

Whose Story, Whose History? The Example of Dolores Huerta

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/classroom/lesson-plans/2023/08/lesson-plan-dolores-huerta-a-life-time-of-activism>

In this lesson, students will investigate the complexity and consequences of writing history by exploring the life and work of Dolores Huerta. This lesson includes a culminating Socratic Seminar assessment, where students will demonstrate their learning on the history and work of Dolores Huerta. Additional support materials for using a Socratic Seminar with ELL learners are included with this lesson. Va esta lección en español

Lesson Summary

Opening Quotes:

“We’re never going to change if folks keep their place and stay quiet, especially with men, especially Latinas. So, my mother, her story will be told and it’s our job to make that happen.”
- Camila Chavez, Dolores

“We try to impress upon her that it is important. Latina girls do need to see statues of you and they do need to have you in their history books. We’ve really got to set the record straight. Women cannot be written out of history.”
- Juana Chavez, Dolores

“She was there at the very beginning. She was there as a woman representing half of the working labor force in the fields. I think it is absolutely essential that people acknowledge that it’s male and female working together.”
-Luis Valdez, Dolores

ELL Strategy: Project these quotes and hand out cards with these quotes printed out. Have students read the cards in pairs or small groups and discuss. If questions arise, have students share their questions with the class.

One of the central motivations for Director Peter Bratt to make *Dolores* was to remedy the historical absence of Dolores Huerta in the study of history and in our national narrative of civil rights leaders, especially for the next generation.

In this lesson, students will investigate the complexity and consequences of writing history by exploring the life and work of Dolores Huerta, co-Founder with Cesar Chavez

of the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers. Students will view a short film segment from the documentary *Dolores*, analyze the perspective/point of view on a range of documents about Dolores Huerta which will prepare them to demonstrate their learning in the culminating Socratic Seminar assessment.

(Note: It is assumed for this lesson that students have participated in prior Socratic Seminars. This [Edutopia](#) article offers helpful tips and a scaffolded approach to preparing students for this assessment.)

Time Allotment

- One 60 minute class period with homework.
- For ELL class, two 60 minute class periods are recommended with homework.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Consider the process of writing history through viewing a film segment from the documentary film *Dolores*.
- Examine the questions “Who is written into history?” and “Who is written out of history?”
- Analyze a range of documents on Dolores Huerta and compare and contrast the similarities and differences in the historical narrative of her life and work across documents.
- Synthesize their learning and articulate their viewpoint on Dolores Huerta using evidence collected throughout all four lessons in the culminating Socratic Seminar.

Supplies

1. Clip from *Dolores*: Lesson 4 - Clip 5: Who Gets to Write History

Description: This film segment challenges the absence of Dolores Huerta in the historical record in the United States and explores the sexism and racism responsible for this omission.

Clip from *Dolores*: Lesson 4 - Clip 6: Legacy

Description: This segment begins with Dolores Huerta’s resignation speech in Spanish from the UFW convention in 2002. The segment then brings students up to the present moment of Dolores Huerta’s organizing work and the enduring power of her legacy.

2. Access either online or in print the following documents on Dolores Huerta:

[National Women's History Museum](#)- Biography of the life of Dolores Huerta

[Dolores Huerta Foundation](#)- Biography of Dolores Huerta from her foundation

[United Farm Workers History](#)- Organizational history of the establishment of the UFW

[National Public Radio Ed](#)- Report on the trial to ban Ethnic Studies in Arizona, HB 2281

(Note: these resources are suggested content and offer a range of views on the life and work of Dolores Huerta. We hope you continue to build upon this list, or if research and media skills are a priority for this lesson, build in time to develop criteria for students to select documents to use in preparation for the Socratic Seminar.)

3. Copies of [Appendix A: What do you know?](#), [Appendix B: Perspectives in Nonfiction Texts](#), [Socratic Seminar Sentence Stems](#) (for Homework), and [Appendix D: Socratic Seminar on Dolores Huerta](#).

4. Project Slide and/or Cards prepared for Opening Quote

Introductory Activity

Day One

1. Two Minute Interview: Begin class with students conducting a two-minute interview using these questions:

- Who is written into history?
- Who is written out of history? Why?

ELL Strategy: Before asking students to pair up for their interview, ask for a volunteer student and model for the class the format to use for a two-minute interview.

Students stand up, choose a classmate to interview using the questions given and take notes on their responses. After two minutes, the teacher calls time and the roles reverse.

