



Cesar Chavez: Protector of Workers' Rights

8A

Note: Introducing the Read-Aloud may have activity options that exceed the time allocated for this part of the lesson. To remain within the time periods allocated for this portion of the lesson, you will need to make conscious choices about which activities to include based on the needs of your students.

Introducing the Read-Aloud

10 minutes

What Have We Already Learned?

5 minutes

Remind students how, when faced with injustice, ordinary people can make extraordinary changes for the good of all citizens. Ask students to define the term *extraordinary*. Have students reference the timeline you have created thus far during this domain. Review some of the content studied with the following questions:

- For what causes did Susan B. Anthony fight during her lifetime?
- For what causes did Eleanor Roosevelt fight during her adult life and as the First Lady of the United States?
- For what causes did Mary McLeod Bethune fight during her lifetime?
- What roles did Jackie Robinson and Rosa Parks have in changing segregation laws?
- What action did Rosa Parks take that helped to bring about change in the South?
- For what causes did Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. fight during his lifetime?

Image Preview

5 minutes

Tell students that today they will hear about a man who fought to make a better life for people who worked very hard but were paid very little money.



← **Show image 8A-1: Cesar Chavez**

Explain to students that the man in this image was named Cesar Chavez. Cesar, like many others, worked in California picking grapes and harvesting other crops when they were ready to be harvested. He did not own his own farm. He worked on farms owned by other people, and he had to travel from farm to farm looking for work. Life for workers like Cesar was very difficult, and he worked to improve the lives of these workers.

Vocabulary Preview

5 minutes

Migrant Workers



← **Show image 8A-5: Migrant workers tending to crops**

1. In today's read-aloud, you will hear that Cesar Chavez and his family were *migrant workers*.
2. Say the phrase *migrant workers* with me three times.
3. Migrant workers are people who travel from one area to another, usually in search of work such as harvesting crops.
4. My friend moved to another state because his parents are migrant workers and their work in our area was finished.
5. What do you think the life of migrant workers is like? Try to use the phrase *migrant workers* in your answer.

Strikes



← **Show image 8A-8: Cesar leads the strike**

1. In today's read-aloud, you will hear that Cesar Chavez led important farmworkers' *strikes*.
2. Say the word *strikes* with me three times.
3. Strikes are periods of time when a group of workers refuse to work because of a disagreement with their employer about things such as pay or working conditions.
4. Some strikes last a long time until the employer and the workers agree on a fair solution to their disagreements.
5. Do you think strikes are a good way for workers to fight for what they want? Why or why not?

Purpose for Listening

Tell students to listen carefully to find out for what causes Cesar Chavez fought.



Cesar Chavez: Protector of Workers' Rights

← Show image 8A-1: Cesar Chavez

Cesar Estrada Chavez (*SAY-zar es-TRAH-da CHAH-vez*) was born in 1927, in the Gila (*HEE-luh*) River Valley, near Yuma (*YOU-muh*), Arizona. As the second of six children, Cesar and his siblings loved to explore the golden desert landscape and to gaze up at the sparkling desert sky that seemed to stretch on forever. Cesar was named after his grandfather who had come to the United States from Mexico in the 1880s. Cesar's grandfather had settled on a small ranch in the Gila River Valley.

The Chavez family worked hard, and their farm was prosperous.¹ Then tragedy struck. Rain stopped falling in the Gila River Valley—first one year, and then the next. Without rain, the crops could not grow, and the cattle died. This was also the time of the Great Depression, and Cesar's family, like so many others, lost their home. There was nothing else to do but to sell the ranch.

1 *Prosperous* means thriving or making money.



← Show image 8A-5: Migrant workers tending to crops

And so, when he was ten years old, Cesar and his family moved to California to become **migrant workers**, people who traveled from farm to farm, picking fruits and vegetables during harvest time.² Cesar and his family were poor and were often treated unfairly by the people who hired them. Migrant workers were paid very little money for the work that they did, and that work was very difficult.

2 A migrant worker is a person who travels from one area to another, often in search of work such as harvesting crops.



← Show image 8A-3: Migrant worker camp

Cesar and his family had to live in many different migrant worker camps. The camps were overcrowded, and many families had to share one bathroom. The Chavez family missed their ranch. They dreamed of going back to Arizona one day and buying back their home. However, migrant workers earned just a few cents a day for the backbreaking work that they did. There was no chance of ever being able to save money.

3 What do the terms *discrimination* and *segregation* mean?

4 The word *heritage* means culture, traditions, qualities, and possessions that are handed down from generation to generation.

Cesar's family was Hispanic; they were originally from the Spanish-speaking country of Mexico. Like African Americans, Hispanics also faced discrimination and segregation.³

Nevertheless, Cesar's family celebrated their Mexican **heritage**, and spoke Spanish, their home language.⁴

Although it wasn't always easy, Cesar did go to school in various places in California. In fact, he went to more than thirty different schools. He later said that he was lucky to have graduated from middle school because his family moved around so much. Later in his life, Cesar told a story about an incident that happened to him at school. One day Cesar accidentally spoke Spanish instead of English in his classroom. His teacher was not happy with him, and Cesar thought that he had done something wrong. Cesar felt he had been treated unfairly, and it made him sad.



← **Show image 8A-4: Cesar joins the navy**

It was not possible for Cesar to go on to high school. He was needed to work in the fields. However, during World War II, Cesar wanted to serve his country. He joined the navy, and his family was very proud of him.⁵ After two years in the U.S. Navy, Cesar returned to life as a migrant farmworker. Soon after his return, Cesar met and fell in love with Helen Fabela. The couple married and moved to San Jose, California.

5 What does it mean to be proud of someone or something?



← **Show image 8A-5: Migrant workers tending to crops**

Cesar moved from farm to farm harvesting fruits and vegetables. The work was so hard, and the hours were so long, that many workers found that their health suffered.⁶ They worked seven days a week, often fourteen hours a day, for very little pay. If they were injured or became sick, they found it difficult to pay medical bills. These migrant workers were only employed during harvest time. And of course, migrant workers did not earn money when bad weather prevented them from working, while waiting for crops to ripen, or when they traveled from job to job. Cesar

6 Why do you think the workers suffered from bad health?

believed that something had to change. He believed that these migrant workers deserved to be treated more fairly. He set out to change the treatment of farmworkers, and especially migrant workers in California.



← **Show image 8A-6: Cesar meeting with workers**

One day, Cesar met an **organizer** for a social service group known as the Community Service Organization, also known as the CSO.⁷ This organization also wanted to improve the lives of Latino people. Cesar volunteered to be a CSO community organizer. He went from farm to farm, helping some farmworkers with their day-to-day problems, and **instructing** others on how to become U.S. citizens.⁸ He encouraged all farmworkers to register to vote, and he helped to register thousands of new voters.⁹ Immediately, some of the farm owners thought that Cesar was a troublemaker.

Cesar was shy. He did not like speaking in front of large groups of people, but he knew that his work was important. He became the leader of a new CSO chapter in California. In addition to speaking Spanish, Cesar spoke very good English. As a result, he was able to communicate with both the farm owners, most of whom spoke English, and the farmworkers, most of whom spoke Spanish. Slowly, many farmworkers became brave enough to attend meetings and rallies organized by Cesar. Without intending to, Cesar had become a labor leader and civil rights activist.¹⁰

← **Show image 8A-7: Cesar creates the NFWA**

Cesar believed that all farmworkers needed a union to represent their best interests. A union is a large, organized group of workers who join together and elect leaders to speak for them. The union leaders try to make sure the members' needs are being met.

Cesar knew that a union would have the power to increase wages, or pay, and provide health care for farmworkers.¹¹ He helped to set up a union called the National Farm Workers Association. Cesar said, "You are never strong enough that you don't need help," and the union was intended to provide that help. Within two years, they had one thousand members.

7 An organizer is someone who brings people and ideas together to accomplish a certain goal.

8 Instructing is teaching or guiding someone to do something.

9 The word *register* here means to sign up to vote. A *register* is also a machine used in a store that calculates how much money is owed.

10 What is an activist? (someone who takes action to achieve a goal)



11 You learned the term *health care* when you heard about Mary McLeod Bethune. What does the term *health care* mean? (medical care for people)

12 A fast is when a person does not eat for a period of time. What is a boycott?



13 Strikes are when workers stop working until the workers and the employer agree on things such as wages and better working conditions.



14 A plight is a very bad situation.



Cesar thought Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had the right idea about protesting in a nonviolent way. He decided to do the same thing. Cesar led marches, fasts, and boycotts, but never violent protests.¹²

← **Show image 8A-8: Cesar leads the strike**

One of the most important farmworkers' **strikes** Cesar led was against grape growers in California.¹³ At that time, grape growers had decided to cut the little pay the farmworkers received, so the workers were earning even less money. Cesar said, "The fight is never about grapes or lettuce. It is always about people."

← **Show image 8A-9: Cesar organizes the protest march**

Cesar not only organized a strike, but a protest march, too. Thousands of farmworkers set off for the state capital of Sacramento. They walked for hours each day in the hot sunshine. More and more workers left the vineyards and joined in the march. People across the nation noticed what was happening. Many people refused to buy—or boycotted—California grapes to protest against the **plight** of the workers.¹⁴

← **Show image 8A-10: Grapes on the vine**

While farmworkers were marching, they weren't harvesting the valuable grapes. The farm owners watched in horror as their precious crops withered and died on the vine. They discovered that without their workers, they would lose money. The farm owners recognized Cesar's union and agreed to discuss higher wages and health care for the farmworkers. The farmworkers' march to Sacramento became the longest protest march in American history.

This was indeed a victory, but there was more work to be done. Cesar defended farmworkers and migrant workers in many other cases of unfair treatment. Thousands of people joined his union. His union opened offices all over the country. Eventually, Cesar's union became known as the United Farm Workers.



← **Show image 8A-11: Cesar protesting against use of pesticides**

Later, the United Farm Workers protested against grape growers who used pesticides, or poisons intended to kill insects, mice, and rats, on their crops. These pesticides harmed workers who harvested the grapes. Cesar called for another boycott of California grapes. Throughout his lifetime, Cesar dedicated himself to working for the rights of poor migrant farmworkers who seemed to have no voice in society.¹⁵

Cesar Chavez died in 1993. Thousands of people attended his funeral. One year after his death, Cesar was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, a very important award in the United States.¹⁶ His wife, Helen, accepted the award. During his lifetime, Cesar often encouraged his fellow farmworkers by saying “Sí, se puede!” (see, seh *PWEH*-deh)—“Yes, we can.” And he certainly did.

15 This doesn't mean they didn't actually have voices. It means they didn't have much power, so not many people listened to them.

16 Rosa Parks also received this award, two years later.

Discussing the Read-Aloud

15 minutes

Comprehension Questions

10 minutes

1. *Inferential* What happened to Cesar's family after the drought ruined their ranch? (The Chavez family lost their ranch, so they went to California and became migrant workers.)
2. *Inferential* Was life as a migrant worker easy or hard for Cesar and his family? Why? (Life was very hard. They had to move from place to place. They earned very little money.)
3. *Inferential* Why did Cesar Chavez decide to fight for the cause of migrant workers? (He felt migrant workers deserved better treatment.)
4. *Inferential* Why did Cesar organize a protest march? (Cesar organized a march to get better pay, better working conditions, and health care for the farmworkers.)
5. *Inferential* How did the grape owners feel about the strike and the march? (They were upset because the grapes were rotting, so they agreed to increase the amount of money they paid to the migrant workers, and they gave them health care.)

6. *Evaluative* Cesar, like many of the other activists you heard about, thought it was important for people to vote for the people who would represent them in the government. Why do you think they thought the right to vote was so important? (Answers may vary.)

[Please continue to model the *Think Pair Share* process for students, as necessary, and scaffold students in their use of the process.]

I am going to ask a question. I will give you a minute to think about the question, and then I will ask you to turn to your neighbor and discuss the question. Finally, I will call on several of you to share what you discussed with your partner.

7. *Evaluative Think Pair Share:* Which causes did Cesar Chavez fight for? Why? (Cesar Chavez fought for the right of migrant workers to receive a fair wage and better working conditions. Cesar and his family were migrant workers and had experienced the plight of migrant workers.)
8. After hearing today’s read-aloud and questions and answers, do you have any remaining questions? [If time permits, you may wish to allow for individual, group, or class research of the text and/or other resources to answer these questions.]



Word Work: Plight

5 minutes

← **Show image 8A-3: Migrant worker camp**

1. In the read-aloud you heard, “Many people refused to buy California grapes in sympathy for the *plight* of the workers.”
2. Say the word *plight* with me.
3. A plight is a very difficult or bad situation.
4. Eleanor Roosevelt was saddened to see the plight of all the people without jobs during the Great Depression.
5. How would you describe the plight of the migrant workers you heard about in today’s read-aloud? Try to use the word *plight* when you tell about it. [Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase the students’ responses: “The plight of the migrant workers was . . .”]

6. What is the word we've been talking about?

Use a *Making Choices* activity for follow-up. Directions: I will describe a situation. If what I describe is an example of a plight, or a difficult or sad situation, say, "That is a plight." If what I describe is not an example of a difficult or sad situation, say, "That is not a plight."

1. when victims of an earthquake need to rebuild their damaged homes (That is a plight.)
2. when a family takes a walk together in a park (That is not a plight.)
3. when a team wins a sports tournament (That is not a plight.)
4. when birds lose their habitat, or homes, because of a forest fire (That is a plight.)



Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day



Cesar Chavez: Protector of Workers' Rights

8B

Note: Extensions may have activity options that exceed the time allocated for this part of the lesson. To remain within the time periods allocated for this portion of the lesson, you will need to make conscious choices about which activities to include based on the needs of your students.

Extensions

20 minutes

↔ Multiple Meaning Word Activity

5 minutes

Sentence in Context: Register

Note: You may choose to have students hold up one or two fingers to indicate which image shows the meaning being described, or have a student walk up to the poster and point to the image being described.

5. [Show Poster 4M (Register).] In the read-aloud you heard, “[Cesar Chavez] encouraged all farmworkers to *register* to vote, and he helped to *register* thousands of new voters.” Here *register* means to put your name on an official list. Which image shows this meaning of *register*?
6. *Register* also means a machine used in a store that figures out the amount of money a customer needs to pay and that has a drawer for holding money. Which image shows this type of register?
7. Now with your partner, make a sentence for each meaning of *register*. Remember to be as descriptive as possible and use complete sentences. I will call on some of you to share your sentences. [Call on a few student pairs to share one or both of their sentences. Have them point to the part of the poster that relates to their use of *register*.]

↔ Syntactic Awareness Activity (Instructional Master 8B-1)

10 minutes

Sentence Builder

Note: The purpose of these syntactic activities is to help students understand the direct connection between grammatical structures and the meaning of text. These syntactic activities should be used in conjunction with the complex text presented in the read-alouds.

1. What do we call words that describe nouns? (adjectives)
What do we call words that describe verbs, or action words? (adverbs)
How does adding adjectives and adverbs to sentences change our sentences? (It makes the sentences more descriptive and interesting.)
2. [Distribute a copy of Instructional Master 8B-1 to each student.]
On this activity sheet, there are two sets of words. Each set is a scrambled, or mixed-up, sentence about Cesar Chavez. You will complete the activity page by rearranging, or changing the order of, each set of words to form a complete and accurate sentence about Cesar Chavez.
3. In addition, you will also fill in the blanks with an adjective to describe nouns or an adverb to describe verbs. Write your complete sentences on the lines below each group of words. [If necessary, students may also cut out the parts of each sentence to physically unscramble them.]
4. On the last line, write your own sentence about Cesar Chavez and the cause he fought for. Try to use at least one adjective or adverb in your sentence.
5. When you are finished, compare your sentences with a partner's sentences. Circle the adjectives you added to the sentences. Put a square around the adverbs you added to the sentences.

↔ Vocabulary Instructional Activity

10 minutes

Word Work: Heritage

1. In the read-aloud you heard, “Cesar’s family celebrated their Mexican *heritage*, and spoke Spanish, their home language.”
2. Say the word *heritage* with me three times.
3. Heritage is the culture, traditions, qualities, and possessions that are handed down from generation to generation.
4. My friend is proud of her Inuit heritage and enjoys attending the Inuit cultural festivals with her family.
5. Why do you think it was important for Cesar’s family to celebrate their heritage?
[Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase the students’ responses: “It was important for Cesar’s family to celebrate their heritage because . . .”]

Use a *Draw and Write* activity for follow-up. Directions: Draw something that is part of your heritage. It can be a family tradition, a way of celebrating a cultural holiday, traditional dress, music, or food. Then write two sentences about your drawing. Finally, share your drawing and sentences with your partner.

Timeline

5 minutes

- Review the individuals placed on the timeline thus far. Show students Image Card 8 (Cesar Chavez). Ask students to describe the cause for which Cesar Chavez fought.
- Help students understand that Cesar Chavez lived at approximately the same time as Martin Luther King Jr., but was helping people at a slightly later time than Martin Luther King Jr. was. Ask students where on the timeline the Image Card of Cesar Chavez should be placed. (slightly to the right of the Martin Luther King Jr. Image Card)

Individual Timelines

- Have students cut out the image of Cesar Chavez from their image sheets.
- Then have them glue the image in the appropriate place on their timelines (on the last notch).
- Have students label the image. [Write *Cesar Chavez* on the board.]

Free Verse Writing: Cesar Chavez (Instructional Masters 2B-4 and 8B-2)

20 minutes

- Ask students what type of poetry they have been writing. Ask which parts of a free verse poem can relate, or tell, the poet's opinion. (the words, phrases, and rhythm)
- Explain to students that they are going to write a free verse poem in which they express an opinion about Cesar Chavez's achievements.
- Tell students that they first need to plan their poem by brainstorming ideas using Instructional Master 2B-4. Explain that they are going to work in groups to brainstorm ideas and recall facts from the read-aloud they have just heard. Have students write "Cesar Chavez" in the circle in the center of Instructional Master 2B-4, and then write the ideas, words, or phrases they might use to write their free verse poem in the other circles.
- After students have worked in groups to brainstorm ideas for their free verse poems, have them individually create a free verse poem in which they express their opinion of Cesar Chavez and his achievements. Encourage students to use facts from the brainstorming chart in their free verse poems. Students should write their free verse poems on Instructional Master 8B-2, writing Cesar Chavez's name on the line to the left of the image of Cesar.

Opinion Paragraph: Cesar Chavez (Instructional Master 8B-3)

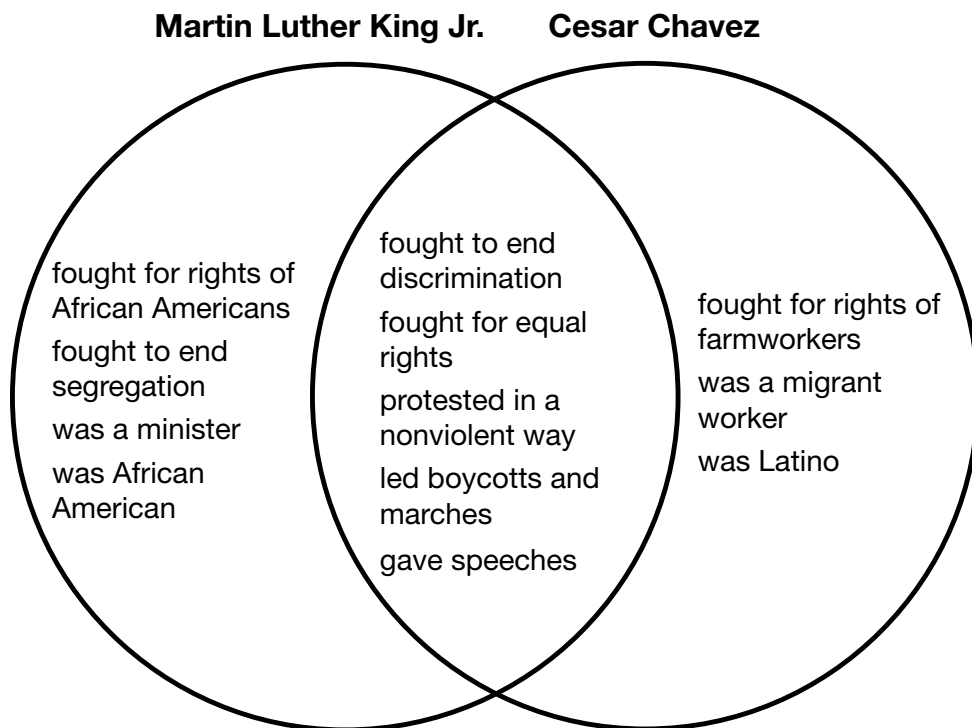
15 minutes

- Distribute a copy of Instructional Master 8B-3 (Opinion Paragraph: Cesar Chavez) to each student. Tell students that they are going to complete the outline of an opinion paragraph about Cesar Chavez. Explain that their opinion paragraph should include the following:
 - an introductory sentence that states the cause that Cesar Chavez fought for
 - their opinion of him or his cause (e.g., I think Cesar Chavez was brave . . . ; I think organizing strikes is a good idea . . .)
 - two reasons for their opinion
 - a concluding sentence

[You may wish to show Flip Book images from this lesson to help students generate ideas. Provide examples for students to help them state their opinion.]

Venn Diagram (Instructional Master 8B-4)

15 minutes



- On chart paper, a chalkboard, or a whiteboard, create a Venn diagram to compare/contrast Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez.
 - Ask students to think about what they have learned about the two men. Ask: “How were Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez alike?” Write their answers on the overlapping part of the Venn diagram.
 - Then ask: “How were Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez different from one another?” Write this information in the non-overlapping parts of the circle labeled “Martin Luther King Jr.” and “Cesar Chavez,” respectively.
 - Read the completed Venn diagram to the class.
- Above and Beyond: You may wish to have students use Instructional Master 8B-4 to complete this diagram on their own. If time allows, you may wish to extend this activity by using the chart as a prewriting tool. Have students write two paragraphs: one describing similarities, and the other describing differences between the two men.