

Climate Justice: Environmental Racism

Dolores Huerta Day Lesson Plan

Five-Day Unit

Lesson Context and Standards
<p>Context: A five-day lesson plan unit in celebration of Dolores Huerta Day (April 10th). This unit falls under the theme of an important part of Dolores Huerta’s activist efforts -Climate Justice and addressing environmental racism. There is an accompanying one-day lesson plan unit as well as other lesson plans/units addressing Labor Organizing and Civic Engagement. These lesson plans and units can be accessed through the teacher’s guide on the Dolores Huerta Foundation website (https://doloreshuerta.org).</p>
<p>Content Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills: <i>Chronological and Spatial Thinking</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1. Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned. ○ 2. Students analyze how change happens at different rates at different times; understand that some aspects can change while others remain the same; and understand that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics but also values and beliefs. ● Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills: <i>Historical Interpretation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1. Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments. ○ 2. Students recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitations on determining cause and effect. ○ 3. Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.

- 4. Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions.
- 11.10 Students analyze the development of federal civil rights and voting rights
- 11.11 Students analyze the major social problems and domestic policy issues in contemporary American society
- 12.2 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.
- 12.10 Students formulate questions about and defend their analyses of tensions within our constitutional democracy and the importance of maintaining a balance between the following concepts: majority rule and individual rights; liberty and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; the relationship of religion and government.

Lesson Plan Elements

Essential Question: How does environmental racism impact marginalized communities?

Outcomes:

- Students will be introduced to Dolores Huerta's activism and Dolores Huerta Day
- Students will be introduced to the United Farm Workers and use of poisonous pesticides
- Students will understand policy context that led to labor organizing actions and the resulting laws
- Students will be introduced to concept of environmental racism
- Students will become aware of and engage in local community organizing on climate justice

Assessment: Students will demonstrate understanding of environmental racism through analysis of current climate justice issues in their community.

Materials:

- PDF of PowerPoint Slides
- PDF of Instructor slide notes
- [United Farm Workers Website](#)
- [Cesar Chavez Foundation Website](#)
- [Hispanic Heritage: Who is Labor Activist Dolores Huerta?](#)
- [Chicago Tonight: Latino Voices](#)
- [Portrait in Minute: Dolores Huerta](#)
- [Declaration of Dolores Huerta Day](#)
- [A Brief History of American Farm Labor](#)
- [Dolores Huerta Ted Talk: How to overcome apathy and find your power](#)
- [Dolores Huerta - Organizing for Justice \(Bioneers\)](#)
- [Farm workers and pesticide exposure](#) (video)
- [Farm worker Voices Ep.3 Pesticides: Adela's Story](#) (tiktok)

Unit Steps:

Day 1

Step 1: Introduction to Dolores Huerta and Dolores Huerta Day

- Quick write: Ask students if they know who Dolores Huerta is and to take a moment to write anything/everything they know.
- Share out with class
- Provide introduction to Dolores Huerta in PowerPoint
 - [Hispanic Heritage: Who is Labor Activist Dolores Huerta?](#)
 - [Portrait in Minute: Dolores Huerta](#)
 - [Chicago Tonight: Latino Voices](#)
- [Declaration of Dolores Huerta Day](#)
 - Have students read declaration
 - Discuss the importance of naming a day after someone and its purpose

Step 2: Introduction to United Farm Workers and Delano Grape Strike

- Use PowerPoint to introduce United Farm Workers
 - [A Brief History of American Farm Labor](#)
 - [Labor Unions and the New Deal](#)
 - [The Wagner Act of 1935 \(National Labor Relations Act\)](#)
- Describe the Delano Grape Strike
 - [Delano Grape Strike](#)
 - [Dolores Huerta Speaks at Delano Grape Strike 50th Anniversary](#)
- Discussion questions: What does it mean to be an organizer? A labor organizer? What are examples of labor organizing in our current time? (Amazon strikes, teacher strikes etc.) What kind of power does labor organizing have? (For an expansion on this topic, refer to the lesson plan/unit on Labor Organizing: A Consideration of Class)

Dolores Huerta Day

High School Lesson Plans

Dolores Huerta Foundation (<https://doloreshuerta.org/>)

Step 3: Introduction to the use of poisonous pesticides and UFW

- Use PowerPoint to describe relationship of the grape boycott to pesticides
 - [Dolores Huerta - Organizing for Justice \(Bioneers\)](#) (video)
 - [Farm workers and pesticide exposure](#) (video)
 - [Farm worker Voices Ep.3 Pesticides: Adela's Story](#) (tiktok)

Day 2

Step 4: Introduction to Unions, Labor Organizing Activity and the Dynamics of Oppression and Resistance

- Describe Dynamics of Oppression (Institutional, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal)
 - Have students apply to the example of farmworkers (use handout in groups)
- Describe Dynamics of Resistance
 - Have students apply to example of UFW and Delano Grape Strike
- What are other examples of union and labor organizing activity?
 - Discussion questions: What does it mean to be an organizer? A labor organizer? What are examples of labor organizing in our current time? What kind of power does labor organizing have?
 - Have students research in groups
 - Some examples include Amazon strikes, Starbucks strike, LAUSD teacher strikes
 - Identify the results of these organizing efforts

Step 5: [Introduction to and exploration of examples of environmental racism](#)

- Use PowerPoint to define environmental racism
- Identify how the use of poisonous pesticides qualifies as an example of environmental racism

- Have students split into groups and assign each group an environmental justice issue: e.g. asthma rates, extreme heat, air pollution, and urban tree cover. Have students research to identify counties in their state with highest/lowest rates of these issues and then compare to the population demographics of those counties as well as potential causes of the high/low rates of the issue.
- Discuss ramifications of environmental racism in each case

Day 3

Step 6: Present environmental justice issues

- Have each group from Day 2 present their findings on the environmental justice issue that they researched and how it relates to environmental racism

Step 7: Identify local environmental issues and current actions associated with them

- In the same groups, have students explore local environmental issues, either in the categories previously assigned or reported on in local news sources
- Brainstorm and identify methods of supporting environmental justice efforts locally

Day 4

Step 8: Community engagement and support

- Review Dynamics of Oppression and Resistance from Day 2
- Consider how climate justice aligns with aspects of resistance against oppression
- In the same groups as Day 3, consider how to involve the greater community in civic engagement around chosen environmental issue
 - Research if similar actions have been done in the past (no need to remake the wheel!)
 - List school orgs/personnel/staff/admin that would need to be involved

- Identify organizations/businesses that are connected to the issue
- Identify any partner community organizations that may already be involved in labor action regarding issue

Day 5

Step 9: Putting it into action! Sí, se puede!

- Watch video(s) of Dolores Huerta putting her words into action (choose from resources listed above)
- Have students work in groups on their civic engagement action
- Present their action to the rest of the class and discuss outcomes and future steps