

## Ahimsa Center- K-12 Teacher Institute Lesson Plan

<b>Title of Lesson: Gandhi's Salt March, A Simulation:</b> <i>"With this, I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire."</i>		
<b>Lesson By:</b> Quetzal Aztlan Roura		
<b>Grade Level/ Subject Areas:</b> 9-12/World History	<b>Class Size:</b> 30-40 students	<b>Time/ Duration of Lesson:</b> 3 days (50-minute class periods)
<b>Goals/ Objectives of Lesson:</b> Students will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent campaign to achieve Indian National Independence from the British Empire.</li> <li>• Describe the contending view points among Indian Nationalist regarding how India should go about achieving independence.</li> <li>• Analyze how the British Empire used the colonial legal systems to pass laws aimed at looting Indian wealth and striping Indians of their basic rights and self-determination. Summarize the social, economic and political conditions for Indians that led to a mass movement for independence from Britain</li> <li>• Demonstrate their understanding of the above objectives in a written assignment that answers analysis question</li> </ul>		
<b>Lesson Abstract:</b> <i>(summarize your lesson in about 50 words)</i> Students will engage in a historical simulation, re-enacting the feverish spirit of revolution at the eve of Gandhi's famous Salt March. The setting of the simulation is India, 1930, in the fiery setting of the Indian National Congress (INC), the leading Indian nationalist organization. Students will take on the identity of contending factions within the INC, and students will present and debate arguments for how the INC should respond to the Salt Tax Laws. After voting the outcome, students will see the real story through viewing a film and writing a short answer responses.		
<b>California State World History Standards:</b>  10.4 Students analyze patterns of global change in the era of New Imperialism in at least two of the following regions or countries: Africa, Southeast Asia, China, India, Latin America, and the Philippines. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Explain imperialism from the perspective of the colonizers and the colonized and the varied immediate and long-term responses by the people under colonial rule.</li> <li>4. Describe the independence struggles of the colonized regions of the world, including the roles of leaders, such as Sun Yat-sen in China, and the roles of ideology and religion.</li> </ol>		
<b>Lesson Content:</b> Mohandas K. Gandhi (October 2, 1869 – January 30, 1948) is most well known around the world as a Indian nationalist leader who set India free from British colonial rule in the early 1940s through his methods of non-violent activism. Gandhi is indeed the first great visionary and effective championed of the social activist methods we know today as non-violent resistance. Countless activists throughout the globe have adopted Gandhi's methods, most notably in America Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar E. Chavez practiced with great success Gandhi's methods of proactive non-violence to achieve a revolution of civil rights for ethnic minorities in America. Gandhi is the ideological architect and spiritual father of what we		

know today as non-violent resistance. Long before Gandhi rose to prominence as a nationalist leader, he was highly regarded in the Indian public for being an effective and selfless advocate for the civil rights and fair treatment of poor and abused Indians: first in South Africa and later in the Indian mainland. As a London educated attorney, Gandhi began his life of public service by defending the rights of the South African Diaspora in court, and then by politically organizing the disenfranchised Diaspora into the Indian National Congress of South Africa. But eventually Gandhi would experiment with methods of non-violence to win decisive victories for Indian rights. Later in his life, Mohandas Gandhi was given the spiritual title *Mahatma* Gandhi, or “great soul” Gandhi, because of the honor given him for his spiritual and social leadership.

Mahatma Gandhi’s Salt March in 1930 was the seminal turning point in Indian’s long struggle for national independence; ultimately it was the beginning of the end of the British Empire. The Salt March was Gandhi’s most famous campaign of non-violent civil disobedience which was aimed against England’s humiliating salt tax and salt monopoly. Since the salt tax law prohibited Indians from making their own salt—because they had to purchase it from England’s national salt company—Gandhi staged a highly publicized civil disobedience where he publicly and calculatingly broke the salt law; Gandhi marched from his home in Sabarmati in central India to the southern coast at Dandi, there in fearless defiance, Gandhi made salt on the beach. Gandhi goal was not merely to over turn the salt law. In actuality Gandhi wanted his Salt March to rally the Indian masses for national independence.

