

Lesson Plan Quick Look

Title of Lesson: Leading the Way: Finding Inspiration in the Work of Dolores Huerta and César Chávez

Photo/Image: “Dolores Huerta signing up members for National Farm Workers Association,” Joseph Francis Gunterman, 1962. Image courtesy of Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State, University, Detroit, Michigan.



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Content Area(s): Language Arts, Speaking & Listening, Social Studies

Grade/Age level: 6-12

Duration: 90 minutes

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Leading the Way: Finding Inspiration in the Work of Dolores Huerta and César Chávez

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Materials Needed/Cost:

Activity 1: notecards/paper, readings, videos, and photographs (See handouts below)

Activity 2: writing supplies, materials to make a visual aid for a presentation (e.g., PowerPoint, butcher paper, markers)

Handouts:

See *Passages from The Union of Their Dreams*

- [Cesar Chavez's Eulogy for Rufino Contreras: February 14, 1979 Calexico CA](#)
- [Cesar Chavez: The Life Behind A Legacy Of Farm Labor Rights](#)
- [Biography: Dolores Huerta](#)
- [Dolores Huerta gets personal and political in a new documentary about her life](#)
- [Essential and expendable: The rise of agricultural labor and the United Farm Workers](#)
- [Photograph: Dolores Huerta signing up members for National Farm Workers Association](#)
- [Photograph: Dolores Huerta leads supporters of the United Farm Workers \(UFW\) in an unidentified march, early 1970s.](#)
- [Video: Cesar Chavez Interview \(1992\)](#)
- [Video: Dolores Huerta Interview \(2019\)](#)



Standard Addressed:

Activity 1:

[Language Arts: Reading](#): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7

[Language Arts: Writing](#): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8

[Speaking & Listening](#): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1

[Literacy in History/Social Studies](#): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

[Social Studies](#): 9-12.US.110

Activity 2:

[Speaking & Listening](#): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6

Depth of Knowledge/Bloom's Taxonomy:

Explain, evaluate, collaborate

Background:

After years of witnessing and experiencing the exploitation of farm workers by growers across California, César Chávez (1927-1993) and Dolores Huerta (1930-) co-founded the National Farm Workers Association in 1962, which merged with the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) to become the United Farm Workers of America, or United Farm Workers (UFW). Both leaders began their careers as organizers in the 1950s and joined forces after being introduced by Fred Ross, a mentor and mutual friend through the Community Service Organization (CSO). While in leadership roles with the UFW, Chávez and Huerta led strikes and boycotts against the grape and lettuce growers in California and later the larger United States, with the most well-known being the Delano grape strike of 1965. Although Chávez was seen as the leader of this movement, Huerta led boycott movements and lobbied for the farm workers movement in the California and U.S. governments. Chávez remained president of the UFW until his death in 1993. Huerta left the UFW after Chávez's death and created the Dolores Huerta Foundation in 2002. With Chávez and Huerta's leadership on the UFW executive board, the UFW negotiated contracts with growers to improve the working conditions and wages of the workers the union represented, and the UFW still fights for agricultural workers today. In this lesson plan, students will reflect on leadership skills, using primary and secondary sources featuring César Chávez and Dolores Huerta and the movement they led for decades.

Skill(s):

Synthesis, reflection, analysis, annotation, teamwork

Essential Question(s):

1. What traits does a leader have?
2. How can we use primary and secondary sources to study history?

Questions for Social Emotional Learning:

1. How do we know if someone is a leader? What traits and skills does a good leader have?
2. When have you seen multiple leaders work together toward a common goal?



3. Reflect on a time you were a leader to others.
4. Consider that each person has a unique leadership style. Describe a leader that you would like to work with.

Objectives:

Students will...

- explain the differences between primary and secondary sources.
- evaluate primary and secondary sources to answer the question: “What traits and skills does a good leader have?”
- participate in collaborative discussions and build on each other’s knowledge.

Academic Vocabulary/Word Wall:

Primary source, secondary source, United Farm Workers of America (UFW), César Chávez, Dolores Huerta, strike, boycott, union, organizer, huelga, “sí se puede”

[NHCC Glossary](#)

Brain Drain or Warm Up Activity:

Option 1 (in person): Organize students into groups. On notecards, have students individually write an answer to the prompt: “What attributes and skills should a good leader have?” Then gather these notecards and redistribute them to the groups so that each group gets a different group’s cards. Have the groups read through their peers’ responses and write a new response based on those cards.

Option 2 (virtual or in person): Using a Google Form, have students submit their response to the prompt “What attributes and skills should a good leader have?” Take those responses (organized by a Google sheet) and insert them to create a word cloud using [EdWordle](#). Ask students what they notice about the graphic. Which words stand out in the word cloud?

