



<https://doloreshuerta.org/>

Celebrating Dolores Huerta Day!

Labor Organizing: Origin of ¡Sí Se Puede!

Thanks to support from:



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

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

Day 1

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

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.

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.



Who is Dolores Huerta?

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.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT STATE OF CALIFORNIA

PROCLAMATION

A living legend, Dolores Clara Huerta was born on April 10, 1930, in Dawson, New Mexico. Taught by her family the importance of giving back to her community and giving a voice to the voiceless, Huerta has been a tireless advocate for working people of California.

Huerta's lifelong pursuit of justice was sparked in the Central Valley when, teaching the children of farmworkers, she often saw her students come to school with empty stomachs and bare feet. Finding her passion fighting for the rights of workers and their families, she has never stopped working towards equality. She began her advocacy work by serving as a leader of the Community Service Organization in Stockton and forming the Agricultural Workers Association, where she worked to increase voter registration in her community and advocated for neighborhood improvements.

Through this work, she joined forces with César Chávez to advocate for better conditions for farmworkers and their families. Together with Larry Iliong, Philip Vera Cruz, Pete Velasco and Andy Imutan, they formed the United Farm Workers and took on grape growers who were exploiting the people who toiled in their fields. Huerta was instrumental in the nationwide boycott of grapes that led to the first farmworker union contracts. Her fierce advocacy also helped secure the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975, a first-in-the-nation law that extended collective bargaining rights to farmworkers. She remained committed to nonviolent resistance, even after nearly losing her life when she was beaten at a protest in 1988.

It is for these acts of bravery and determination that Huerta became the first Latina inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1993 and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States, in 2016.

Huerta continues to be a powerful force for social justice and empowerment for all. Through her leadership of the Dolores Huerta Foundation, she continues to build upon her legacy of civic engagement by training the next generation of community organizers and advocating for the working poor, women and children.

Today, Huerta's 89th birthday, we honor her lifelong commitment to justice for all and the many trails she paved for generations of activists. May her rallying cry of "¡sí se puede!" continue to call us to fight for the change our communities need to thrive.

NOW THEREFORE I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, do hereby proclaim April 10, 2019, as the first annual "Dolores Huerta Day."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 1st day of April 2019.



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

ALEX PADILLA
Secretary of State

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.

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).



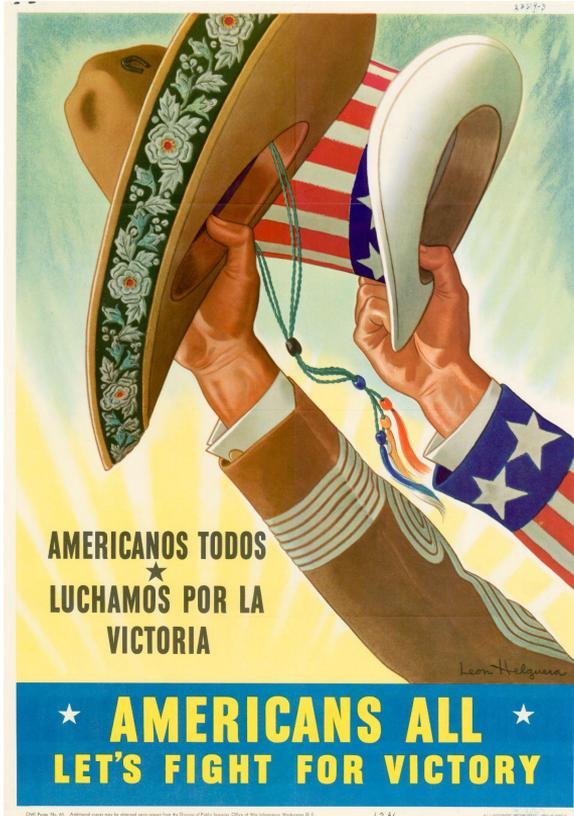
Photo Credit: Dolores Huerta Foundation, photographer Angela Torres.

¡Si se puede!

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

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.

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.

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.

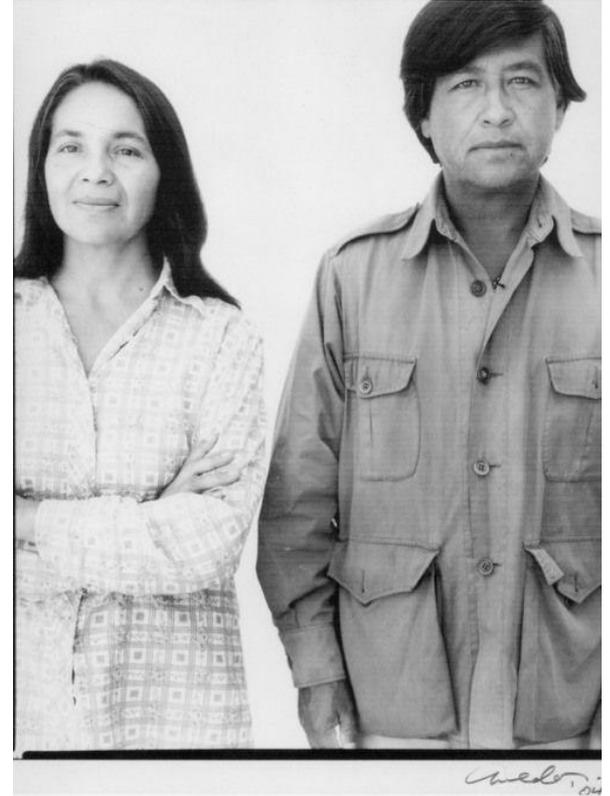


Photo credit: Richard Avedon; courtesy of Dolores Huerta Foundation, used with permission.

