Title of Lesson: Gandhi’s Non-violent Revolutions: Examining Tools to make Non-violent change

Lesson By: Sangita Kumar

Grade Level/ Subject Areas: Middle School: Technology, ELA

Class Size: 25-30

Time/ Duration of Lesson: 2 Class Periods

Goals/ Objectives of Lesson:
- Students will learn Gandhi’s philosophy of non-violent social change
- Students will research a leader (from the attached list) who practiced non-violent social change
- Students will write their own poem related to that leader’s method of achieving social change
- Students will type, edit and format their poems using Microsoft Word.
- Students will read their poems in class

Lesson Abstract:
This lesson will expose middle school students to social justice movements. Students will analyze the poem “This Poem Wants to Live in Peace” by Sangita Kumar, and do research (electronic and book-based) to further analyze leaders who created non-violent change. Students will finally write their own poems based on their research and will type, edit and format in Microsoft Word.

Lesson Content*:

“My soul refuses to be satisfied so long as it is a helpless witness of a single wrong or a single misery.” - Gandhi, Young India, 17 Nov. 1921

One of the foremost leaders in the non-violent social change movement is Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi was born in India, studied law in London, and then spent the first part of his career in apartheid South Africa. After 21 years in South Africa he moved back to his native country, India. While Gandhi is most widely known for his Nationalistic movement to free India from the Colonial rule of the British, at the heart of his philosophy is a belief in non-violence, self-control and the need of every individual to follow his or her own dharma (to do their duty). In South Africa Gandhi developed a system of non-violent non-cooperation against the British called Satyagraha. In this form of protest, he would challenge unjust laws by attempting to communicate with those in charge and if this went unheeded, would slowly escalate the agitation without the use of any violence. This meant he would lead a strike to show popular discontent with a law. Or he would break an unjust law and peacefully accept a jail sentence as a form of protest. As a last resort he would fast. Underlying this methodology lies the principle that it is better to inflict suffering on oneself than another in order to make change. In this way, Gandhi would appeal to the greater compassion of the oppressor, and convince them to see the truth of the oppressed. Gandhi used this method to lead a revolution
of thought, behavior, and an understanding of a person’s individual duty. He brought about incredible cultural and political changes – and many revolutions have taken and will take birth from the ideals and philosophy Gandhi left behind. Gandhi defined non-violence as non-violence in thought, words, and actions. Discussing Gandhi’s method of non-violent social change can be an interesting paradigm shift for students. Gandhi believed it took more courage not to fight – which doesn’t mean that one is passive, but that one can use soul-force, or a power from within, to bring down an oppressor. Gandhi believed that nonviolence required far more courage than violence. He said: "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man."

In largely bloodless revolutions, Gandhi twice brought the British Empire to it’s knees—once in South Africa, and once in India. Revolution is often thought of as violent or militant in nature, but the concept of “revolution” is anything that brings about a paradigm shift, or a change in how a situation or condition is viewed. A charismatic leader on a podium or a timid peasant with no formal education can bring about revolutions.

The poem “This Poem Wants to live in peace” written by a university student Sangita Kumar is a reflection on different forms of revolution, and poetically alludes to many important movements and instances of shifts in political, social and economic thought during Gandhi’s life. This poem can be used to explore the tools that agents of social change have available to them, and the use of violence or non-violence present in this choice. Understanding Gandhi’s many unique approaches to bringing about social change leads to an interesting discussion of revolution – and what causes social change. While violence can sometimes bring about social change, the means used to achieve change often creates more unrest. Gandhi believed that any change won through violent means would result in only a temporary change. For Gandhi the means of achieving the goal needed to be in line with the goals sought. So one could not achieve peace by going to war, just as much as one cannot achieve silence by shouting.

For every injustice Gandhi challenged, he carefully chose the approach to use based on the particular context of the issue. As students are exposed to this rich variety of tools to create social change accompanied by Gandhi’s philosophical framework to evaluate if an action is violent or not, they will be empowered to become activists in their own corner of the world—working on issues that matter most to them.

California Technology & English Language Arts Standards:

- ELA Research & technology 1.4 Create simple documents by using electronic media and employing organizational features
- ELA Research & technology 1.5 Use a thesaurus to identify alternative word choices and meanings.
- ELA Evaluation & Revision 1.6 Edit and revise manuscripts to improve the meaning and focus of writing by adding, deleting, consolidating, clarifying, and rearranging words and sentences.
- ELA 3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Guiding Questions:

- What are some of the historical events referred to in this poem?
- What is the author’s point of view?
• How does non-violence play a role in this poem?
• Can you create change better using violence or through non-violence?
• If you had to leave a message for the world, what would it be about?

