



<https://doloreshuerta.org/>

Celebrating Dolores Huerta Day!

Climate Justice: Environmental Racism

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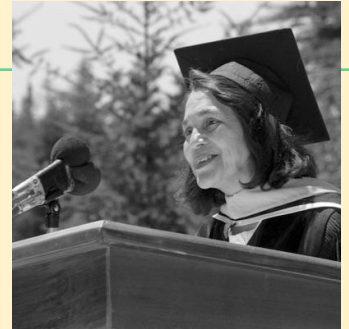


Photo courtesy Special Collections, University Library,
University of California Santa Cruz.

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One-Day Lesson Goals

- Students will be introduced to Dolores Huerta's activism and Dolores Huerta Day
- Students will examine the power of labor organizing and consider current day examples
- Students will be introduced to the United Farm Workers and Delano Grape Strike and 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

No notes

Introduction to Dolores Huerta

And Dolores Huerta Day
on April 10th

Are you familiar with Dolores Huerta?

Write down anything and everything that you know about Dolores Huerta

No notes

Who is Dolores Huerta?

Brief Background:

- Born in April 10, 1930 in Dawson, New Mexico
- Active in numerous school clubs
- Was a majorette
- Dedicated member of the Girl Scouts until the age of 18.
- Continued her education at the University of Pacific's Delta College in Stockton earning a provisional teaching credential.
- While teaching she could no longer bear to see her students come to school with empty stomachs and bare feet, and thus began her lifelong journey of working to correct economic injustice.
- Dolores left for Delano from Stockton in 1962
- Mother of 11



Photo credit: Kathy Murphy, used with permission.

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Who is Dolores Huerta?

What She Saw

- Segregation
- Discrimination
- Poor Social conditions of Farmworkers
- Poor economic conditions of farm workers

What She Did

- Quit teaching to fight farmworker oppression
- 1955 stockton chapter of Community Service Organization (CSO) with Fred Ross
- 1960 Started Agricultural Workers of America (AWA)
- Voter registration Drives
- Lobbied politicians to allow non-US citizens to receive public assistance, pensions, and Spanish ballots, Spanish driving tests



Photo Credit: Dolores Huerta Foundation, photographer Angela Torres.

notes Photo Credit Angela Torres



Who is Dolores Huerta?

Choose 1-2 videos to share:

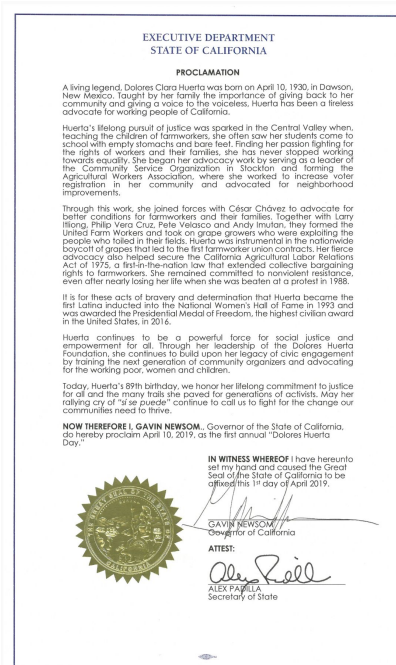
- [Hispanic Heritage: Who is Labor Activist Dolores Huerta?](#)
- [Portrait in Minute: Dolores Huerta](#)
- [Chicago Tonight: Latino Voices](#)

Celebrating Dolores Huerta Day!

- April 10th (Dolores Huerta's birthday)
- Established in 2019 in California
- Recognition of lifelong pursuit of justice



About image: used by the State of California to recognize the day. Graphic designer unknown.



Read proclamation: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2019/04/10/dolores-huerta-day/>

United Farm Workers (UFW) 1962 - Present



March to Sacramento, Cesar Chavez to the right. Photo credit © George Ballis, courtesy of UC Merced Library Archives, used with permission.

Point out that the Farm Worker movement was happening at the exact same time as many other social justice movements mentioned before yet is one of the lesser known movements.

