Ahimsa Center- K-12 Teacher Institute Lesson Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Lesson:</th>
<th>Is Gandhi Right: Analyzing His Ideas</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson By:</td>
<td>Maureen Wagers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade Level/ Subject Areas:</td>
<td>World History, Grade 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Size:</td>
<td>varies LG – 150 students, SG – 15 students, Lab – 50 students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time/ Duration of Lesson:</td>
<td>2-3 days (depending on length of classes)</td>
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**Goals/ Objectives:**
- Demonstrate knowledge of Gandhi’s background.
- Evaluate the impact of British imperialism in India.
- Analyze effectiveness of Gandhi’s methods of non-violent actions, such as marches and strikes.
- Understand how Gandhi’s ideas were applied to acts satyagraha.
- Relate Gandhi’s ideas to current events throughout the world.

**Lesson Abstract:**
The world history students will learn to make a connection between the history of Gandhi’s non-violent independence movement in India and current day issues around the world. An in-depth analysis of Gandhi’s ideas through the use of quotes and philosophies will take place in the forms of presentation, discussion, and writing.

**Lesson Content:**

**Brief History of British Imperialism in India:**
The British East India Company entered India during the rule of the Mughals. For over two hundred years, this company controlled the economy of India. The company had an army of Indian soldiers, called *sepoys*, to protect its interests in the region. In 1857, these soldiers rebelled against the British company, which in turn asked its home government for military help. The conflict, known as the Sepoy Mutiny, resulted in a broader British control over India. The British government extended its official control over the Indian subcontinent at this time. India was a colony of the British empire, often referred to as the crown jewel since India’s resources and markets brought vast wealth to Great Britain. India earned its independence shortly after World War II. The Indian people, led by Gandhi, had used forms of non-violent civil disobedience to weaken the British control. After World War II, it was no longer possible for Great Britain to maintain its grasp on India.

**Gandhi’s Background:**
Mohandas Gandhi was born in 1869 in Porbandar, which was a small town on India’s west coast. His father was a government official, known to be fair and just. His mother was a very devout Hindu. She was a role model for Gandhi with her dedication and purpose, such as her fasts. Gandhi’s childhood was not remarkable. He was a mediocre student and very shy. He was married when he was thirteen to Kasturba. Gandhi would later speak against child marriages, where children are naïve of the roles of husband and wife.

After his father’s death, it was decided by Gandhi’s family that he would go to law school in
Great Britain. Prior to this time, Gandhi had little contact with the British. His experiences in London were positive, having made many friends and been treated well. He also spent time studying religious philosophies, conducting experiments with vegetarianism, and developing a lifelong habit of simplicity.

Gandhi returned to India for a short time period before he went to South Africa, another British colony. He had not experienced success in India as a lawyer, and took a temporary position as a legal advisor to a Muslim businessman. While traveling on a train shortly after arriving in South Africa, Gandhi was thrown off a train for traveling first class, which was against the law for a “colored” person. It was the first time he had experienced discrimination first hand. This event helped shape the ideas Gandhi would employ in both South Africa and India. He had planned to stay in South Africa for less than a year, but ended up staying twenty-one years to help the Indians there work towards equality under British rule. It was during his experiences here that he developed the ideas of satyagraha, Gandhi’s plan for the pursuit of truth.

Gandhi returned to India in 1915. It did not take long for him to become involved in the independence movement. During his time in South Africa, Gandhi had developed connections with some of the leaders of the movement in India. Many of these leaders respected the work that Gandhi had done in South Africa through non-violent means. Through these men, Gandhi was brought to the forefront of the movement in India. From the time of Gandhi’s return to India until the nation earned its independence in 1948, Gandhi led the Indian people through many different acts of satyagraha. The civil disobedience took many different forms. To protest the Rowlatt Acts after World War I, the Indian people used hartal, or strike. The Salt March of 1930 applied marches and boycotts to protest an unfair salt tax. Another example of satyagraha was during World War II with the “Quit India” movement. This act was direct non-cooperation with the British. Gandhi himself used fasting as a means of persuasion several times. These are just a few forms of satyagraha that Gandhi and his followers used to end the rule of the British.

Gandhi died in 1948 at the hands of Hindu extremists who believed he was being too sympathetic to the Muslims in the region. India’s independence had come in 1947, but the British had chosen to partition it into two states: India and Pakistan. This resulted in widespread violence and masses of refugees fleeing between these two states. Gandhi had fasted to end the violence at various times. Because Gandhi would not turn his back on the Muslims, he aggravated many extreme Muslims and would result in his assassination.