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

EL MALCRIADO page 13

IN DELANO— Our Credit Union— Vigorous, Growing

The Farm Workers Credit Union, more than three years after its beginning in 1963, is a vigorous, well-staffed credit union run by the people themselves. Symbolic of the joining of the AWOC and the NFWA last year, the Mexicans and Filipinos together operate the credit union. Of the 15 elected officials, five are Filipinos and ten are Mexicans. The board is large so that no one man will have too much power.

Another function in the credit union is that of the supervisory committee which sets as a "watchdog" over the officers as they perform their duties. Another committee is the credit committee which passes on loans. It is their task to find out who are the "coyotes" who have no intention of paying back the money the credit union lends them.

The members of the credit committee have been burned a little by the "professional borrower" but it is now a much wiser committee that knows all the tricks of the cheaters. The committee does a very thorough job of finding out "who the person is" who seeks a loan. Careful investigations are made. The credit committee must find out how badly the money is needed, and how the people will be able to pay it back. The credit committee also makes emergency loans to the members of the credit union.

The people who work full-time, every day in the credit union are Helen Chavez, the assistant treasurer; Julio Hernandez, the president; and Roberto Barron, assistant to the president. Mrs. Chavez keeps the record of all money coming in as savings, and

money going out in loans. She helps the treasurer in preparing his reports to the Directors. Mr. Hernandez is the man that represents the credit union. He is the connecting line of communication between the people who run it and the people who use it; the shareholders. He makes sure the different committees work in harmony. Mr. Barron assists him in this work.

The credit union works in many ways like a bank. The big difference is that it is operated by and for the people themselves. The money is used FOR THE PEOPLE; in a bank the money is often used AGAINST THE PEOPLE.

In Delano, the credit union is one of the strongest links in the chain which has made the huelga possible. It's 725 members are putting their money together, and together they are finding trust, unity and strength.

It is the same people who have joined together in the credit union, who have also joined together in the strike which broke the tyranny of millionaires Schenley, Di-Giorgio and Goldberg, and brought new era of dignity to farm work.

NOT LONG AGO THE POWERFUL DELANO CREDIT UNION HAD LESS THAN FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS IN ITS TREASURY.

Below: Helen Chavez, Delano credit union employee, counts out money to Mrs. Margarita Osorno, one of the 725 shareholders.



IN BOTH NEW MEXICO AND DELANO, CALIFORNIA, PEOPLE WHO WORK TOGETHER ARE BUILDING STRENGTH FOR THE FUTURE.

If We Stick Together We Can Win

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

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?
-

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>		

DYNAMICS OF OPPRESSION IN AMERICAN FARM LABOR

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



“ 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)

Oppression and Resistance



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

DEFINE RESISTANCE:

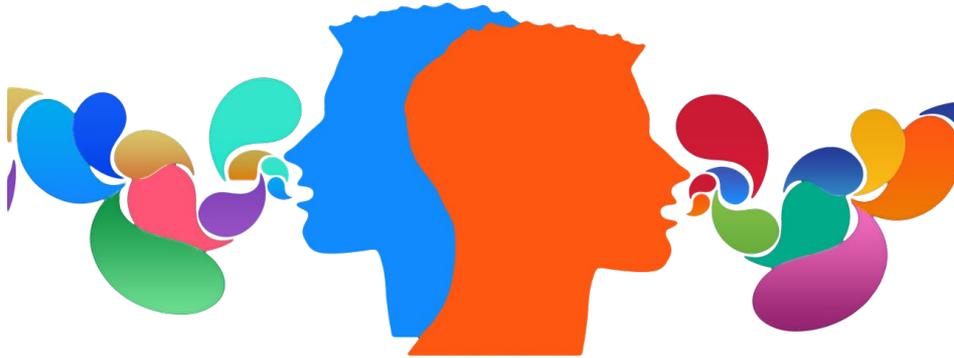
THE REFUSAL TO ACCEPT OR COMPLY WITH SOMETHING; THE ATTEMPT TO PREVENT SOMETHING BY ACTION OR ARGUMENT.

WHAT DOES
RESISTANCE LOOK
LIKE?

DYNAMICS OF RESISTANCE BY UFW AND FARMWORKERS

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

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



Source: Pixabay free image

Day 2

Origin of ¡Sí Se Puede!



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

The Power of a
Slogan and “Finding
your Power”

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?



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?
-



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.

Day 3

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
-

Organize into groups
based on slogan values

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

Day 4

Review Dynamics of Oppression and Resistance from Day 1



Source: Pixabay free image

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).

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!

Day 5



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

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!

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



Photo Credit: Victor Aleman, used with permission