

**USING NONVIOLENCE TO
FIGHT OPPRESSION**



Examining the Impact of
Mahatma Gandhi
on Social Change Movements



Hindu American Foundation
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USING NONVIOLENCE TO FIGHT OPPRESSION

Examining the Impact of **Mahatma Gandhi** *on Social Change Movements*

This lesson will examine the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and the Hindu concept of Ahimsa (nonviolence) on leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) and César E. Chávez.

Lesson Plan

Students will learn about these leaders, the social change movements used to overcome oppressive ideologies and conditions through non-violent means, and the unique role played by women in these movements, including Sarojini Naidu, Ella Baker, and Dolores Huerta. Students will research these movements while filling out the accompanying Circles of Oppression chart to identify the ideology and the ways it impacted institutional, internal, and interpersonal conditions.

SUBJECT

- › Social Studies
- › History
- › Ethnic Studies

GRADE LEVEL

10-12th grade

TIME

2 x 60 minute classes

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- › Identify oppressive ideologies and their impact
- › Describe the role of nonviolence in confronting oppressive ideologies in the 20th century
- › Apply principles of nonviolence (Ahimsa) to issues impacting their lives or community

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

- › **ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2:** Write informative/explanatory text to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- › **ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3:** Evaluate various explanations for actions or events, and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.



- › **ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7:** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- › **ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.10:** By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.
- › **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

matter of principle

- › **Oppression** extended cruel or unjust treatment
- › **Resistance** an opposing force
- › **Salt March** or **Salt Satyagraha**
- › **Satyagraha (Sanskrit: satya = truth, agraha = persistence)** social and political reform through nonviolence
- › **Satya (Sanskrit)** truth
- › **Southern Conference Education Fund (SCEF)**
- › **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**

KEYWORDS AND TERMS

- › **Ahimsa (Sanskrit)** non-harming or kindness
- › **Civil Rights** the right to political and social freedom and equality
- › **Civil Disobedience** the refusal to comply with certain laws or to pay taxes and fines, as a peaceful form of political protest
- › **Ideology** a system of beliefs or ideas
- › **Institutional Oppression** the systematic mistreatment of people which is supported and enforced through institutions and organizations to maintain an ideology through power dynamics
- › **Interpersonal Oppression** mistreatment of people through interactions with one another, including interactions between people from a power group and people in an oppressed group; between people within the same oppressed group, or between people of different oppressed groups
- › **Internalized Oppression** beliefs people facing oppression have about themselves and how they should be treated based off the oppressive practices from the institutional and interpersonal behaviors
- › **Mobilize** organize and encourage people for a concerted movement or service
- › **National Farm Workers Association (NFWA)**
- › **Nonviolence** abstaining from violence as a

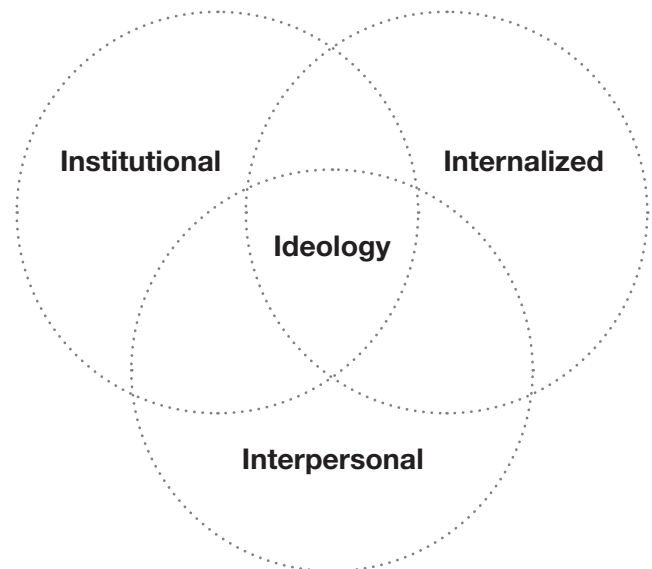
DIRECTIONS

1. **Begin the discussion with the following warm-up questions:**
 - What is Civil Disobedience?
 - What was the Salt March?
 - What was the Civil Rights Movement?
 - What was the Farm Workers Movement?
 - **Additional questions for discussion:**
 - Who were Mahatma Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu? What are they known for?
 - Who were Martin Luther King Jr. and Ella Baker? What are they known for?
 - Who are César E. Chávez and Delores Huerta? What are they known for?
2. **Using the suggested readings, explain the respective trajectories of the following leaders:**
 - Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948)
 - Sarojini Naidu (1879 – 1949)
 - César Chávez (1927 – 1993)
 - Martin Luther King Jr. (1929 – 1968)
 - Ella Baker (1903 – 1986)
 - Delores Huerta (1930 –)