Cesar Chavez at the Delano UFW rally in Delano, California, June 1974. Credit: Joel Levine, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cesar_chavez3.jpg

Dolores Huerta and the UFW

Right: September 24, 1965, Dolores Huerta on the Grape Strike picket line in Delano, California. Photo by Harvey Richards (© Paul Richards, Estuary Press).



Photo Credit: Dolores Huerta Foundation, photographer Angela Torres.

¡Si se puede!

- Most students will say Cesar Chavez is the activist they mostly or only associate with the Farm Worker Movement.
- Use this slide to connect how and why Dolores Huerta is given less credit for the United Farm Workers movement.
- Tell students that the phrase “Si Se Puede”, came from Dolores, not Cesar Chavez.

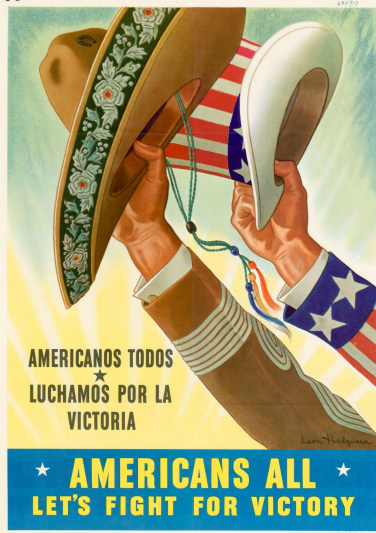
Rise of Labor Unions

- 1930s - Tremendous labor union gains due to pro-union stance of the Roosevelt administration and from legislation enacted by Congress during the early **New Deal**
- 1933 - **The National Industrial Recovery Act** provided for collective bargaining
- 1935 - **National Labor Relations Act** (aka **the Wagner Act**) required businesses to bargain in good faith with any union supported by the majority of their employees

[Labor Unions and the New Deal](#)

[The Wagner Act of 1935 \(National Labor Relations Act\)](#)

American Farm Labor and the Bracero Program



Credit: Helguera, Leon. Americans all, let's fight for victory: Americanos todos, luchamos por la victoria., poster, 1943; Washington D.C. Public Domain.

- Labor shortage during World War II
- Bracero Program allowed Mexicans to work temporarily on U.S. Farms
- Program officially ended in 1964

Mexican Workers Wanted in October

Farmers and orchardists in Washington state have placed orders for approximately 6000 imported Mexican workers for the month of October, according to reports sent to

Figure 14. A description of the demand for Mexican laborers (Source: Northwest Farm News, September 9, 1943).



Right: The first Braceros arriving in Los Angeles, CA by train in 1942. Credit: Dorothea Lange, working for the US Government., Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

A Brief History of American Farm labor

California became a major agricultural center after the Civil War. There, farm labor was mostly imported from Asia. By the 1930s, the immigrant labor force had begun to shift to Mexico, and during the World War II labor shortage the Bracero Program was initiated, which allowed Mexicans to work temporarily on U.S. farms. The program was ended in 1964, although Latin American immigrants—legal and illegal—continue to make up the vast majority of the U.S. agricultural workforce.

Poster credit: Helguera, Leon. Americans all, let's fight for victory : Americanos todos, luchamos por la victoria., poster, 1943; Washington D.C..

(<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc426/>; accessed April 15, 2025), University of North Texas Libraries, UNT Digital Library, <https://digital.library.unt.edu/>; crediting UNT Libraries Government Documents Department. <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc426/>

Photo credit: Dorothea Lange, working for the US Government., Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BraceroProgram.jpg>

United Farm Workers



Photo credit: Victor Aleman, used with permission.

- 1962: Dolores Huerta founded NFWA with Cesar Chavez later to be renamed to UFW in 1965
- 1963: First lobbying and negotiating victory by adding Farmworkers to the Aid to Families with Dependent Children ("AFDC") program, for the unemployed and underemployed, and disability insurance for farm workers in the State of California.

- Point out that the NFWA landed a huge victory within the first year of its foundation.

