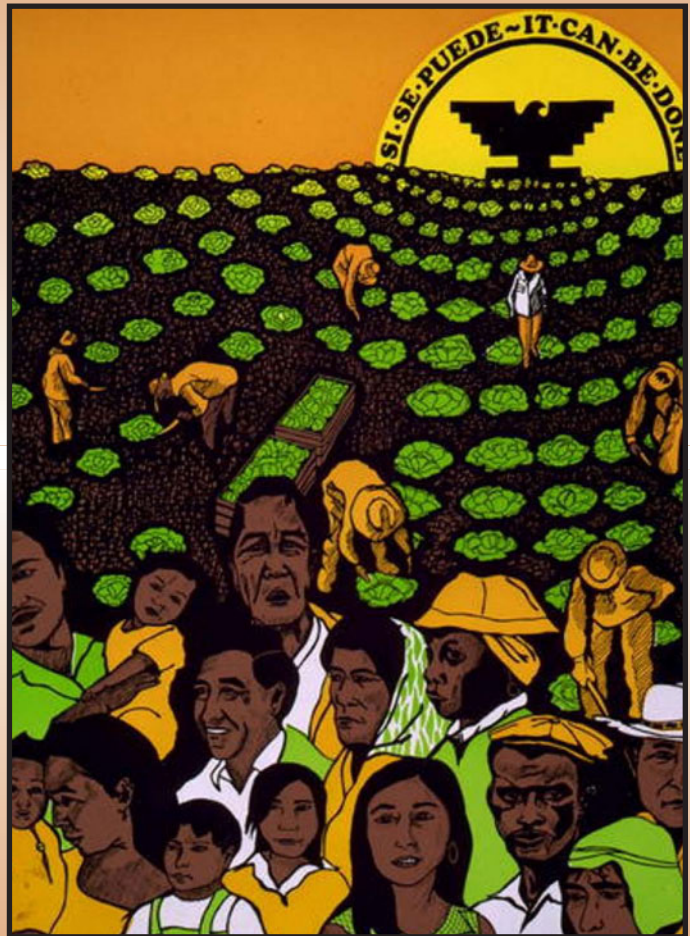


Lessons and Activities for Cesar Chavez Day



Lessons and Activities for Cesar Chavez Day

Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) is providing these free resources for teachers to:

1. Engage students in learning about and discussing key events and people associated with issues related to Mexican-American civil rights.
2. Provide opportunities for students to engage in service learning and civic participation activities related to civil rights and issues of immigration.

For additional lessons and resources related to immigration, please visit our *Educating About Immigration* web site: **www.crfimmigrationed.org**



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Lessons and Activities for Cesar Chavez Day

Lesson One: The Chicano Movement

A reading introducing Ernesto Galarza and Cesar Chavez, the Farm Workers' Union and the Grape Boycott. Discussion starters are provided to engage students in talking about the reading.

Lesson Two: Options for Addressing) Public Policy

Reviews methods for engaging in public policy issues. Provides options for students to explore including letters to the editor, letters to officials, letter-writing campaigns, petitioning, e-mail and telephone campaigns, and lobbying.

Lesson Three: Conducting Panel Discussions and Civil Conversations

Provides two strategies to engage students in discussing controversial issues and policies.

Lesson Four: Ideas for Using Quotes in the Classroom: Cesar Chavez

Provides strategies to use famous quotations to engage students in writing, speaking, and analysis skills. Provides several Chavez quotes for students to work with.

The Chicano Movement

The civil rights movement is frequently associated with the African-American struggle for equality and social justice. But another minority has played a significant role in advancing the cause of civil rights in the United States. Like African Americans, the Mexican-American, or Chicano, community has fought long and hard against racial discrimination and for civil rights.

Chicano activist Cesar Chavez is one of America's best known labor leaders. His commitment to the struggle for equality and his legacy of non-violent action is comparable to that of Martin Luther King. Like King, Chavez would be the first to explain that he was one of many civil rights activists.