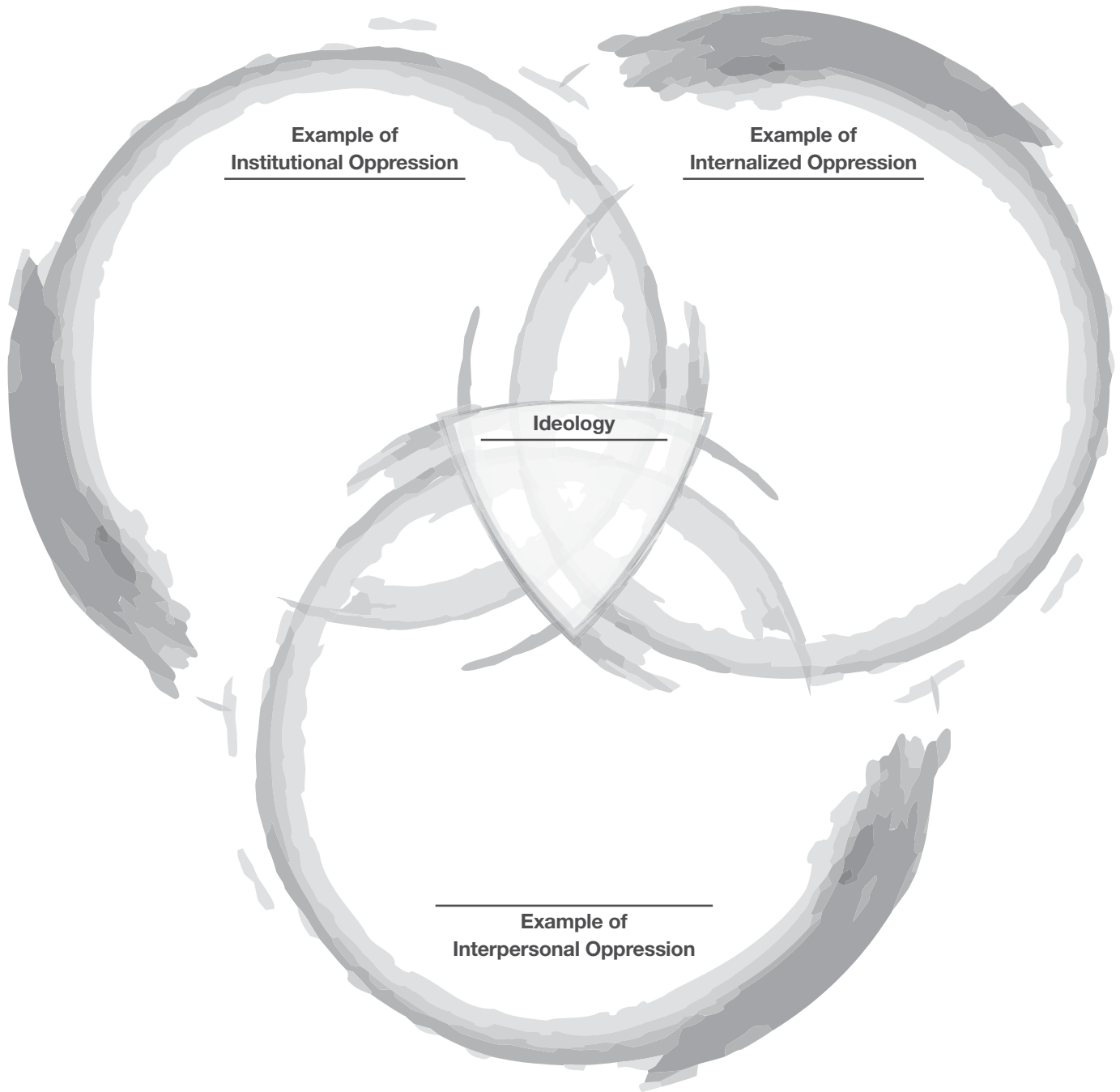


3. Introduce key vocabulary and terminology when explaining the similarities of these leaders in their respective battles against oppressive ideologies. Write out the vocabulary on the board and explain the definitions to the students. Watch the video [“Legos and the 4 I’s of Oppression”](#) and extend out the definitions by providing additional examples of:
 - Oppression
 - Ideology
 - Institutional Oppression
 - Interpersonal Oppression
 - Internalized Oppression
4. Break students into groups of three (count off by three). Assign a march or movement to each group: all “1s” to the Salt March, all “2s” to the Farm Workers Movement, and all “3s” to the Civil Rights Movement.
5. Using the Circles of Oppression Chart (page 5):
 - Have students research their assigned leader and identify an oppressive ideology.
 - Explain the following:
 - How is it institutionally carried out?
 - How is it internalized?
 - How does it impact their interpersonal well-being?
 - Have students fill out the charts.
6. Once students have completed their charts, place them in groups of three with one representative from the Salt March, the Farm Workers Movement, and the Civil Rights Movement. Have students share their charts with each other by taking turns—about five minutes per student.
7. Bring the discussion to the whole class and create a large collaborative Circles of Oppression Chart on each of the three movements. Take student input as you fill out the charts so that students are able to contribute on large scale versions for the classroom. Have students note down similarities and differences in these movements.
8. To continue the lesson, have students identify an oppressive ideology that they believe Mahatma Gandhi, César E. Chávez, or Martin Luther King Jr. would likely protest today. Ask students to complete a new Circles of Oppression Chart on their own.