United Farm Workers Union

- First genuine collective bargaining agreement between farm workers and growers in the history of the continental United States (1966 Schenley vineyards).
- The first union contracts requiring rest periods, toilets in the fields, clean drinking water, hand washing facilities, protective clothing against pesticide exposure, banning pesticide spraying while workers are in the fields, outlawing DDT and other dangerous pesticides, lengthening pesticide re-entry periods beyond state and federal standards, and requiring the testing of farm workers on a regular basis to monitor for pesticide exposure.

No notes

United Farm Workers Union

- The first union contracts regulating safety and sanitary conditions in farm labor camps, banning discrimination in employment and sexual harassment of women workers.
- The first union contracts providing for profit sharing and parental leave.
- Abolishing the infamous short-handled hoe that crippled generations of farm workers and extending to farm workers state coverage under unemployment, disability and workers' compensation, as well as amnesty rights for immigrants and public assistance for farm workers.
- The first union contracts eliminating farm labor contractors and guaranteeing farm workers seniority rights and job security.

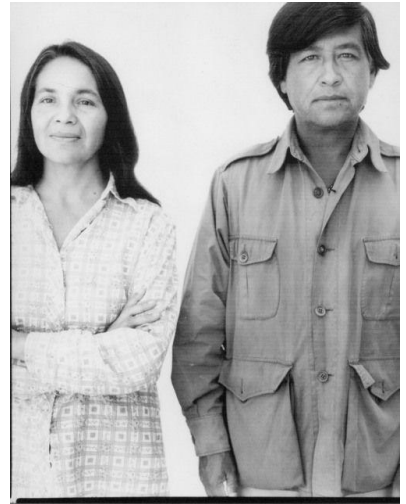


Photo credit: Richard Avedon; courtesy of Dolores Huerta Foundation, used with permission.

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Farmworker supports provided by UFW

- Health Benefits (RFK Medical Plan)
- Pension Plans (Juan De La Cruz)
- Life insurance
- 1st credit union of farmworkers
- Cooperative stores
- Immigration Paperwork
- Income Taxes



Credit: El Malcriado, © United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO, used with permission.

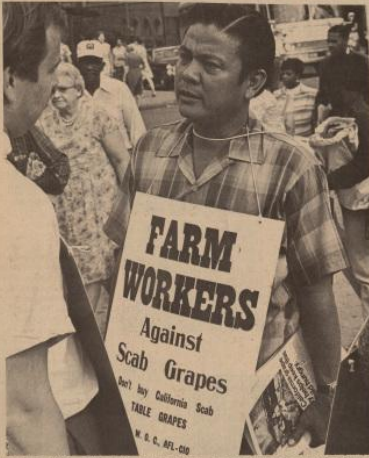
- The image is an article highlighting the credit union established by the United Farm Workers, a first for farm workers
- The list is of supports offered by UFW to farmworkers

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?
-

No notes

The Delano Grape Strike and Boycott



In September, 1965, over 4,000 grape pickers in the vineyards around Delano, California went on strike, when their employers refused to pay a living wage, sign a union contract, or recognize the workers' union. Since then, over 10,000 workers have joined in that strike. For four long years, these farm workers, led by Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, have struggled valiantly for social and economic justice. Here is our story.

Image: recordsofrights.org

1965 grape boycott



Left: "The Delano Grape Strike and Boycott" 1970

This pamphlet published by the United Farm Workers (UFW) union publicized and sought support for a boycott of non-union table grapes. The pamphlet asks consumers to look for the iconic UFW union label before buying grapes.