One of Chavez's immediate forerunners was Ernesto Galarza. Shortly after World War II, Galarza began a campaign to organize Mexican-American farm workers. A dynamic civil rights leader, Galarza rose from humble origins as a field worker to become a widely recognized teacher, labor organizer, and historian. Despite vigorous efforts to help agricultural workers demand better wages and working conditions, Galarza achieved only limited success.

Galarza faced a difficult challenge: Federal labor laws did not protect farm workers. In addition, most Mexican migrant laborers worked on a temporary basis. They traveled from farm to farm throughout the Southwest and northward, cultivating and harvesting crops. Because of poor economic conditions in Mexico, migrant workers were willing to work for extremely low wages. Their mobility, their temporary employment, and their desperate economic circumstances made migrant workers difficult to organize. Still, Galarza's work in the 1940s and '50s set the stage for more successful efforts a few years later.



The Farm Workers' Union

Into the 1960s, low wages and difficult working conditions continued to make life miserable for thousands of Chicano farm workers and their families. In 1965, grape pickers earned an average of 90 cents an hour. Many workers, including children, labored long hours, risked injury from unsafe machinery, and suffered abusive treatment from supervisors and employers. They also endured substandard housing that lacked indoor plumbing, cooking facilities, or personal privacy.

One organization responding to farm workers' problems was the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC). Founded by Dolores Huerta, it included Chicanos, Filipinos, African Americans, and whites. Huerta had a long record of labor activism and commitment to human rights.

In 1962, Chavez invited Huerta to work with him in creating a new farm workers' union. Chavez had been a migrant farm worker as a young man and had already built up a long record of social protest and labor organizing. According to Huerta, "Cesar . . . knew that it wasn't going to work unless people owned the union . . . [and] that the only way . . . [was] to organize the union ourselves." Traveling throughout California, Chavez tirelessly met with farm workers any place he could find them—in the fields, at their homes, and in the migrant camps. His mission was to persuade them that forming a union would improve their lives.

In 1965, strikes by Filipino workers against major grape growers broke out in California's Central Valley. "All I knew was, they [the Filipinos] wanted to strike" Chavez explained. "We couldn't work while others were striking." Chavez's union, the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), joined the strike in solidarity with the Filipino workers.

The farm workers maintained that they—like any other workers—had the right to join a union that could represent them in labor negotiations. This right, called collective bargaining, gave the workers a better chance of negotiating fair working agreements with their employers, the growers. For farm workers, however, neither state nor federal law protected this right.

Six months later, the grape strike had grown, generating national press coverage. Thousands of striking farm workers formed picket lines around the vast vineyards near Delano, California. Many growers responded fiercely, employing strikebreakers and occasionally using violence against the picketers. Despite Chavez's call for nonviolence, some strikers resorted to violence as well. Local police often harassed the union, arresting strikers on questionable charges usually dismissed in court.

The Grape Boycott

Inspired by the tactics and outcome of the Montgomery bus boycott, Chavez announced a consumers' boycott of non-union grapes. The grape boycott became the core of the farm workers' non-violent strategy. The grape strikers sustained their boycott by linking it to the larger civil rights movement, which many Americans supported.

Chicano leaders organized marches and rallies in support of the farm workers' cause. The farm workers found allies among other unions, church groups, students, consumers, and civil rights organizations that publicized the grape boycott nationwide. Millions of consumers stopped buying grapes, creating substantial economic pressure on the large grape growers.

By 1966, some large growers conceded, recognizing the new farm workers' union. On August 22, 1966, the AWOC and the NWFA merged to form the United Farm Workers (UFW). The new union became the largest, most influential organization in the Chicano struggle for equality and social justice.

Many growers stubbornly refused to recognize the right of the UFW to unionize their farms.