Basic Lesson Description and Procedure:

Activity 1a: Introduction

1. Provide students with a brief background on the United Farm Workers Movement, led by César Chávez and Dolores Huerta.
2. Introduce the terms *primary source* and *secondary source*. Ask them what they think the differences between primary and secondary sources are. Include an example of both and have students determine which is the primary source and which is the secondary source.

Activity 1b: Resource analysis

1. Distribute the primary and secondary sources provided in this lesson plan. (See Handouts section.)
2. In groups, have students discuss and annotate 1-3 sources and focus on responding to the prompts:



- a. "What stands out to you?"
 - b. "What leaderships traits do you see in these examples?"
 - c. "How are primary sources used in secondary sources?"
3. As a class, have groups share out what sorts of traits they listed. (They could write or draw these traits on a whiteboard/butcher paper/presentation slide to present their discussion with a visual.)

Activity 2: Being a Leader in Your Community

1. Individually or in groups, have students choose a cause that is important to them.
2. Present them with the prompts: "How can you be a leader in this cause? Do you already know a leader involved in this cause?" Have them individually journal a response.
3. In small groups, have students share their thoughts and compile a list of their favorite ideas to share with the class. (They prepare for sharing out verbally and/or with the assistance of a visual or digital aid, like [Jamboard](#).)
4. Have students share out responses with the rest of the class, using a visual aid for support if necessary.

Assessment/Observation Activity:

Activity 1: Written/Oral Response: Write a paragraph/paper synthesizing sources and personal experiences to answer the question: "What makes a good leader?"

Activity 2: Written/Oral Response: Write a reflective paper addressing the prompt: "What communities do you belong to? How can you be a good leader in my community?"

Lesson Conclusion/Potential Practice at Home:

Encourage students to notice leaders in their family, community, and/or school. Have them write down any additional characteristics of good leaders that they notice in their observations. Encourage them to ask the leaders in their community questions about their values, interests, and role models.

Accommodations & Modifications:

Activity 1: Any writing portion can be completed verbally or through drawing, and any discussion portion can be completed through writing or drawing.

Activity 2: If students don't find a cause that interests them, encourage them to consider events happening at the school or in their communities. (Should the school consider different food options at lunch? Should passing periods be longer or shorter? Etc.) Suggest ideas based on the students in your classroom, keeping in mind what you already know they care about.

Extension: Students may struggle to define a leader in their lives. If this is the case, help them refer to their definition of a good leader. Some examples of community leaders are



elders in their family or neighborhood, older siblings or cousins, coaches, music teachers, scout leaders, school staff, etc.

Culturally Responsive Instruction and Modifications:

César Chávez and Dolores Huerta became leaders in the farmworker movement and UFW after witnessing farmworkers' mistreatment by growers. Chávez grew up in a family that worked in the fields, and Huerta taught the children of farmworkers. These experiences impacted how these leaders saw the world. Encourage students to consider their own lived experiences and the experiences of leaders in their communities.

- What kinds of experiences prepare someone to be a leader?
- Are there times when people should look to others to be leaders for a cause they care about? Why?
- How does your culture view leadership?
- How does your cultural perspective impact your opinions about leadership?

Relevance to families and communities:

Throughout life, students will encounter leaders, both good and bad, and they will need to reflect on different leadership styles to learn how they prefer to be led and how they prefer to lead. Some students may already know a lot about César Chávez and Dolores Huerta, but for others, this lesson plan may be their first introduction to the entire movement. However, regardless of students' familiarity with the historical events of this lesson plan, every student has had some experience with leadership and can reflect on those experiences. Studying the leadership of César Chávez and Dolores Huerta can help students further reflect on leadership in general and become leaders in their own communities.

Cross-Curricular Connections:

1. Social Studies: Chicano Movement and the Civil Rights Movement
2. Art: posters and printmaking
3. Science: DDT and its effects on people
4. Agriculture: how farming works in the United States (both historically and today)

Additional Resources:

1. Bratt, Peter, dir. *Dolores*. 2017; San Francisco, CA: 5 Stick Films, 2017. PBS Distribution.
2. Brown, Monica, illus. Joe Cepeda, and trans. Carolina Valencia. *Side by Side/Lado a Lado: The Story of Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez/La Historia de Dolores Huerta y César Chávez*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010.
3. Pawel, Miriam. *The Crusades of Cesar Chavez*, New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2014.
4. Pawel, Miriam. *The Union of Their Dreams: Power, Hope, and Struggle in Cesar Chavez's Farm Worker Movement*, New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009.