9. Explain how this ideology is manifested through institutional, interpersonal and internalization conditions. Then using The Gandhian Principles of Nonviolence, Martin Luther King Jr’s Principles of Nonviolence, and the Core Values of César E. Chávez, ask students to identify nonviolent solutions to protest oppressions for social change.
10. Use the following questions for a wrap-up discussion:
 - Do you think the men in these movements were more, less, or equally recognized for their contributions than women?
 - Did the way in which women approached or worked in these social change movements differ from men? If so, in what ways?
 - What role did women play in protesting for solutions?
 - What are the similarities/differences of approaches in these social change movements?

CIRCLES OF OPPRESSION



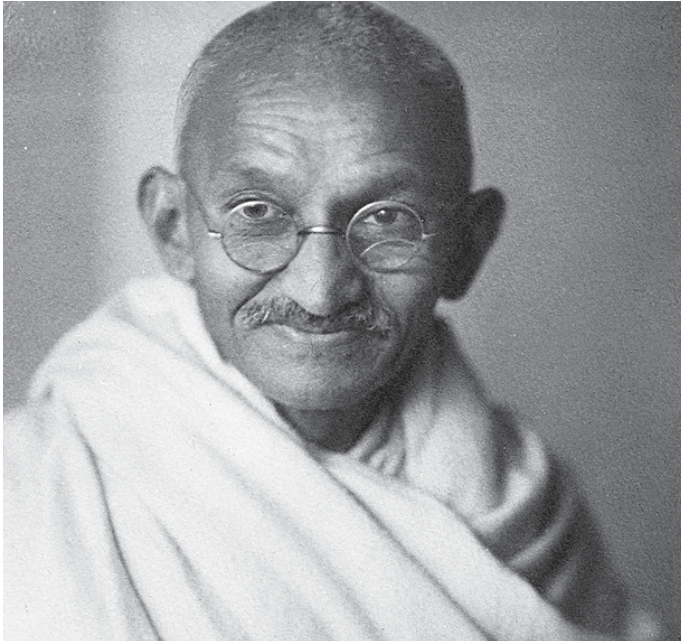
CIRCLES OF OPPRESSION



Non-Violent Solutions and Peaceful Responses



Values and Principles of Peaceful Leaders



GANDHIAN PRINCIPLES OF NONVIOLENCE

“Truth is my religion and nonviolence (love) it’s only realization.”

1. **Respect:** I vow to respect others and the interconnectedness of all life.
2. **Understanding:** I vow to understand the “whys” (meaning behind behavior), for myself and others.
3. **Acceptance:** Out of respect and understanding, I vow to accept the differences of others.
4. **Appreciating:** Differences: I seek to move beyond acceptance into appreciation and celebration of difference.
5. **Satya (Truth and Truthfulness):** I commit to be truthful and authentic and to confront untruth wherever I find it.
6. **Absorbing Suffering:** I take on, without complaint, any suffering that results from my confrontation with untruth. I also accept that all forms of violence cannot be totally eliminated.
7. **Ahimsa (nonviolence) with my Adversary:** I vow to help my adversary avoid all suffering, especially from our confrontation.
8. **Trusteeship and Constructive Action:** Beyond personal necessities, I see myself as God’s trustee over my possessions and talents. I promise to use them to empower others and make things fair for all.