The boycott and strike continued for five years. Chavez, following the example of India's non-violent leader Mahatma Gandhi, added personal hunger strikes to the UFW's arsenal of protest strategies. Repeated fasts, often lasting for several weeks, damaged Chavez' health, contributing to his death in 1993. But Chavez' fasts also generated great respect for his commitment to non-violent social change. By 1970, two-thirds of all grapes grown in the Central Valley came from unionized workers. In 1975, Chavez's efforts helped pass the nation's first farm labor act in California. It legalized collective bargaining and banned owners from firing striking workers. With these successes, the Chicano civil rights movement became a powerful force.

Thousands of young people were attracted to social activism through participation in "la huelga" (Spanish for strike). They saw the UFW as a major vehicle for social change. The UFW's political and economic agenda drew broad support for Chavez and his activities.

Discussion Starters

1. What non-violent strategies did Chavez employ in his work with the United Farm Workers?
2. Identify some of the contributions to the farm labor movement by Ernesto Galarza and Dolores Huerta
3. How did Chavez use the larger civil rights movement of the period to help make the grape boycott more effective?

Options for Affecting Public Policy

People in the United States have many options for making their opinions heard on issues facing the country and their communities. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees the rights of free speech, free press, petition, and assembly. These rights assure that political parties, interest groups, and individuals can influence the making of laws and governmental policies. The First Amendment allows peaceful methods for influencing elected representatives.

Choosing the best way to influence the political process can be a challenge. Questions arise about what method would be the most effective. What benefits does a particular approach offer? What are its potential costs? Political experts and everyday people often debate these questions. Not everybody agrees.

One approach to affecting public policy and opinion is by demonstrating. A demonstration can include marching, picketing, and walkouts by large numbers of people. Demonstrations have certain benefits. They can capture the attention of the news media and draw attention to the issue or cause. If large numbers of people are involved, demonstrations can show that many people have strong feelings about the issue. If demonstrations disrupt normal business, they can put pressure on officials.

Demonstrations can also have a downside. If they disrupt peoples' lives, they can cause resentment and alienate those who might be supportive. If they become violent, they can sway public opinion against the marchers. Because demonstrations can get so much media attention, they can solidify opposition.

The recent nationwide student school walkout demonstrations against proposed changes to federal immigration law serve as an example. Supporters argued that that the demonstrations drew media coverage and focused greater public attention to the issues involved and showed that many students were strongly opposed to more restrictive immigration laws. They argued that the demonstrations showed



that the young people involved were committed to their cause and exercising the rights of free expression and assembly non-violently.

Critics of the demonstration argued that the walkouts were illegal and disrupted schools and the education of the youths involved. They also pointed out that some of the schools affected could lose funding because students were not in school and those students could face discipline for walking out. Some also criticized the behaviors of some the demonstrators claiming that unruly behavior and waving Mexican national flags could actually hurt the cause supported by the students.

In addition to demonstrations, there are many other methods for affecting policy.

As you review each of the following approaches consider its benefits and costs. For each, discuss the following questions.

- What is the purpose of this approach?
- What are some of its potential benefits? What are some of its potential costs?
- Under what circumstances, would this approach be appropriate and get the best results?

Letters to the Editor

Almost every daily newspaper publishes letters to the editor. Many people read them. With a single letter, you can draw widespread attention to your concerns and perhaps get more support.

If your letter is published, show it to other people. Photocopy it and include it with handouts, fliers, news releases, etc.

Follow the paper's instructions. You can find them in the letters' section, near the editorials. They will tell you where to send the letter and other requirements.

Type and double-space the letter.

Include your name, address, and daytime phone number. Many papers contact the sender before publishing the letter.

Use "To the Editor" as the salutation.

Keep it less than one page. Long letters are seldom printed. Editors shorten longer letters.

Focus on one issue only.

Get to the point. Say why you're writing. State your opinion and the reasons that support it. If you have a solution, include it as a suggestion.