Extension:

Activity 1: Looking for Primary Sources in Secondary Sources



Literacy in History/Social Studies: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRH.11-12.9

- Before beginning the extension, consider having students play a game of “telephone” in which one student whispers the phrase “I would like a piece of pie” to the student sitting next to them. That student will repeat what they heard to the following student, until every student has participated. The last student should say what they heard to the class, and then the first student should say what they initially said. This game demonstrates how our words can be altered when shared with others and the importance of thinking critically about the validity of secondary sources.
- This activity can be completed using the provided secondary sources, but students may also search for their own. Have students read and annotate a secondary source, specifically looking for how the secondary source uses primary source information. For instance, the source may include images, maps, or quotations. Provide them with the prompt: “How do primary sources influence secondary sources? How can secondary sources change the context of primary sources?”
- For an additional challenge, have students ponder the questions: “How would the farm worker movement have been different if it took place after the introduction of the internet and social media? What would stay the same?”

Activity 2: Interview a Community Leader

Speaking & Listening: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6

- Connect students with local community leaders related to the causes they are interested in, and have the students conduct an interview with the leader. Make time in class for students to present what they learn from the interview.

Feedback:

[Take this survey to share your feedback on this lesson plan.](#)



Passages from *The Union of Their Dreams: Power, Hope, and Struggle in Cesar Chavez's Farm Worker Movement* by Miriam Pawel

Chris found Chavez an irresistible force, a presence that belied his slight stature. Chavez was dark-complexioned with faintly Mexican Indian features, his dark hair parted on the left, slicked back or occasionally falling over his penetrating, perpetually tired eyes. He used those eyes when he wanted something, looking right at you, but otherwise he glanced down a lot. Sometimes a brief smile flashed across his face, or a mischievous grin. He dressed in work clothes, donning a shirt with a Nehru collar or embroidery for special occasions, never a tie. His speech, like his appearance, was unremarkable; his profound thoughts delivered in a flat voice, with run-on sentences often punctuated by “you know.” He was at his best in small groups, a good listener who left his audience convinced that their words mattered—even as he listened intently to make sure his points had gotten through. (pp. 12-13)

Cesar's brother Richard saw the difficulties clearly and had been trying to get Cesar's attention for months. A carpenter by trade, Richard Chavez had been on his way to a middle-class life in 1962 when his older brother convinced him to help build a union for farmworkers. When the lettuce strike started and all the union leaders flocked to Salinas, Richard Chavez was left alone in Delano to set up a hiring hall and figure out how to administer dozens of new contracts. Practical by nature, he grasped the problems right away. After visiting all the field offices in mid-1971, he grew increasingly concerned that the union was alienating its members. His brother brushed off the warnings. Richard Chavez thought the union's punitive measures—collecting back dues and fining members who did not attend meetings—so destructive that he simply stopped enforcing them. (p. 85)

Pawel, Miriam. *The Union of Their Dreams: Power, Hope, and Struggle in Cesar Chavez's Farm Worker Movement*, New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009.



Chris knew he could not match the standard that Chavez set. Chris would be home at night watching TV with Pudge, while Chavez was reading labor history and Gandhi. “I need first of all people who can work as much as I’ll work,” Chavez told a group of volunteers. “I don’t like them to take vacations. I don’t like them to run around in expensive cars. I don’t like them to wear ties. I’m a son of a bitch to work with . . . I work every day of the year. I just sleep and eat and work. I do nothing else.” Chris pushed himself relentlessly to do more, and where he fell short in hours, he compensated with efficiency and loyalty. Chavez said he could name only five people he could count on to get something done, with no excuses. Chris was one: “They just look at me and blink their eyes and do it. I may be wrong, they still do it. But it’s also a reciprocal thing, they have more influence with me than most anybody else.” (p. 98)

At twenty-eight, Sandy was one of the older union staff. He didn’t quite share the Chavez worship that was so prevalent. Sandy had seen Chavez inspire crowds but had not yet had much personal contact. Sandy’s first close encounter with Chavez made a lasting impression.

Sandy and a few of the sisters who had become full-time volunteers sat talking in the Coachella strike office at the end of the day, weary from the relentless pace and frightened by the Teamsters’ violence. Chavez walked into the small storefront in the strip mall. He launched into a tirade about their phone bills, cursing profusely in front of the nuns. Here he was, groveling with labor leaders in Washington to raise donations for a strike fund, while the union staff wasted money on phone calls.

Sandy found the outburst so incongruous he almost laughed. Any romanticized notions of Chavez evaporated. He was a leader, a symbol, a useful tool, and in the end, as the phone-bill tirade demonstrated, very human. The world of UFW cleaved into those drawn by the man and those attracted to the cause. With the union at war, that distinction blurred almost entirely. The diatribe over phone bills in the midst of so many real crises reminded Sandy that the man and the movement sometimes diverged. For Sandy, the cause always transcended its leader. (pp. 117-118)

Pawel, Miriam. *The Union of Their Dreams: Power, Hope, and Struggle in Cesar Chavez’*, New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009.