

LESSON PLAN #1: NONVIOLENCE

For Students in Grades 10-12

Based on the documentary, **GANDHI'S AWAKENING** (56 minutes). Featuring footage and photographs from sites of Gandhi's life. With commentary by scholars, such as Dr. Rajmohan Gandhi, historian and grandson, and Narayan Desai, son of Gandhi's personal secretary of 25 years who grew up with Gandhi in his Sevagram Ashram.

Introduction

Throughout history, violence has been used to overthrow oppressive rulers and governments and fight injustice. But violence is harmful to human beings, physically and psychologically, and can be harmful culturally, economically and environmentally. Nonviolence is an alternative to violence that can be an effective answer to oppression and injustice. Calling himself a “soldier of peace,” Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948)* created a new nonviolent technique to answer violence and fight injustice, *Satyagraha*** (Sanskrit for “Truth”—*Satya*—and “holding firmly”—*graha*—so “holding firmly to Truth”). He allowed it to be translated into English as “Truth-Force” (“Soul-Force” or “Love-Force”). He said this nonviolent resistance differed from “passive resistance” because it was not passive and required great courage. He said it gave every person anywhere the power to resist oppression and injustice.

**The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. <https://www.mkgandhi.org/cwmg.htm>

**Rajmohan Gandhi, *Gandhi: The Man, His People, and The Empire* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007, pp. 112-114, p. 121).

**Bhikhu Parekh, *Gandhi*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 54-58.

** How to pronounce *Satyagraha*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfGrbH4y9PM> .

Film Summary

GANDHI'S AWAKENING shows Mohandas K. Gandhi in his young, transformative years in South Africa before he became known around the world as Mahatma (Great Soul) and Father of the Indian nation. In South Africa he faces prejudice and hatred as an Indian immigrant, undergoes a spiritual and personal transformation of purpose and creates a revolutionary nonviolent method to fight injustice and oppression that will later be adopted by millions around the globe. **GANDHI'S AWAKENING** documents these 21 years of Gandhi's life so little known about before now (1893-1914).

Background

Young Gandhi (23 years old) arrived in Durban, South Africa in 1893. From *Gandhi* by Rajmohan Gandhi: “The lands and resources of 1893 Africa had been ‘possessed’ by

European powers and, following the Berlin Congress of 1885, parceled out among them. South Africa was not yet a single political entity. Natal, on the east coast, was a Crown Colony, and the Cape, in the south-west, a self-governing colony of the British while the interior territories of the Transvaal and Orange Free State were Boer or Afrikaner republics, their culture influenced by the Dutch and French Huguenots. . .In 1893, Durban had a population of close to 30,000. About half were whites. The other half was made up, in roughly equal numbers, by blacks (Zulus) and Indians.”*

The Zulu are a Bantu ethnic group of Southern Africa and the largest ethnic group in South Africa with an estimated 10-12 million people living mainly in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The Zulu formed a powerful state in 1818 under the leader Shaka. They came into conflict with the British during the Anglo-Zulu War (1878) and the Zulu or Bambatha Rebellion against British rule and taxation (1906). This latter conflict plays a crucial role in **GANDHI'S AWAKENING**.

The first white settlement in South Africa was in 1652 on the southwest coast of the Cape Peninsula (the future Cape Town) under control of the Dutch East India Company, who saw it as the ideal halfway station on the sea route to the East. (The term “Boer” is used for a member of this Dutch and Huguenot population who settled in southern Africa.)

In 1820 British settlers arrived in South Africa. After the Napoleonic wars, Britain had a serious unemployment problem. Encouraged by the British government, the first settlers immigrated to Table Bay. This bay is on the Atlantic Ocean at the northern end of the Cape Peninsula, stretching south to the Cape of Good Hope. (The Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias was the first European to explore the region in 1486.)

Soon, these two groups of white colonizers fought over land and control. The First Boer War was between the British Empire and South African Republic (Republic of Transvaal) from 1880-81. The British lost. The Second Boer War (1899-1902) was between the British Empire and two Boer states (Republic of Transvaal and Orange Free State). When the British won, the Boers gave their support to their government. In 1910 both republics were incorporated into the Union of South Africa as part of the British Empire.

