

Introduction to Nonviolence: A 1-week Lesson for the High School Classroom

Lesson Rationale

This is a time of crisis for young people. Students are losing optimism, causing many of them even to turn to self-destructive behaviors. At the same time classrooms are compromised in their effectiveness by a lack of civility and security. Many believe that this crisis can in large part be traced to the unbalanced emphasis on the outer world and neglect of inner life that characterizes modern civilization as a whole. In a holistic view of the human being, we are body, mind, and spirit: we have an inner as well as an outer life, and our inner wellbeing and fulfillment is at least as important as our material, or outer life. This course uses the life and career of Mahatma Gandhi to expand students' understanding of their inner dimension and — at a minimum — give them skills that they can apply in their daily life. The key to both is Gandhi's signal achievement: developing nonviolence into a practical science. This understanding will empower students to exercise their agency in more constructive ways, which will in turn improve their self-confidence as co-creators of this complex world.

Main Ideas, Key Words, and Essential Questions:

Main Ideas:

- 1) Human beings are essentially good and dignified, and have three components to their lives: Body, Mind, and Spirit.
- 2) Nonviolence operates within Body, Mind, and Spirit, and begins with Spirit.

Key Words:

- 1) Work vs. “Work”
- 2) Kenneth Boulding's Three Faces of Power (Threat, Exchange, Integrative)
- 3) Satyagraha

Essential Questions:

- 1) What are the various ways of dealing with conflict, and how effective are they?
- 2) How can Nonviolence be used to prevent and, when necessary, deal with bullying?
- 3) How have social movements around the world used nonviolence to achieve their goals?

Course Objectives

- 1) Students will be able to critically analyze media reports by understanding their underlying assumptions, particularly in advertising.
- 2) Students will be able to distinguish between a nonviolence principle and its application by analyzing the underlying dynamics of an event.
- 3) Students will be able to affirm their role as makers of history and their ability to exercise their agency and responsibility personally, interpersonally, societally and even globally.

- 4) Students will be able to reclaim their cultural and universal heritage of nonviolence.
- 5) Students will be able to critically evaluate nonviolent episodes by their type and intensity.
- 6) Students will be able to discover the history, principles, and logic of nonviolence by summarizing selected readings, film, and lecture.

Common Core Standards Addressed:

Grades 9-10:

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6–12 RH: page 61 of Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text
3. Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social studies
6. Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
7. Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6–12: page 65 of Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

Grades 10-12

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6–12 RH: page 61 of Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

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.
2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).
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.)
8. Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.
9. Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6–12 RH: page 61 of Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation
8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation

9. Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources

Suggested Assessment

- 1) Daily assessment of notes, handouts, group work and then your final assessment for the week.
- 2) Ongoing homework assignment: A diary of all the Nonviolence in which the student directly observes or participates, using criteria provided by instructor and readings.
- 3) Final assessment paper: Do you believe that nonviolence can be effective for solving bullying or pursuing social goals? Why, or why not? Use examples from this week's lesson to support your claim. Make sure to address possible claims against your argument.

Supplementary Materials

Nonviolence Videos (Introduction, Principles of Nonviolence, and the Historical Context of Nonviolence)

Nonviolence Movement Handouts (from ["History Shows: Winning with Nonviolence"](#) Rachel MacNair)

The Search for a Nonviolent Future by Michael Nagler

Resources for Teachers:

Hope or Terror

A Force More Powerful

"New Story" Material (Metta Center and others)

Course Outline: A Week of Nonviolence

Monday: How to evaluate "real world" media.

Objective: Students will be able to critically analyze media reports by uncovering their underlying assumptions, particularly in advertising.

Agenda:

- Quickwrite: On a scale of 1-10, how much of an effect does media have on you, and why?
- Analysis of Advertisement: Ex: "There's a Soldier in all of us" *Call of Duty* Ad: <http://youtu.be/Pblj3JHF-Jo>
- Discussion: What does this advertisement want you to believe about how the world works? What is the subtext of this ad? (Peel back the messages in the advertisement. For example, a McDonald's commercial that says, "I'm lovin' it," says much more than "Eat McDonald's tonight.")

- Reflection: Do you want to live in a world like the one this ad portrays? What are some consequences of living in a world like the one portrayed in this advertisement? What is an alternative way to see the world?
- Explain “new story,” alternative way to see the world, and nonviolence unit.
- Journal Assignment: observe violence in media tonight and write about your reactions and reflections.

Tuesday: Introduction to nonviolence

Objectives: Students will discover the history, principles, and logic of nonviolence by summarizing selected readings, film, and lecture.

Students will be able to affirm their role as makers of history and their ability to exercise their agency and responsibility personally, interpersonally, societally and even globally.

Principle: Nonviolence is an important, powerful, and largely unnoticed factor in human affairs.

