V. Styles**

**A.** What individual styles did each party use?

**B.** How did the individual styles change during the course of

the conflict?

**C.** How did the parties perceive the other’s style?

**D.** In what way did a party’s style reinforce the choices the other party

made as the conflict progressed?

**E.** Were the style choices primarily symmetrical or complementary?

**F.** From an external perspective, what were the advantages and disadvantages

of each style within this particular conflict?

**G.** Can the overall system be characterized as having a predominant style?

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**J.** What are the tactical options used by both parties?

**K.** Do the tactical options classify primarily into avoidance, competition, or

collaboration?

**L.** How are the participants’ tactics mutually impacting on the others’

choices? How are the tactics interlocking to push the conflict through

phases of escalation, maintenance, and reduction?

 **VI. Conflict and emotions**

**A.** In your situation, what approaches to change have you utilized or are

you contemplating? How effective are these approaches?

**B.** Choose several emotions that you and the other party have expressed in

this conflict. What are the functions of these emotions? How are they

mitigated or moderated?

**C.** What are you learning about emotions in this particular conflict?

**D.** Discuss how you might use positive emotions to help you (and the

other party) in this particular conflict.

**E.** In this conflict, have you strayed out of the “zone of effectiveness?”

How? What have you or might you do about this?

 **VII. Mapping Interactions and overall patterns**

**A.** What rules of repetitive patterns characterize this conflict?

**B.** What triangles and micro events best characterize the conflict?

**C.** How destructive is the tone of this conflict?

**D.** Are there coalitions that affect this conflict?

**VIII. Attempted Solutions**

**A.** What options have been explored for managing the conflict?

**B.** Have attempted solutions become part of the problem?

**C.** Have third parties been brought into the conflict? If so, what roles did

they play and what was the impact of their involvement?

**D.** Is this conflict a repetitive one, with attempted solutions providing temporary

change but with the overall pattern remaining unchanged? If so,

what is that overall pattern?

**E.** Can you identify categories of solutions that have not been tried?

 **IX. Negotiation**

**A.** Are the parties able to negotiate with one another? Why or why not?

**B.** What is done to equalize power?

**C.** Do the parties use primarily competitive tactics, collaborative tactics, or

some combination?

**D.** Were the parties able to reach agreements that are durable?

 **X. Forgiveness & Reconciliation**

**A.** In your situation, are you working toward forgiveness or reconciliation?

Clearly state which in terms of the chapter’s information on the difference

between the two.

**B.** In your situation, what power imbalances should be addressed? How are

you doing that?

**C.** For you, is forgiveness a decision or a process? Use information in the

chapter to discuss your position.

**D.** In what way is your situation calling for intrapersonal or interpersonal

forgiveness, or both?

**E.** Discuss the problems of apology in your situation.

**F.** What lessons from other cultures might inform your study of your own

conflict?