From *South African History Online* on Indian immigration to South Africa: The first Indians arrived during the Dutch colonial era as slaves (1684). A conservative calculation shows about 16,300 slaves from the Indian subcontinent were brought to the Cape. From 1690 to 1725, over 80% of the slaves in South Africa were Indians. This practice continued until the end of slavery in 1838.

In the second half of the 19th Century, Indians came to South Africa in two categories: indentured workers (1860) and “free” or “passenger” Indians. The former came as a result of a pact among three governments, which stated that the indentured Indians were to work for the Natal colonial government on Natal’s sugar plantations. The “free” Indians came to South Africa mainly as traders alert to new opportunities abroad. These “free Indians” came at their own expense. Immigration was stopped in 1914.

Between November 1860 and 1911 (when the system of indentured labor was stopped) nearly 152,184 indentured laborers from across India arrived in Natal. After serving their indentures, the first category of Indians were free to remain in South Africa or to return to India. By 1910, nearly 26.85% indentured men returned to India, but most chose to stay and thus constituted the forbearers of the majority of present-day South African Indians.

Then and now, South Africa is rich in mineral resources. South Africa is the world's largest producer of gold and platinum, and its diamond industry is the fourth-largest in the world. The country is one of the world's leading producers of base metals and coal.

*Rajmohan Gandhi, *Gandhi: The Man, His People, and The Empire* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007, pp. 56-57).

Film Synopsis—available on www.gandhisgift.org website.

Objectives

Students will:

- Learn about Mahatma Gandhi as a young man and his legacy of nonviolent peacemaking.
- Analyze Gandhi's use of nonviolent methods to fight for justice and equality.
- Compare the use of nonviolent protest by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Learn about the early ashrams that Gandhi began as model villages.
- Encounter the geography and history of South Africa.
- Learn about the Zulu tribe of South Africa, once the largest indigenous tribe on the African continent.
- Define colonialism and analyze how the British, Dutch and others were examples of colonialists in South Africa.
- Research the phenomenon of immigration and immigrants and how Indian immigrants were treated in South African history.

Estimate Time Required: 2-3 hours (class time)

Materials Required: **GANDHI'S AWAKENING** film; Lesson Plan; computer access

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

SETTING THE STAGE—IN A CLASS PRIOR TO VIEWING FILM (10-15 min.)

INTRODUCTION TO FILM: Introduce the film by telling students they will watch a one-hour documentary about Gandhi as a young attorney in South Africa,

GANDHI'S AWAKENING (1893-1914). You might read **Film Summary** (Pg. 1).

RESEARCH HOMEWORK BEFORE VIEWING FILM (two research groups):

- a) Find the Cape Peninsula, Cape Town and Cape of Good Hope in South Africa? When did white settlers first settle in this area and why?
- b) Find Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Pretoria and Johannesburg in South Africa, all depicted in the film. When did white settlers settle in this area and why?
- c) Who are The Zulu Tribe of South Africa? Where did and do they live? Where is that in relation to Durban, where Gandhi arrived in 1893? About how many Zulus were there in 1893? And now?
- d) Read more about the Zulus on this site or others: South African History Online: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/zulu-community>
- e) When did the first Indians arrive in South Africa and why? Read about Indian immigrants in South Africa: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/indian-south-africans>
- f) How long have the British been ruling India when the film begins in 1939? Why did they come to India? How many people (Indian and British) lived in India in 1939?
- g) Investigate how the British and Dutch took control of South African resources, such as with diamonds, gold and sugar plantations. Whom did they get to work in these mines and plantations? Research a good definition of colonialism.

SETTING THE STAGE—IN A SECOND CLASS PRIOR TO FILM (10-20 min.)

Have students report their research. Ask for a definition of “colonialism” and an analysis of how the British, Dutch and others were examples of colonialists in South Africa.