Quote: *“I have learnt through bitter experience the one supreme lesson to conserve my anger, and as heat conserved is transmuted into energy, even so our anger controlled can be transmuted into a power that can move the world.” – M.K. Gandhi*

Story: Mother Teresa Story on P. 199-201 (*Search for a Nonviolent Future*)

Agenda:

- Warm-up: Ask students to list times that they have been involved in conflict on one side of a sheet of paper. Ask them to list different international conflicts on the other. How were these conflicts resolved?
- Ask students to define conflict. Are there different ways to deal with conflict? Explain that Learning about NV requires a different way of looking at conflict, and even at human nature. We are going to look at NV both in our personal interactions (bullying, disrespect, or the opposite), and in the international sphere (history).
How do our thoughts and emotions influence our personal interactions? How can our personal interactions influence our community? How can our personal interactions influence world events?
- Beyond Rangoon Video Clip: <http://youtu.be/6Db5700JQt4>
Discussion: Is there a force other than violence at work here? Why couldn't the soldiers in the video pull the trigger? Who seems to be the most powerful side here? Why to they appear to be the most powerful?
- Video Clip: Introduction to Nonviolence.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6cCoLD-oc8&feature=BFa&list=UUhbPsONliTtbVCcomho9hKg>
- Think pair share activity: Discuss what nonviolence allows you to do.

Homework: Write a paragraph on how to positively and creatively resolve a conflict. What does it take?

Wednesday: Basics of Nonviolence

Objective: Students will discover the history, principles, and logic of nonviolence by summarizing selected readings, film, and lecture.

Principle: Nonviolence, like violence, does not always provide the exact results one desires in the immediate term, but unlike violence it always produces good results in the long-term.

Story: Nashville Sit-ins or Salt Satyagraha (P. 97-98 of *Search for a Nonviolent Future*)

Quote: “Over the last few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. So I have tried to make it clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends.”
--Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from Birmingham City Jail”

Agenda:

- Brief discussion/review from Tuesday and journal sharing
- Video: Principles of Nonviolence: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7dccpm3880&feature=relmfu>
Ask students to watch the movie with three different focuses: list three important principles of nonviolence, list stories/examples of nonviolence, and explain the concept of “work” vs. work
Discuss and classify further examples as necessary (Ask students for examples to see if they get “work” vs. work; return to previous examples used in class as well)
- Secondary source: Work vs “Work”: Nonviolence glossary on www.Mettacenter.org
- Homework: Journal on a time when you did something that “worked” but didn’t work, and another time when you did something that didn’t work” but definitely worked.

Thursday: Nonviolence and Bullying/Social Movements

Objectives: 1) Students will be able to reclaim and understand their heritage of nonviolence.

2) Students will be able to critically evaluate nonviolent episodes by their type and intensity.

Principle: Bullying can be transformed with nonviolence and integrative power.

Story: Prague Spring P. 117-120 *Search for a Nonviolent Future*

Quote: Nonviolence “does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means the pitting of one’s whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire.” -Gandhi

Agenda:

- Discussion: Quickwrite on what your idea of a bully is. How would you define a bully? What can you do to stop a bully in a positive, creative way?
- Debrief: broaden view of a bully and injustice.
- Video: Historical context of nonviolence:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTU9y_hJ_ak&list=UUhbPsONliTtbVCcomh09hKg&index=1&feature=plcp

- Discussion: What groups or peoples are using nonviolence are using or have used injustice? How are they drawing on their own heritage to do so? What effect does it have on the injustice they are facing? NOTE: Feel free to include past movements that have concluded, but emphasize contemporary movements.
- Assign Movements to Groups: Evaluate actions and effect of nonviolent actions on injustice. What connections can you make to this heritage of nonviolence?
- Read provided material on assigned movements in groups, using readings from a variety of sources, for example: The short stories in *Small Acts of Resistance* by Steve Crawshaw and John Jackson, Lynd & Lynd (U.S.), MLK (“Black history”), Cesar Chávez or essays on Latin American movements, likewise on S. Asian, from Zunes, Kurtz, & Asher. Also, Joan Bondurant in *Conquest of Violence* has a good section on how most if not all Gandhi’s techniques were already known in India.
- Share and explain each movement to the class, focusing on the nonviolent history and heritage of the people you chose.
- Homework: in your journal, write about what you learned from your own nonviolent heritage to show you how you could be a history-maker. Note: you do not have to select only parts of your heritage that are unique; they can be universal techniques or practices.

Friday: Compare Nonviolence in Social Movements

Objective: Students will be able to affirm their role as makers of history and their ability to exercise their agency and responsibility personally, interpersonally, societally and globally.

Principle: Nonviolence can be a more effective way to bring about social change than violence.

Story: Rosenstrasse or Saint of Auschwitz 100-105 in *Search for a Nonviolent Future*.

Quote: “Fewer people have been killed in ten years of nonviolent demonstrations across the South than were killed in one night of rioting in Watts.”

-MLK, found in Colaiaco, *Martin Luther King Jr.: Apostle of Militant Nonviolence*, 185

Agenda:

- Review from week of nonviolence, principles, etc.
- Reading/ Video on nonviolence today.
- How can you use nonviolence in your life? Get into groups and brainstorm ways to be nonviolent in various aspects of your life. Create a visual representation of your ideas on poster paper. How will you use your agency as a history maker to change the world positively?
- Homework: “Are there things going on around you that you feel are unjust? How could you try to improve them using what you have learned about nonviolence?” Feel free to use examples from this week’s lessons.

Acknowledgments

Michael Nagler
Stephanie Van Hook
Ossian MacDonald
Todd Diehl

Questions about this curriculum? Contact info@mettacenter.org.