Make it stand out. Your letter will have a greater chance of being published. What makes a letter stand out? It might be interesting, have a good argument, use language well, be funny, etc. Include your age if this will help your letter stand out.



Letters to Officials

Most people in power keep close track of letters written by the public. It's one of the ways they gauge public opinion. Although a U.S. senator, a CEO, or the head of a non-profit may not personally read your letter, he or she has assistants who read letters and tally opinions. Your letter will be read, and it probably will be answered.

Tell who you are. Give your name, address, and who you are. The people who read your letter want to know who you are, why you care, and how to reach you.

Focus on one issue. Don't try to fight crime, air pollution, and unemployment all in one letter.

Keep it short and simple. State your ideas in the first paragraph. Get your idea across in a page or less. People who read a lot of letters don't have much time.

Be polite. You can disagree, but never threaten or insult in a letter. Let your ideas do the talking.

Include supporting material. If you have any newspaper articles, letters to the editor, or other written material supporting your position, include it.



Letter-Writing Campaigns

If politicians and corporations pay attention to one letter, think of what many letters can do.

Get permission to set up a card table in the mall and ask passersby to write letters. Hang a poster telling what you're doing. You can hand out leaflets, talk to people, and get those interested to write a short letter right there. Provide clipboards to write on. You can have several people writing letters at one time.

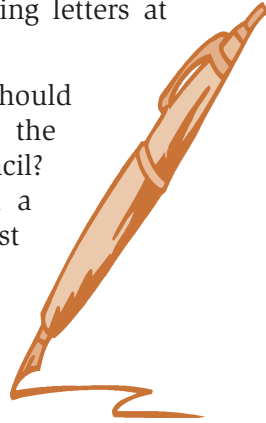
Plan your target. Who should receive the letters? All the members of the city council? The members sitting on a particular committee? Just one member? Decide.

Prepare a leaflet. Explain the problem. Give the address of the person to write to. Include all the information a person would need to write and mail the letter.

Don't send form letters. A handwritten letter shows that a person really cares. Some groups organizing letter-writing campaigns at malls often use a variety of pens and paper and envelopes. That way all the letters look different.

Get people's names, addresses, and phone numbers. People who write letters care about your problem. They are potential supporters.

Ask for small contributions for stationery and postage.



Petitioning

A petition is like a letter with a thousand signatures. It's easier to get people to sign a petition than write a letter. Officials know this—that's why they pay more attention to a letter-writing campaign. But a petition will help spread the word about your cause and your organization.

Give your petition a clear, simple title. Tell what you want.

Address the petition to an individual or group who can help you with your problem.

Write your petition like a short letter. Briefly describe the problem, your plan, and your reasons.

Provide numbered spaces for people to write their signature, address, and telephone number. The numbers will help you count the signatures you have collected.

Include your group's name on the petition.

Make every page a separate petition. That way more than one person can gather signatures. Also it makes it clear that people knew what they were signing.

Get permission to set up a table at school or at the local mall.

Be able to tell people about the problem and your strategy in clear, simple language. People will want to know more before they sign.

Let people make up their own minds. Deliver your message and let your ideas speak for themselves.

Get your friends to sign first. People will feel better if a lot of other people have already signed your petition.

Set a deadline. Energy for the drive will last a short time. Make the drive short. You can then claim, "In only a week, we collected 500 signatures."

Make copies of the petition before you deliver it. You may want to contact the people who signed it.

Do something special to deliver the petition. Present it at a public meeting or invite the media.

E-Mail and Telephone Campaigns

Politicians keep track of e-mails and telephone calls as carefully as they do letters. A flood of phone calls or e-mails can get a politician's attention as quickly as a stack of mail. And it's easier for most people to call or e-mail than to write a letter.

Target the swing votes. Unless your supporters will call everyone, it's best to call those lawmakers who have not made up their minds.

Prepare a brief message. For example, "I hope you are supporting the proposed new park. It's very important for everyone in the city."