ENGAGING WITH THE STORY—THE DAY YOU VIEW THE FILM (5 min.)

You might want to reread the **Film Summary** (Page 1).

Explain to students that the film moves back and forth in time. It begins in 1939 with Gandhi as an older man (69 years old) when he is a great leader; although he holds no public office, he is the most important man in India along with the British Viceroy or Ruler. In 1939, Gandhi has been working for more than two decades to get the British to end their rule and leave India, so the Viceroy can be considered an adversary. The

Viceroy has summoned Gandhi for sympathy at the outbreak of World War II, hoping he will discontinue his movement for freedom from British rule because of the War. Ask students to notice Gandhi's reaction to the danger of Britain being bombed by Hitler's troops and how he treats his adversaries such as the British here and throughout the film. Next, there is a flashback to the 23-year-old attorney as he arrives in Durban, South Africa in 1893. Ask them to note Gandhi's initial experiences and what he does as a result. Write these words on the board (and pronounce): *Satyagraha*—"holding firmly to the Truth" (Truth Force, Love Force, Soul Force). Ask students to listen closely to the definition of what *Satyagraha* is, how Gandhi describes it and what examples are given or shown. Write "Ashram" on the board and ask students to note the descriptions of Phoenix Farm and other ashrams or communities Gandhi founded and lived in.

WATCHING THE FILM—about 56 min.

DELVING DEEPER—AFTER VIEWING THE FILM; CHOOSE one or more of these three types of class activities:

1) DISCUSSION WITH ENTIRE CLASS ACTIVITY (15-30 min.):

Questions: At the start of **GANDHI'S AWAKENING**, Gandhi is summoned by the Viceroy or Ruler of India to his grand palace in Simla in the Himalaya Mountains.

a) How does Gandhi react when the Viceroy describes what could happen to London as a result of Hitler's bombing? (8:02) As Gandhi descends the mountain in his train, he encounters crowds. What are they screaming? (8:28; "No understanding with the British!") How do their reactions to the British seem different from his?

b) Gandhi's granddaughter Ela says (8:44-9:12) he taught his grandchildren to "detest the deed and not the doer." Dr. Vandana Shiva states (9:13-9:28) "Gandhi said, 'I love the Englishman. I do not love the systems and structures of violence and oppression that the Englishman has created.'" Discuss what those statements mean in terms of treating an adversary or opponent. How did Gandhi illustrate this love and forgiveness of his adversaries in his own life? (For example, he is beaten by a colleague with a lead pipe who thinks he has betrayed their movement, but upon waking up, he says he will not prosecute him. Another example: his relationship with General Jan Smuts, a South African politician who was responsible for harsh immigration laws and imprisoning Gandhi, but they work together for legislation and as he leaves South Africa, Gandhi gives him a gift of sandals he made.)

c) Is it common for public figures to forgive their so-called political "enemies" (a word Gandhi didn't use) or adversaries like Gandhi did—what about people in general? Why or why not? Ask students if they have experienced, read or heard about someone who

forgave another after s/he had committed violence against him/her? How did they feel about the person who forgave (who detested the deed and not the doer)?

2) DISCUSSION WITH RESEARCH ACTIVITY (30-45 min.):

First, ask someone to write on the board: “Satyagraha” and “Holding firmly to the Truth” (34:41): Gandhi says this in the film (35:24): “I have also called it Love Force or Soul Force.” And (36:00): “So the doctrine came to mean vindication of Truth, not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one’s own self.” Discuss what these definitions might mean and how Gandhi used them to fight harsh laws against immigrants in South Africa. What other definitions, statements or examples are given for Satyagraha? Definitions and statements: a) the Narrator calls it (34:34) “the technique whereby steadfast Truth and Love overcome violence and oppression.” b) Narayan Desai, son of Gandhi’s personal secretary for 25 years, who grew up in Gandhi’s Sevagram Ashram, describes it as (34:50): “The resolve to say no, not to accept injustice.” c) Gandhi also states (32:54): “It came to me that we should refuse to obey legislation that was degrading and let them put us in jail if they liked.”