Materials Needed:
• Sangita Kumar’s I-movie
• Projector & screen
• Copies of poem structure (handouts)
• Access to computers for student research
• Copies of Gandhi’s Way: A handbook of Conflict Resolution by Mark Juergensmeyer, Chapter 1 and Chapter 8

Lesson Context:
This lesson could be used as a final Microsoft Word project to apply the following skills
• Internet research
• Typing
• Editing
• Formatting
• Inserting images (optional)
• Creating captions in text boxes (optional)

You may also choose to partner with an English or Social Studies teacher to add a historical or literary component to this lesson.

Teaching Activities:

Day 1

1. Introduction/Hook/Anticipatory Set
Introduce the concept of Non-violent revolution by asking students to work with a partner to come up with a definition of revolution. Have a few groups share their responses. As a group decide on a working definition.

Some definitions (from www.dictionary.com) include:
1. an overthrow or repudiation and the thorough replacement of an established government or political system by the people governed.

2. A radical and pervasive change in society and the social structure, esp. one made suddenly and often accompanied by violence. Compare SOCIAL EVOLUTION.

3. A sudden, complete or marked change in something: the present revolution in church architecture.

Ask students:
• Do all revolutions need to be violent?
• What are some examples of social change that have happened in the world (abolition of
slavery, De-segregation laws, women voting, etc.)
• What are some examples of non-violent movements of social change?
• Have students read chapter 1 and chapter 8 of Gandhi’s Way: A handbook of conflict resolution.

2. Mini-Lesson & Connections
• Teacher-led presentation of Gandhi’s life and belief in non-violence.
  • Share examples of how Gandhi led people to create change non-violently
  • Explain his philosophy to choose personal suffering over causing suffering to others.
  • Connect this philosophy to the previous conversation on revolution and the students’ list of movements of social change.
  • Ask: According to Gandhi’s philosophy how many of the movements listed would be considered non-violent.

3. Activity
• Distribute the poem: This Poem Wants to live in Peace By Sangita Kumar. Read it together and de-brief.
  o What events from Gandhi’s life are mentioned in this poem
  o What imagery is used?
  o How does the author use the objectification of the poem as a person to tell its story?
• Distribute the poem template (Appendix 2) to students. Assign a person for students to research, or allow them to choose their own. You may want to assign Nonviolence and World History By Tara Sethia as background reading to familiarize students with some of the leaders in the chart.

4. Homework: Have students research one of the leaders from the chart using the internet, then create their own “This Poem Wants to Be…” poem using the template provided.

Day Two: Computer Editing & Formatting
• Students work with partners to co-critique completed poems – have them brainstorm ideas together to turn their phrases into more powerful statements. Encourage them to use symbolism, imagery and vivid adjectives to give their poems depth.
• You may want to add your own comments to the poems as well.
• Students will edit, type, and format their poems for print. You may want to turn the completed poems into a poetry book or publish as a blog.
• Give students time to work on computers with their poems.
• Early finishers can illustrate their poems by inserting images, applying fonts to emphasize certain words, etc.

Spoken Word Café:
• Have students share their poems with the class. If possible set up a microphone, use a music stand to allow students to prop their poems up, or drape a black cloth as a background to “create a feel”. Students can be asked to bring mugs for hot chocolate to create more of a café ambiance.
• Model how students will present their poems - it is important to set agreements that each
person will share, each person will be applauded, the audience must listen respectfully and attentively. You may want to give students a mini-lesson on projecting voice, body language in front of a room, and using gestures to emphasize their poems.

- De-brief the experience
  - What did you learn from each other’s poems?
  - Which figure seemed most impressive to you, why?
  - How did it feel to do research on the Internet? What was hard or easy about this?
  - How did it feel to turn your notes into a poem? How is this different from writing a research paper?
  - Do you think it is possible to create non-violent social change?
  - What is something you would like to change in your life? How could you use non-violent methods to achieve your goal? (Optional: Have students journal on this question)

**Assessment/ Evaluation:**

See Rubric Attached

**Extension Activities/ Enrichment**

Some ideas include: Read other poems from [www.poetry.com](http://www.poetry.com), have students create a blog with reflections on their writings, compare and contrast different poems, create a CD recording of their spoken word poetry, create Found Poems.

**Bibliography:**


This Poem Wants to Be ____________________

This poem wants to ____________________________________________________________
To be ____________________________________________________________
To stand ____________________________________________________________

and say ____________________________________________________________
To sit ____________________________________________________________
To start ____________________________________________________________
To believe __________________________________________________________

This poem needs to _____________________________________________________
Because ____________________________________________________________
This poem has to _____________________________________________________
Because if it didn’t ___________________________________________________
This poem wants to be ________________________________________________
So please let it ______________________________________________________
This is my poem for _________________________________________________
It is full of _________________________________________________________
Full of _____________________________________________________________
Full of _______________________________________________________________
This poem wants to live in peace . . .

To be so strong that it never has to raise a fist or its voice.

To write letter after letter in undying optimism to its own oppressors, asking them to do the right thing and respect the dignity of humanity.

This poem wants only justice...