Prepare a leaflet telling supporters who and how to call or e-mail. It should tell people:

- The name, title, phone number, and e-mail address of the official.
- The message to deliver.

Lobbying

You can work to persuade politicians to pass or oppose laws.

Know your subject. Politicians hear opinions from all sides on an issue. If you only know a little, you won't get far.

Learn the rules. What does it take to get a bill voted on? Ask an assistant how the legislative process works.

Find allies. What organizations have the same interests as you? Convince them that you can help each other by lobbying together. Find other politicians who will support your cause.

Know the opposition. Learn their arguments. You'll have to overcome them.

Don't burn your bridges. The saying, "Politics makes strange bedfellows," means that you might sometime need the support of someone you on occasion may consider an opponent. Don't ever take part in personal attacks. Stick to the issues.

Meeting With a Lawmaker

Make an appointment. You cannot expect to see a politician without an appointment. Even with one, the politician may have to leave early to vote. You may end up meeting with an assistant.

Prepare points to go over. Have a short list of items to talk about. You may even give the list to the politician. Prepare your presentation.

Give the politician charts, leaflets, and printed information on the subject. Give out anything that helps make your case.

Stay on task. You might find the conversation drifting onto other subjects. Politely try to guide it back on course.

Dress appropriately.

Finish your conversation by asking for a commitment. "Can we count on your support?"

Express thanks and send a thank-you note. No matter how it goes, thank the lawmaker for his or her time.



Testifying

Committees, commissions, and special panels hold hearings. You can express your opinion and show that it has community support.

Find out the place, date, and time of the hearing. Ask the sponsor or your representative for this information.

Be on time. Some public hearings take testimony in the order of those signing in.

Fill the room with supporters. Have them bring posters, if they are allowed. But make sure your supporters do not antagonize the committee.

Conducting a Panel Discussion and Civil Conversation

Panel Discussion

Overview

Panel Discussion and Civil Conversation activities can provide teachers and students with formats for structured discussion of controversial issues.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Develop arguments on controversial issues.
2. Gain insights into controversial issues.
3. Express their viewpoints on controversial issues.

Preparation

You will need a copy of **Handout A** for each student.

Procedure

- A. **Focus Discussion:** Ask students: “What do you think were the most important issues we discussed in *Current Issues of Immigration, 2006*? Why?” Hold a brief discussion.
- B. **Small-Group Activity: Panel Discussion**
 - Step 1. Inform students that they are going to discuss some issues raised by *Current Issues of Immigration, 2006*.
 - Step 2. Divide the class into groups of five or six students. Distribute **Handout A—Panel Discussion** to each student. Review the handout. Give students time limits on the discussion and have them begin.
 - Step 3. Call time. Call on reporters from each group to tell their answers to question #1. Repeat the process for each question.

Civil Conversation

Overview

Controversial legal and policy issues, as they are discussed in the public arena, often lead to polarization, not understanding. This Civil Conversation activity offers an alternative. In this structured discussion method, under the guidance of a facilitator, participants are encouraged to engage intellectually with challenging materials, gain insight about their own point of view, and strive for a shared understanding of issues.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Gain a deeper understanding of a controversial issue.
2. Identify common ground among differing views.
3. Develop speaking, listening, and analytical skills.

Format Options

1. Conversations for classroom purposes should have a time limit generally ranging from 15 to 45 minutes and an additional five minutes to reflect on the effectiveness of the conversations. The reflection time is an opportunity to ask any students who have not spoken to comment on the things they have heard. Ask them who said something that gave them a new insight, that they agreed with, or disagreed with.
2. A large-group conversation requires that all students sit in a circle or, if the group is too large, pair the students so that there is an inner and outer circle with students able to move back and forth into the inner circle if they have something to add.
3. Small-group conversation can be structured either with a small group discussing in the middle of the class “fish bowl” style or simultaneously with different leaders in each group.

Preparation

You will need a copy of **Handout B** for each student.

Procedure

- A. **Introduction:** Briefly overview the purpose and rationale of the Civil Conversation activity. Distribute copies of **Handout B—Civil Conversation**. Review the rules.
- B. **Reading Guide:** The Civil Conversation can be used with a news article or other reading you select. Have students working in pairs complete the reading by following the instructions and responding to the questions in the Civil Conversation Reading Guide.
- C. **Conducting the Activity**
 - Step 1. Select one of the formats and time frames from above and arrange the class accordingly.
 - Step 2. If selecting the large-group format, the teacher leads the discussion using the procedures from below. If using a small-group format, write the following procedures on the board and review them with the class. Then select co-conversation leaders for each group.

Leader's Instructions

- Begin the conversation, by asking every member of the group to respond to questions 3 and 4 of the Reading Guide. Members should not just repeat what others say.
- Then ask the entire group to respond question 5 and jot down the issues raised.
- Continue the conversation by discussing the questions raised.

Step 3. Debrief the activity by having the class reflect on the effectiveness of the conversation. Begin by asking students to return to the Reading Guide and answer questions 6 and 7. Then ask:

- What did you learn from the Civil Conversation?
- What common ground did you find with other members of the group?

Then ask students who were not active in the conversation to comment on the things they learned or observed. Conclude the debriefing by asking all participants to suggest ways in which the conversation could be improved. If appropriate, have students add the suggestions to their list of conversation rules.

Panel Discussion

As a final activity, the class will discuss in groups some of the issues raised by *Current Issues of Immigration, 2006*.

In your group, do the following:



1. Decide on roles for group members. Select who will be . . .

Discussion leader—leads the discussions.

Recorder—takes notes on the discussions.

Reporter—reports the discussions to the class.

Timekeeper—keeps track of time for the group.

Task master—makes sure the group follows the discussion rules below.

2. Discuss each question below fully.

3. Prepare to report your discussion to the class. All members should help the recorder prepare.

#	Discussion Question
1	What is the status of immigration policy in America today?
2	What do you think are the most important issues associated with current immigration policy in America today?
3	What do you think should be done to address these issues?

Discussion Rules

1. Everyone should participate in the discussion.
2. Listen carefully to what others are saying.
3. Ask clarifying questions if you do not understand a point raised.
4. Be respectful of what others are saying.
5. Focus on ideas, not personalities.

Civil Conversation

Rules for Civil Conversation

1. Read the text as if it were written by someone you really respected.
2. Everyone in the conversation group should participate in the conversation.
3. Listen carefully to what others are saying.
4. Ask clarifying questions if you do not understand a point raised.
5. Be respectful of what others are saying.
6. Refer to the text to support your ideas.
7. Focus on ideas, not personalities.

Civil Conversation Reading Guide

Reading _____

Read through the entire selection without stopping to think about any particular section. Pay attention to your first impression as to what the reading is about. Look for the main points and then go back and re-read it. Briefly answer the following:

1. This selection is about _____
2. The main points are:
 - (a) _____
 - (b) _____
 - (c) _____

3. In the reading, I agree with _____

4. I disagree with _____

5. What are two questions about this reading that you think need to be discussed? (The best questions for discussion are ones that have no simple answer, ones that can use materials in the text as evidence.)

The next two questions should be answered after you hold your civil conversation.

6. What did you learn from the civil conversation? _____

7. What common ground did you find with other members of the group? _____

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For additional lessons and resources related to immigration, please visit our *Educating About Immigration* web site: www.crfimmigrated.org

Cesar Chavez Quotations

"We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community. . . . Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own."
Cesar Chavez

"In some cases non-violence requires more militancy than violence."
Cesar Chavez

"You are never strong enough that you don't need help."
Cesar Chavez

"Preservation of one's own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures."
Cesar Chavez

"There is no such thing as defeat in non-violence."
Cesar Chavez

Quotations from: www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/c/cesar_chavez.html



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