



<https://doloreshuerta.org/>

Celebrating Dolores Huerta Day!

Labor Organizing: Origin of ¡Sí Se Puede!

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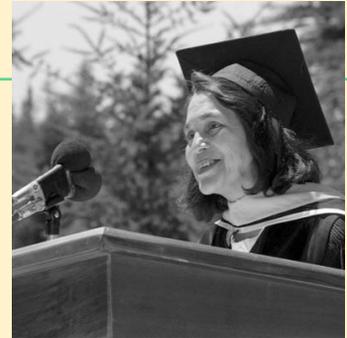


Photo courtesy Special Collections, University Library, University of California Santa Cruz.

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Five-Day Unit Goals

- Students will be introduced to Dolores Huerta's activism and Dolores Huerta Day
- Students will be introduced to the United Farm Workers and examine the power of labor organizing and consider current day examples
- Students will understand policy context that led to labor organizing actions and the resulting laws
- Students will be introduced to the slogan coined by Dolores Huerta "¡Sí Se Puede!"
- Students will critically examine other political slogans and dissect the movements they inspired
- Students will create their own personal slogan
- Students will participate in civic engagement action

No notes

Day 1

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.

No notes

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:

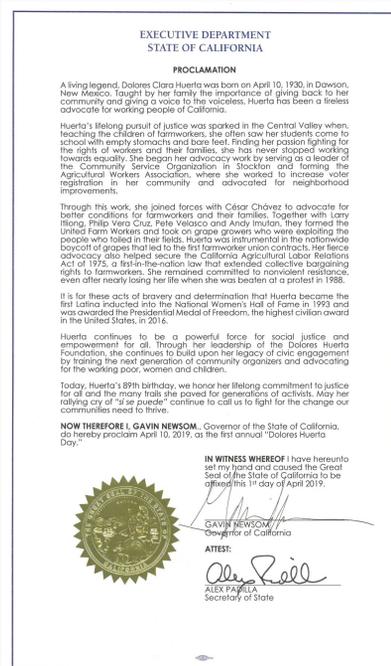
- [Hispanic Heritage: Who is Labor Activist Dolores Huerta?](#)
- [Portrait in Minute: Dolores Huerta](#)
- [Chicago Tonight: Latino Voices](#)

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 \(National Labor Relations Act\)](#)

The Taft-Hartley Act, formally known as the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947, was a US federal law that restricted the activities and power of labor unions

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 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.

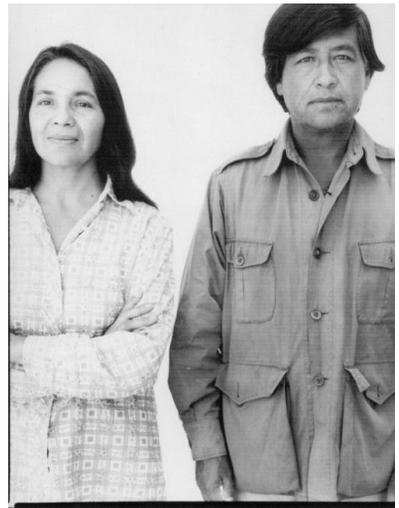


Photo credit: Richard Avedon; courtesy of Dolores Huerta Foundation, used with permission.

No notes

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



Image 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

DYNAMICS OF OPPRESSION

the exercise of authority or power in a cruel or unjust manner

	INSTITUTIONAL (Systemic – Society)	INTERPERSONAL (Group)	INTRAPERSONAL (Individual)
Thoughts	Institutionalized stereotype <i>(acknowledges stereotype exists* even through denial)</i>	Group stereotype <i>(thought of stereotype is commonly understood)</i>	STEREOTYPE <i>(Spanish or Southern accent is bad)</i>
Feelings / Beliefs	Institutionalized prejudice <i>(institution accepts stereotype as factual)</i>	Group prejudice <i>(stereotype is believed to be true)</i>	PREJUDICE <i>(Spanish or Southern accent is bad)</i>
Behaviors / Actions	Institutionalized discrimination <i>(institution justifies discrimination)</i>	Discrimination <i>(Spanish or Southern accent are made fun of)</i>	Self-inflicted discrimination <i>is internalized (I change my accent to avoid discrimination)</i>
Policies, Practices, Structures, Laws, Culture, Norms	OPPRESSION / ISM <i>(Structural Inequality of hiring practice based on accent)</i>		

- The main idea here is for students to understand the difference between
 - Institutional Oppression, systems and/or structures in society oppression a group or an individual
 - Interpersonal Oppression, oppression between two groups or two individuals or between a group and an individual
 - Intrapersonal Oppression, oppression against our own self.

DYNAMICS OF OPPRESSION IN AMERICAN FARM LABOR

INSTITUTIONAL (SYSTEMIC – SOCIETY)	INTERPERSONAL (GROUP)	INTRAPERSONAL (INDIVIDUAL)
[Yellow block]	[Blue block]	[Purple block]

- Have students discuss where the Dynamics of Oppression showed up in the Drawbridge Story.
- This can be done in groups or as whole-class discussion.