Gandhi’s Philosophies through Quotes:

- **Ahimsa** (non-violence):
  “It is the law of love that rules mankind. Had violence, i.e. hate, ruled us, we should have become extinct long ago. And yet the tragedy of it is that the so-called civilized men and nations conduct themselves as if the basis of society was violence.” (McCarthy)

  “I felt that violence was no remedy for India’s ills, and that her civilization required the use of a different and higher weapon for self-protection.” (Parel, p. xv)

  “If we remain non-violent, hatred will die as everything does, from disuse.” (McCarthy)
“Non-violence is the greatest and most active force in the world. One cannot be passively non-violent….One person who can express ahimsa in life exercises a force superior to all forces of brutality.”  (McCarthy)

“Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from the fear of punishment.”  (Miles)

- **Satyagraha** (soul-force):
  “When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance, the government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me. I do not like it. If, by using violence, I force the government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body-force. If I do not obey the law, and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves the sacrifice of self.”  (Parel, pp. 90-91)

- **Hind Swaraj** (self-rule):
  “…moral superiority of non-violence over violence…the force of love and pity is infinitely greater than the force of arms….The soul is able to exercise control over itself and the passions. Ultimately then, the success of the ethic of non-violence depends on the state of the soul, the mind and the passions – in one word, on self-rule.”  (Parel, p. lvi)

“What is true of the individual will tomorrow be true of the whole nation if individuals will but refuse to lose heart and hope.”

**Wisconsin Content Standards** (History – Grade 12)
- B.12.2: Analyze primary and secondary sources related to a historical question to evaluate their relevance, make comparisons,
- B.12.3: Recall, select, and analyze significant historical periods and the relationships among them.
- B.12.5: Gather various types of historical evidence to analyze issues of freedom and equality, liberty and order, individual and community, law and conscience, diversity and civic duty; form a reasoned conclusion in the light of other possible arguments.

**Guiding Questions:**
- How did Gandhi’s personal lifestyle reflect on the Indian Independence movement?
- Describe the impact of imperialism on a nation, such as India?
- How were the Indian people treated by the British, both in South Africa and India?
- What were the major beliefs of Gandhi and how did these beliefs affect his followers?
- How did Gandhi’s law breaking activities make him different from a common criminal?
- What does non-violence mean?
- How can Gandhi’s ideas work for today? Think of specific examples…

**Materials Needed:**
- LCD Projector: power point, digital video clips, digital storybook (Is Gandhi Right?)
• Note taking and video guide to match with presentation and video clips
  
  *Gandhi* (Attenborough)

• Reading assignments or textbook available to teacher.

• Excerpts from *Strength Through Peace*, Coleman McCarthy (ed.)

• Essay cover sheet

• Grading rubric

**Lesson Context:**

• Digital story will be used to introduce the essay topics after the discussion. The digital story will be a pictorial of historical and current events and leaders that will give students issues to contemplate in the writing of their essays.

• The lesson on Gandhi can fit into many different units of study, depending on the layout of the world history curriculum. In this situation, the lessons on Gandhi will be part of a six-week India unit completed in the beginning of the school year. It lays the foundation for the rest of the year, so that students can anticipate a theme of non-violence.

**Teaching Activities:**

**Day 1:**

• Presentation of background information in a large group setting: using power point, digital video clips, and a note-taking guide. (Basic outline of notes included at the end of the lesson plan)

**Day 2:**

• Socratic discussion in a small group setting: students are seated in a circle with the teacher. The discussion should flow like a conversation, so students will get credit for asking questions, responding to both teacher and student comments and questions, and depth of the topics. Teacher should keep track of discussion points. Suggested discussion topics include: Gandhi’s background, impact of British imperialism in India, Gandhi’s philosophies and methods of non-violence, satyagraha, making connections between Gandhi’s ideas and the world today. (Sample discussion questions included in appendix at the end of the lesson.)

**Day 3:**

• Essay assignment: teacher will show a 3 minute digital story to introduce the essay topics. Students should receive a cover sheet for the essay that contains the essay choices and the writing process, along with a grading rubric to be handed in with the essay.

• After showing the digital story and handing out the cover sheet, use cooperative learning groups of four students to brainstorm ideas for each of the potential topics. They should concentrate on relating Gandhi’s ideas to current times.

• Share ideas with whole class the last ten minutes – verbally and writing ideas on the board.

**Later:**

• Unit Exam: writing 10-15 multiple choice/matching questions for the India unit exam.

**Assessment/Evaluation:**

• Graded Discussion: students receive a grade based on the depth of their involvement in a class discussion.
• Essay: students will be given the choice of three quotes from Gandhi to write a two page essay on that reflects how Gandhi’s philosophies have been applied since his death.
• Unit exam: 10-15 objective questions about the Indian Independence Movement, Gandhi, and his ideas on the India unit exam.

Vocabulary:
• Satyagraha: The policy of nonviolent resistance initiated in South Africa and applied in India by Mahatma Gandhi in order to oppose British rule and to hasten political reforms.
• Ahimsa: A religious concept which advocates non-violence and a respect for all life.
• Ashram: A community system used by Gandhi where everyone was equal and worked together to attain self-sufficiency. He lived on ashrams in both India and South Africa.
• Hind Swaraj: self-rule; Indian home-rule
• Imperialism: A policy that extends on country’s rule over other countries; also called colonialism. The British maintained this type of control over India and South Africa.
• Discrimination: Unfair treatment of a person or group on the basis of prejudice.
• Hartal – Strike system used by the Indians after World War I to protest unfair laws.
• Civil Disobedience: A group's refusal to obey a law because they believe the law is immoral (as in protest against discrimination).
• Boycott: To refuse to buy a product or take part in an activity as a way of showing strong disapproval.

Bibliography:


