



Cesar Chavez - Study Guide

diligence: hard work over time

migrant worker: a person who moves from place to place in search of work

justice: equal treatment under the law

organizer: someone who brings people together to get something done or to meet a goal

protests: actions taken to show people want change

citizen: an official member of a country

labor union: an organization of workers who work together for better pay and working conditions

strike: refusing to work to protest low pay or working conditions

freedom of expression: the freedom to say what you believe

boycott: refusing to buy something as a form of protest

march: an organized walk by a group of people to make a point

fast: going without food to make a point

legacy: something passed down to younger people

CHAPTER 1 - Early Years

- Cesar's father taught him the importance of hard work and diligence and his mother showed that talking, NOT fighting, was the way to solve problems
- Cesar's parents had come to the U.S. from Mexico as a child. Cesar was born in Yuma, Arizona, in 1927.
- Because his family moved around so much looking for work, Cesar went to more than 30 different schools. There were times he had to miss school to work.

CHAPTER 2 - Justice for All

- Many of people in California worked on farms. They worked hard under very difficult conditions.
- When Chavez was 17, he joined the Navy so that he could get away from the unfair treatment of migrant farm workers.

Part of Chavez's job was to speak to groups of people about working together to change things. People listened to him and agreed with what he said. He learned he was a good leader and community organizer.

CHAPTER 3 - Rights for Farm Workers

- Chavez studied the work of Mohandas Gandhi in India and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the United States. He learned that both had used nonviolent protests to bring important changes to their countries.

- Chavez wanted to start a labor union to help farm workers win recognition of their rights. He wanted better pay and working conditions for all of them.
- Acting as a group, workers have more power than they would alone. A union can make employers give workers better pay and working conditions.
- Traveling diligently from farm to farm, Chavez asked workers to join his union so that as a group they could fight for better working conditions.
- Chavez became the leader of the Community Service Organization in 1959. In that job, he helped thousands of people from Mexico become citizens of the United States. This group wanted justice for all people.

CHAPTER 5 – We Remember Chavez

- Today, Chavez's birthday is a holiday in seven states. On this day, many people honor Chavez by taking part in community projects.
- In 1994, **President Bill Clinton awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Cesar Chavez.** Clinton stated, "Cesar Chavez left our world better than he found it, and his legacy inspires us still."

Be prepared to discuss...what life was like on California farms in the mid 1900's.

- no running water or electricity
- Workers lived in tents.
- Workers started working in the morning and worked all day.
- They were not allowed to drink water before noon.
- There were no bathrooms.
- Workers who complained could lose their jobs.
- There were no hot showers or soft beds.
- Workers shared one water faucet for drinking, cooking, and washing.
- They were not paid very much for their hard work.

Be prepared to discuss...nonviolent protests that Cesar used to bring about change for the migrant workers.

- strikes where they refused to work
- boycotts where they refused to buy grapes grown in California
- marches where they walked to draw attention to the strike
- fast where Chavez didn't eat for 36 days to protest pesticides

Know that Cesar Chavez brought changes to farm workers from California and where California is located on the map.