“ We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. ”

Image: Nobel Foundation, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

**Martin Luther
King, Jr.**

(Letter from a Birmingham Jail)

- Use this quote to transition from Oppression to Resistance

Photo: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin_Luther_King,_Jr..jpg
Nobel Foundation, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Oppression and Resistance



Photo by [Jon Tyson](#) on [Unsplash](#)

DEFINE RESISTANCE:

THE REFUSAL TO ACCEPT OR COMPLY WITH SOMETHING; THE ATTEMPT TO PREVENT SOMETHING BY ACTION OR ARGUMENT.

WHAT DOES
RESISTANCE LOOK
LIKE?

- Dynamics of Resistance
- Before displaying the definition of Resistance, have students share out what they think Resistance means
- Have a volunteer read the definition of resistance
- To answer “What does resistance look like?”, use the chart on the next slide

DYNAMICS OF RESISTANCE BY UFW AND FARMWORKERS

INSTITUTIONAL (SYSTEMIC – SOCIETY)	INTERPERSONAL (GROUP)	INTRAPERSONAL (INDIVIDUAL)

22

- Have students discuss where the Dynamics of Resistance showed up in the Drawbridge Story.
- This can be done in groups or as whole-class discussion.

*In dyads, discuss the following:
Share a personal or historical example of
oppression and resistance.*



Source: Pixabay free image

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- Use the Listening Dyad Strategy. Each partner will have a set amount of time to speak uninterrupted (30 - 60 seconds). If they finish early, they are to sit silently with their partner. When the time resets, the other partner will speak uninterrupted.

Image: <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/dialogue-argue-speak-share-7161463/>

Day 2

No notes

Origin of ¡Sí Se Puede!

No notes



¡Sí Se Puede - Interview with Dolores Huerta and Benjamin Bratt

Use one of these videos:

- [Dolores Huerta: “Yes we can!”](#)
- [Si Se Puede! Interview with Dolores Huerta and Benjamin Bratt](#)
- [“Si se puede”: Dolores Huerta’s 50 years of activism](#)

The Power of a Slogan and “Finding your Power”

No notes

Yes, We Can! Sí, Se Puede!

Pair/share

- What is different about the contexts in which this slogan was used for Huerta and Obama?
- What types of movements did they inspire?
- Do you have questions about what this slogan represents?



No notes

Large Group Discussion Questions

- What are other political slogans that we're familiar with?
 - What types of movements did they inspire (e.g. America is a Nation of Immigrants, Black Lives Matter)?
 - What are different assumptions these slogans rely on and what do they reflect about our nation?
-

No notes



How to Overcome Apathy and Find Your Power
Dolores Huerta Ted Talk

Build Your Own Slogan

- Do you have your own personal slogan?
- Is there a saying that helps you to “find your power” as Dolores Huerta identifies in her Ted Talk?
- Something that keeps you working towards something when you want to give up?
- Take time to think about your values and what inspires you.

Could start at 6:10-8:15 (or more) to focus on “finding your power”

Day 3

No notes

Present slogans to the class

- Describe the slogan's origin (how/why etc.)
 - Explain how it reflects Dolores Huerta's idea of "finding your power"
 - Discuss the underlying values of the slogan
-

No notes

Organize into groups
based on slogan values

No notes

Research community organizations

- Research local community organizations that reflect the values represented in your slogans
- Select 1-2 community organizations
- Research what types of actions in the community these organizations take

No notes

Day 4

No notes

What is Civic Engagement?



Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our **communities** and developing the combination of **knowledge, skills, values** and **motivations** to make that difference. It means promoting the **quality of life** in a community, through both **political** and **non-political processes** (Civic Responsibility in Higher Education, Ehrlich, 2000, p.vi).

Operating with unwavering **hope**, we believe in achieving the seemingly unattainable. “**Si se puede**” embodies a **collective awakening to individual and communal power**. Our civic engagement department is dedicated to equipping **grassroots leaders** with the **tools** and **knowledge** essential for guiding their **communities** toward enduring **transformative solutions**. We aim to create a Central Valley of **informed** and **engaged citizens** and **voters** ready to **advocate, educate, vote**, and use our political system to create a more **just** and **equitable** Central Valley (Dolores Huerta Foundation website).

[Image by Stockcake](#): Community Rising Together (public domain).

- Consider how community engagement aligns with aspects of resistance against oppression

Civic engagement and support

In the same groups as Day 3, brainstorm within groups on an action that you can take that aligns with the values of your slogan(s). These actions can correspond to the community organizations that you researched, but they don't have to.

Some examples can include:

- Writing letters to/calling local legislators, encouraging them to support the proposed values/actions
- Creating a campaign within the school (working with student government etc.)
- Signing up to volunteer time at local organization
- Or something else!

No notes

Day 5

No notes



“¡Sí Se Puede!”: Dolores Huerta’s 50 Years of Activism

No notes

Civic engagement and support

In the same groups as Day 3, brainstorm within groups on an action that you can take that aligns with the values of your slogan(s). These actions can correspond to the community organizations that you researched, but they don't have to.

Some examples can include:

- Writing letters to/calling local legislators, encouraging them to support the proposed values/actions
- Creating a campaign within the school (working with student government etc.)
- Signing up to volunteer time at local organization
- Or something else!

No notes

Present your project to the class
and discuss goals and future steps



Photo Credit: Victor Aleman, used with permission