Values and Principles of Peaceful Leaders



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'S PRINCIPLES OF NONVIOLENCE

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

1. **Way of Life:** Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.
2. **Friendship and Understanding:** Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding.
3. **Defeating Justice:** Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice, not people.
4. **Education and Transformation:** Nonviolence holds that suffering for a cause can educate and transform.
5. **Love Not Hate:** Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate.
6. **Justice:** Nonviolence holds that the universe is on the side of justice and that right will eventually prevail.



Values and Principles of Peaceful Leaders

THE CORE VALUES OF CÉSAR E. CHÁVEZ

“There is no such thing as defeat in nonviolence.”

- 1. Acceptance of All People:** An essential ingredient for success in organizing diverse forces to achieve social change, create community, and actualize democracy is the acceptance of all people; an absolutely indispensable necessity to the well-being of this country.
- 2. Celebrating Community:** Sharing the joyous and respectful expression of cultural diversity through the reinforcement of the values of equity and responsibility to and for one another.
- 3. Respect for Life and the Environment:** Respect that holds as sacred the land, the people, and all other forms of life.
- 4. Nonviolence:** Invoking nonviolence as the most powerful tool for achieving social/economic justice and equality; action that requires boldness and courage versus meekness and passivity.
- 5. Innovation:** A creative capacity to find pragmatic strategies and tactics to resolve problems and situations that often seen insurmountable to others.
- 6. A Preference to Help the Most Needy:** A concerted effort to support programs that reach the most needy, the most dispossessed, the most forgotten people in society no matter how difficult the challenge that choice may bring.
- 7. Knowledge:** The pursuit of self-directed learning and the development of critical thinking and constructive problem solving skills; overcoming ignorance through education.
- 8. Sacrifice:** Sacrifice that is spiritual; that is courageous and steadfast in its willingness to endure great hardship for others.
- 9. Service to Others:** Service that is predicated on empowering others; engendering self-help, self-determination, and self-sufficiency versus charity.
- 10. Determination:** Determination that is characterized by an attitude that with faith, steadfast commitment, patience, and optimism, human beings can prevail against all odds.



Suggested Resources and Readings

- › (n.d.). A Trilogy of Non-Violent Movements. Retrieved from <https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/TrilogyOfNon-ViolentMovements.pdf>
- › Admin. (n.d.). The Story of Cesar Chavez. Retrieved from <https://ufw.org/research/history/story-cesar-chavez/>
- › Cadavid, F. R. (2004). Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, Civil Rights Legacy - AARP Everywhere... Retrieved from https://www.aarp.org/politics-society/advocacy/info-2004/growing_up_with_an_activist_a_valuable_legacy.html
- › Das, A. (2019, April 6). The women who heeded Gandhi's call. Retrieved from <https://www.livemint.com/mint-lounge/features/the-women-who-heeded-gandhi-s-call-1554530300409.html>
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- › DeLong, W. (2018, December 19). Ella Baker: The Unsung Hero Of The Civil Rights Movement. Retrieved from <https://allthatsinteresting.com/ella-baker>
- › Donnelly, G. (2017, September 15). Dolores Huerta: Facts About the Civil Rights Icon. Retrieved from <https://fortune.com/2017/09/15/dolores-heuerta-facts/>
- › (2019, July 2). Gandhi, Mohandas K. Retrieved from <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/gandhi-mohandas-k>
- › (n.d.). Gandhi-King-Chavez Basic Principles . Retrieved from <http://agnt.org/snv2010/basicprinciples.htm>
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- › Sherman, Z. (2018, January 15). Every MLK Day, You Forget The Women Who Fought Alongside Him. Retrieved from <https://www.bustle.com/p/every-mlk-day-you-forget-the-women-who-fought-alongside-him-7872668>
- › Taneja, R. (2019, February 13). Sarojini Naidu Birth Anniversary: Know About The Iconic Woman Of India. Retrieved from <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/sarojini-naidu-birth-anniversary-know-about-the-iconic-woman-of-india-1992817>
- › (n.d.). Who Was Ella Baker? Retrieved from <https://ellabakercenter.org/about/who-was-ella-baker>







The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) is an educational and advocacy organization established in 2003.

HAF focuses on educating the public about Hindus and Hinduism and advocating for policies and practices that ensure the well-being of all people and the planet. We work directly with educators and journalists to ensure accurate understanding of Hindus and Hinduism. We also work with policymakers and key stakeholders to champion issues of concern to Hindu Americans, including defending civil and human rights and protecting all living beings. Inspired by our guiding principles and Hindu teachings, HAF promotes dignity, mutual respect, and pluralism.

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