Here are a few important guidelines to share with students:

1. The teacher will keep time. (It can be helpful to tell students at the 1 min mark just to make sure both students pace their answers.)
2. This is not a discussion or conversation but an interview. When interviewing be mindful to use active listening habits, do not interrupt your peer as they are sharing their
3. viewpoints, and make sure to take notes.

4. After interviews are finished, pairs will decide on one or two ideas to share out to the class.

Learning Activities

1. **Exploring Perspective in Nonfiction Text:** Explain to students that they will be conducting an analysis of the historical record of Dolores Huerta by examining the perspective in non-fiction printed and visual texts about her life and work.

Students will document their learning by completing a “Perspective in Nonfiction Texts” chart—one chart per document analyzed. Before releasing students to conduct research, go over the questions on the chart and check for understanding. Students can work individually or you can organize small groups of 4-5 students and assign one document per student to complete. (See [Appendix B](#) for a blank handout.)

ELL Strategy: It may be helpful to pair an ELL student with a native English speaker.

What information is included in the document?

Explain: Student should look for facts and evidence given in the text or film. Pay attention to word choice and the topics covered. They should also keep track of the kinds of sources, how they are accurately cited, interviews conducted, background of the author and/or interview subjects, if known.

How is this information presented?

Explain: Students should look at the format used for presenting the information. What text, visuals, or audio is used? This information could include music, photographs, infographics, quotations, etc.

What information is not included?

Explain: Students should always be wondering as they read any source material: what am I not seeing, reading, or hearing?

*What can you assume about this piece’s **perspective**? Why?*

Explain: After watching the film clip and reading the printed/online texts, students should be able to make a statement on the filmmaker’s/author’s perspective followed by a “because” statement that used evidence collected from each of the other questions.

2. View Clip 5: Who Gets to Write History from Dolores.
3. Read either online or in print the following documents for students to analyze and document in their chart.

[National Women's History Museum](#)- Biography of the life of Dolores Huerta

[Dolores Huerta Foundation](#)- Biography of Dolores Huerta from her foundation

[United Farm Workers History](#)- Organizational history of the establishment of the UFW

[National Public Radio Ed](#)- Report on the trial to ban Ethnic Studies in Arizona, HB 2281

Homework:

Pass out Appendix D - Socratic Seminar on Dolores Huerta. Have students review all their notes on Dolores Huerta and prepare talking points for the Socratic Seminar on Dolores Huerta.

ELL Strategy: It may be helpful to support ELL students' preparation for the Socratic Seminar by using this [Socratic Seminar Sentence Stem handout](#).

Culminating Activity

Day Two

Socratic Seminar: Final Assessment

1. Allow students 10 minutes to organize themselves and their notes for the Socratic Seminar.

Note to Educator: There are many different methods of scoring and assessing student learning and participation in a Socratic Seminar. Your district or state may already have a format to follow. If not, see these links for a range of methodologies and objectives.

[Socratic Seminar Checklist](#), [Socratic Seminar Grading Criteria](#), [Teaching Channel: Engaging Students in Socratic Seminars](#).

2. Arrange the class in your chosen Socratic Seminar format. Review the protocol and scoring sheet for a Socratic Seminar. Pass out scoring sheets according to the structure of the Socratic Seminar that you selected.
3. Explain to students that you will open each question by re-reading a quote excerpted from the film clip they viewed from *Dolores* followed by the question they completed for homework.

Closing

Explain to students that after Cesar Chavez died, Dolores was not voted in to serve as his successor even though in the film we hear that the volunteers, the workers, and the members supported her candidacy. Lori de Leon (Dolores's daughter) states, "It was not about her, it was about the union's survival." Instead the UFW chose Arturo Rodriguez (who retired in 2018).

Before viewing the clip, read the full speech Dolores gave at the UFW convention in 2002. You will hear that the clip begins at the end of the speech in which she stepped down from working with the union and brings students up to her current organizing work.

(In Spanish)

Thank you very much peers. It gives me great pleasure to be back here. Reunited again as we have been in all the conventions since Cesar and I started this movement back in 1962. The courage of Cesar Chavez, partnering with a woman in the midst of a divorce with seven little children, to say, "Let's form this union." I say this because it is very important that we always have women in our committees. I will continue to work for you. Not at this board here, but I will always be there, working for the farmers, working for our children, working for our Latin people. Our leader, Cesar Chavez, as we know he left ... he didn't have the privilege of saying goodbye. Well, I have that privilege. Thank you so much. . .

Watch Clip 6: Legacy. After finishing the final film clip, ask students to think of one word that they would like to say to honor Dolores or a word that describes their feelings about her work and the impact she continues to have in our communities and nation.

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