Source: National Archives, Records of the U.S. House of Representatives

- Name it: this is one main example of Resistance against Agribusiness
- Make connection that AWOC came out of AWA which was formed by Dolores prior to co-founding the NFWA
- [Delano Grape Strike](#)
- [Dolores Huerta Speaks at Delano Grape Strike 50th Anniversary](#)

1965 grape boycott

- 5 year strike
 - Boycotts
 - Rallies
 - Marches
 - Non-violent resistance
 - Women and children more than ever on picket lines after seeing Dolores and Helen Chavez out there
 - 17 million people stopped eating grapes
 - Support from Europe and Canada

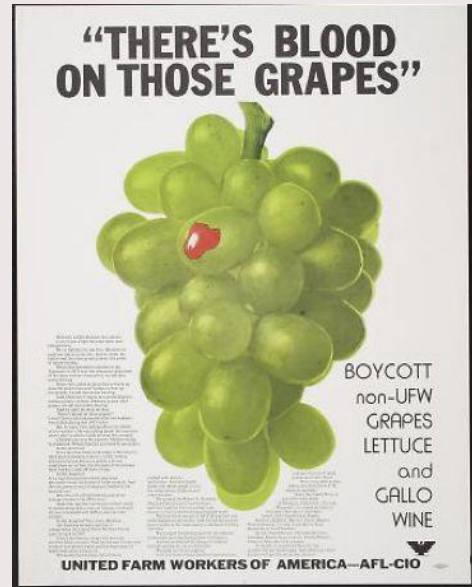


Image Credit: El Malcriado, © United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO, used with permission.

- Point out the ways in which the UFW and the public resisted.

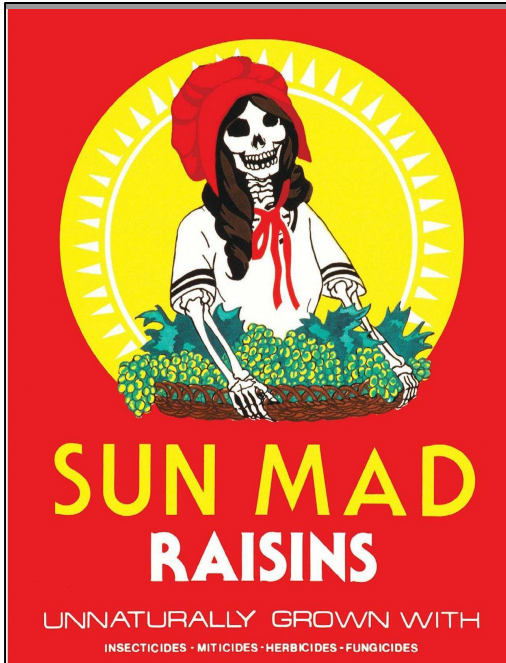


Image Credit: © Ester Hernandez, used with permission.

Pesticides and Environmental Justice



Source: Library of Congress, Grape Strike and Boycott March, 18, 1970, bumper sticker

No notes



Farm workers and pesticide exposure

No notes



Farmworker Voices: Adela's Story (UFW Foundation Tik Tok)

<https://www.tiktok.com/@ufwfoundation/video/7365903939050409258>

What is Environmental Racism?

No notes

Environmental Racism Defined

A form of systemic racism whereby marginalized Black, Indigenous or communities with people of color (BIPOC) are disproportionately burdened with health hazards through policies and practices that force them to live in proximity to unsafe environments or climates.

Environmental Racism is a global issue that affects people's health, natural environments, and cultures. When toxic waste locations such as sewage works, mines, landfills, power stations, major roads and emitters of airborne particulate matter are placed near BIPOC communities, people suffer.

[Environmental Racism](#)

How are the pesticides an example of environmental racism?

No notes

Local examples of environmental racism

- Split into groups
- Choose an environmental justice issue:
 - Asthma rates
 - Extreme heat
 - Air pollution
 - Urban tree cover
 - And more!
- Identify counties in your state with the highest/lowest rates of these issues
- Compare to population demographics of those counties
- Consider potential causes of the high/low rates of this issue
- Report back to the class

- 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

Community Engagement: ¡Sí Se Puede!

How can you be involved??

- Research environmental justice issues and consider ways to participate
 - Boycotting
 - Protesting
 - Calling/writing letters of support to elected officials
 - More!



Photo Credit: Victor Aleman, used with permission.

[Five calls app](#) - Identifies local representatives, provides scripts for calling reps and bringing attention to relevant current issues

[Find your Congress members](#)