To stand up for its rights on a train in foreign South Africa and say I will not move to a third class seat because of the color of my skin

To overcome a lifelong fear of public speaking when it realizes that its voice will be the only hope of thousands in the Transvaal and Nataal provinces

This poem is willing to suffer in order to do the right thing...

To challenge the boundaries of caste and sex discrimination that oppressed and enslaved the masses for hundreds of years

To watch Ba cry as it stands firmly by its belief in living a life of simplicity

To renounce the pleasures of the body to train the mind for satyagraha

But now this poem feels that perhaps it is copying the English, and should instead switch the black lace up shoes for a traditional dhoti and sandals it made itself

To turn the spinning wheel into a symbol of national pride and re-ignite the dignity of a people who were made to feel their traditions and culture barbaric and uncivilized

To offer general Smuts who repeatedly lied a pair of sandals made in jail, as a gesture of their friendship

To lead a revolution of heart and mind from the corner of a small undistinguished hut

Remain optimistic in the belief that all men are good, even while it was being beaten and imprisoned over and over again.

This poem believes peace can prevail in the world if only everyone would do the right thing

This poem believes in peace, lives for peace, and died in peace.
Use the chart below to brainstorm ideas for your poem. Once you are finished use the poem template to write your poem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-violent Agents for Social Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Gandhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cesar Chavez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rosa Parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Martin Luther King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Malcolm X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wu-er Kaixi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hernandez Martinez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lech Walesa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vaclav Havel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mubarak Awad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nelson Mandela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mother Teresa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rachel Carson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tenzin Gyatso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Corazon Aquino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aung San Suu Kyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details about their life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ideas to include in your poem:
## Project Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internet Use</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successfully uses suggested internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance.</td>
<td>Uses suggested internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance.</td>
<td>Occasionally able to use suggested internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance.</td>
<td>Needs assistance or supervision to use suggested internet links and/or to navigate within these sites.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of Information</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.</td>
<td>Information clearly relates to the main topic. It provides 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.</td>
<td>Information clearly relates to the main topic. No details and/or examples are given.</td>
<td>Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poem Analysis</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurately describes several dominant elements or principles used by the poet and accurately relates how they are used by the artist to reinforce the theme, meaning, mood, or feeling of the poem.</td>
<td>Accurately describes a couple of dominant elements and principles used by the poet and accurately relates how these are used by the artist to reinforce the theme, meaning, mood, or feeling of the poem.</td>
<td>Describes some dominant elements and principles used by the poet, but has difficulty describing how these relate to the meaning or feeling of the poem.</td>
<td>Has trouble picking out the dominant elements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem Interpretation</td>
<td>Student forms a reasonable thesis about the symbolic or metaphorical meaning and is able to clearly support this with evidence from the work.</td>
<td>Student forms a thesis about the meaning and supports that with examples from the text though with less clarity or development.</td>
<td>A thesis may be evident but unclear or the supportive examples are ill chosen or not explained.</td>
<td>Though there may be some interpretive statements, most of the writing describes rather than interprets.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>MS Word Document Appearance</td>
<td>Title is appropriate and either centered or in Bold Face; Bold Face, Italics, Underlining, and Highlighting are all used effectively; Font used is creative and illustrative; Margins and Spacing are above average or exemplar</td>
<td>Title is appropriate but not centered or in bold face; Bold Face, Italics, Underline, and Highlighting are used adequately; Font used is adequate; Margins and Spacing are adequate</td>
<td>Title is inappropriate but centered or in Bold Face; Bold Face, Italics, Underline, and Highlighting are used but detract; Font used shows little planning or thought; Margins and spacings are erratic or uneven at times</td>
<td>Title is missing or inappropriate, not centered, and in regular face; Bold Face, Italics; Underlining, and Highlighting are not used; Font used is distracting or hard to read; Margins and spacing are uneven and disrupt the flow of the page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Printed Document Attractiveness</td>
<td>Makes excellent use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance the presentation.</td>
<td>Makes good use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance to presentation.</td>
<td>Makes use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. but occasionally these detract from the presentation content.</td>
<td>Font, color, graphics, effects are not used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gandhi’s Philosophy to bring about Non-violent Social Change
Or
From Gandhi’s Way: A Handbook of Conflict Resolution pg. 24-25
A Gandhian Approach to achieve Self-Rule or Swaraj
Steps in Waging a Large Campaign

1. **Negotiation**
   - of the differences and an attempt to resolve them.
   - ... but if this fails,

2. **Mobilization**
   - of supporters, proper training,
   - ... and

3. **Demonstration**
   - of the issues, to solidify support & present a truthful resolution.
   - ... but if this fails,

4. **Noncooperation**
   - including boycotts, strikes, peaceful disruption, blockades & sit-ins.
   - ... but if this fails,

5. **Creation of a Parallel Entity**
   - to replace the old opponent.
   - ... but if even this fails,

6. **Return** to stage #1, increase strength and intensity as each step is repeated.