An integral aspect of *Satyagraha* is this willingness to break the law and go to jail (civil disobedience). Ask students what they think about Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the U.S. breaking the law at times and then going to jail for it? What do they think about people who do that today? Would they be willing to do it? Remember, this does not entail them harming anyone or property, just breaking the law.

d) Examples: The main example is Gandhi, who is depicted going to jail and leading nonviolent protests against the unjust immigration laws. He states (47:07-47:43) that he may have to die during his nonviolent campaign in South Africa; but if he does, he tells his followers to rejoice because his death would bring together the Hindus and the Muslims, whom he says many in the community are trying to pull apart. Another example is Gandhi’s wife, Kasturba, (47:43-49:49) who leads a nonviolent march of Indian women against immigration laws that would not recognize Indian marriages. A third example is Martin Luther King Jr. (33:05-34:04), who is shown in footage during his campaign for civil rights in Chicago (1966), where he dodges bullets and is protected by his colleagues while surrounded by chaos, hatred and violence.

Research Activity: ask students to research King’s Chicago campaign. Then discuss: how could his work there be considered *Satyagraha* or the use of nonviolence for justice and equality?

3) SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION ACTIVITY (15-20 min.) WITH ENTIRE CLASS DISCUSSION ACTIVITY (15-20 min. for a total of 30-40 min.):

Have students get into small groups to discuss one or more of the following three discussion topics then designate someone to share key points with the rest of the class.

Topic 1: In **GANDHI'S AWAKENING**, we see the 23-year-old Gandhi, arriving in Durban, South Africa in 1893, to be thrown off a train while attempting to ride in a first-class compartment with white passengers. After spending a cold night in the station then taking a stagecoach where he is forbidden to sit inside with whites and is verbally and physically abused, Gandhi becomes a changed man. He makes a life decision not to return to India but remain to fight the unfair immigration prejudices, practices and laws.

Discuss: how would you feel if you were arriving in a foreign country for the first time and were thrown off a train because you were the wrong color (or nationality or religion or different in some way)? Would you be afraid? Would you be angry? What would you do? Relate any experiences you have had in a foreign country—or even visiting another city, state or even neighborhood—where you were mistreated or disrespected. Were you treated as an “outsider” or “the other”? How did it make you feel? Gandhi decided to stay in the country where he had just arrived to fight injustice nonviolently. How much courage does that take? What are some other reactions that Gandhi could have had in that situation instead?

Topic 2: Do you know about anyone living today who has courageously taken up a cause after experiencing injustice or prejudice, as Gandhi did when he first arrived in South Africa? Or do you know about anyone living today who took up a cause or stayed firm in a cause after experiencing trauma, such as violence, as Gandhi did in South Africa? If so, share their stories and how you feel about them.

What do you think about the Parkland (Florida) high school students who have taken up the cause of gun violence, after experiencing a tragic shooting at their school. Have you ever thought about what such an experience would feel like? Even if you disagree with them on their political stand to achieve stricter gun laws, do you admire them in any way? Can you see how a traumatic experience could make you want to take a political stand and work for what you see as justice? Does experiencing such a trauma validate or invalidate your political stand in any way?

Topic 3: Dr. Vandana Shiva discusses the famous statement of Gandhi, which has been taken to heart by many, including the ecological movement around the world (38:03-38:51): “The Earth has enough for everyone’s needs, but not enough for a few people’s greed.” Discuss this statement and if you believe it is true. Do you agree with her statements of Gandhi’s belief (based on an ancient Hindu text) that someone who uses more than her/his fair share of resources can be called a “thief”?

REFLECTING AND EXPRESSING THROUGH WRITING—Six possible topics are suggested for student essays.

- 1) Keeping in mind the Class Discussion of Gandhi’s kind of forgiveness (Discussion With Entire Class Activity #1, Question #1), write an essay to define and describe the Truth and Reconciliation Commission created by Nelson Mandela in 1995 and carried out by Archbishop Desmond Tutu to investigate past human rights abuses committed by both pro and anti-apartheid groups in South Africa. Mandela saw this Commission as an important component to the transition to democracy for South Africa. The Commission has often been called “restorative justice.” Make sure to define “apartheid” and “restorative justice.” **Or:** Investigate and analyze another Reconciliation Commission in another country that attempted to bring human rights abuses out in the open and create reconciliation among the parties (victims and perpetrators). If there is reliable information on how successful it was, include it.

- 2) Based upon the Discussion With Research Activity #2, analyze the Chicago campaign of Martin Luther King Jr. Describe what King did while in Chicago and analyze his motives and objectives? Was he successful? If so, what did he achieve? If not, what went wrong and why?

- 3) Based upon the Small Group Discussion with Entire Class Discussion Activity #3, Topic #2, write an analysis of the political actions of the Parkland students. Be sure to relate the incident they lived through that motivated them. What have they achieved, thus far if anything? What impact, if any, have they had upon others—and if so, who has been affected? Gandhi was 23 when he decided to change the course of his life and nonviolently fight for justice, but at the time in South Africa, he wasn’t allowed to vote. He developed other methods to get the people’s and government’s attention and persuade them to change in what they envision as a positive direction. How old are the Parkland students? Can they vote? What methods have they used and what methods might they use to fight for their cause? **Or:** Write an argument for or against making changes to gun laws such as the Parkland students are suggesting.

- 4) Based upon the Small Group Discussion with Entire Class Discussion Activity #3, Topic #3, argue for or against the statement of Gandhi’s: “The Earth has enough for everyone’s needs, but not for a few people’s greed.” Be sure to research your own country’s current use of resources in comparison to other countries’ and include those facts in your argument. **Or:** After doing the research about the U.S.’s use of resources in comparison to other countries’ use, analyze the cause(s) and effect(s) of our country’s use of one or more resources, keeping in mind Gandhi’s statement about need and greed. **Or:** After concluding the research about the U.S.’s use of resources in comparison to other countries’ use, analyze an effective method that is currently being developed or implemented in the U.S. or elsewhere to solve a current or future problem of dwindling resources. Choose one resource.

- 5) Read Henry David Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" and define his view of "civil disobedience." How do you think Gandhi incorporated Thoreau's ideas into his own? What similarities do you see in their thinking?
- 6) Write an argument for or against the use of *Satyagraha* for a cause of justice, equality or freedom that you believe in.

SUPPLEMENTAL READING LIST FOR STUDENTS GRADES 10-12

Fischer, Louis. *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, Harper, 1950.

Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. "On Civil Disobedience" (July 27, 1916), *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*.

----- . *The Story of My Experiments with Truth: The Autobiography of Mohandas K. Gandhi*, Navajivan Press, 1927.

Gandhi, Rajmohan. *Why Gandhi Still Matters: An Appraisal of the Mahatma's Legacy*, Aleph Book Company, 2017.

King, Martin Luther King, Jr. "My Trip to the Land of Gandhi," King Papers, Stanford University, July 1959, 5:231-8.

----- . "Statement Upon Return from India," King Papers, Stanford University, 18 March 1959, 5:142-3.

----- . James Melvin Washington, ed. *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches*, HarperCollins, 1986.

Parekh, Bhikhu. *Gandhi*, Oxford University Press, 1997.

Thoreau, Henry David. "Civil Disobedience" in *Collected Essays and Poems*, Library of America, 2001.

STANDARDS

Students will be able to achieve the national standards listed below.

Common Core English Language Arts. SL.9-10.1 and SL.11-12.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 (or 11-12) topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards. D2. Psy.2.9-12. Investigate human behavior from biological, cognitive, and sociocultural perspectives.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards. D2. His. 3. 9-12. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.

CCSS Reading Standard for History/Social Studies. 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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH11-12.9. Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH11-12.8. Evaluate an author's premises, claims and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Geography State Standards. D2.Geo.2.9-12. Use maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions, and their political, cultural, and economic dynamics.