Gandhi understood that the salt tax and monopoly was just one discriminatory policy of a countless constellation of unfair policies, laws, and institutions imposed on the Indian masses by the powerful English Empire. Policies like the salt tax were the building blocks of British imperialism. Taken in sum these policies created economic, social, and political subjugation of the India, and they established colonial infrastructure to maintain and perpetuate British imperial rule. England did not seize hegemonic control in India over night, it happened gradually over centuries. Initially, Britain formed trade relations with local Indian communities, which then expanded to encompass more regional spheres. But as England’s Industrialized economy peaked, England increasingly grew to dominate India’s international economy. With vast economic “investments” in India, Britain soon found it “necessary” to expand its military and political authority in India, until finally, by the late 1800s, India was an English colony. Surly India was no mere any colony, it was considered the “crown jewel” of the British Empire. Given this history of economic imperialism, Gandhi knew that an effective campaign against the salt tax could arouse national opposition against every economic, legal, and political institution imposed by the British. Additionally, Gandhi understood that the salt tax could be a populist cause, since everyone—from the richest Brahmans to the poorest untouchable—is affected by a salt tax.

Gandhi’s calculations were correct. Gandhi set out on March 12, 1930 along with 78 fellow “satyagrahis” from his home in Sabarmati and headed toward the sea. Gandhi would walk for 23 days over 240 miles, passing through 4 districts and 48 villages. As Gandhi marched he stopped in every town and village on the way, giving speeches, meeting local residence, and leading public prayers and rallies. Everywhere Gandhi went, he stirred up a hornets nest of support. At every stop, people joined Gandhi on his march, expanding his march from a simple one-man walk into a large procession, then from a procession into a parade. Newspaper reporters followed Gandhi on his journey, writing articles to national and international audiences. With every article in the national press, Gandhi grew in public stature. As he marched, day after day, the Indian populace began to view Gandhi as a national hero: their hope was in him, they wanted to see Gandhi fearlessly defy the British before the world. Gandhi arrived at the beach in Dandi to April 5, 1930. On April 6th Gandhi performed this highly publicized yet simple act of civil disobedience: Gandhi made salt. As Gandhi raised a fist full of sand that morning he declared, *“With this, I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire.”* Then he boiled the sand in seawater, producing salt. He turned to the masses

surrounding him, asking them to join him in making salt. Many did.

Indian throughout the subcontinent grew strength from Gandhi's fearlessness, emboldening them to rise up in national solidarity as a powerful seething mass, to summarily reject the empire's discriminatory economic structures, institutions, and laws that dominated the Indian colony. Thousands of Indians continued to make and sell salt illegally throughout the seacoast of India. By the end of the month the British government arrested over 60,000 people. Throughout the rest of India there was a staged numerous boycotts on not only salt but British made cloth and goods. A Muslim disciple of Gandhi's, Ghaffar Khan, staged a massive non-violent satyagraha in Preshawar. Khan had used Gandhi's teaching to train an army of non-violent activists. As crowds gathered there, the British officers opened fire, killing hundreds of unarmed protesters for hours. Masses of protesters marched fearlessly toward firing guns, knowingly martyring themselves for non-violence. Gandhi was arrested on May 4<sup>th</sup>. The British reaction to the waking giant of India was violent and bloody, in stark contrast to the resistance of Gandhi and his followers. The more England suppressed dissenting Indians, the more the Indian masses united in dissent. The brutality of British was unmasked, irreversibly.

Realizing they were fighting a battle impossible to win, the English Imperial government decided to negotiate with Gandhi to end the social chaos. Gandhi agreed to specific terms: he and the other prisoners would be freed and the Salt Tax would be revealed. Gandhi would be criticized for not pushing at that moment for national independence. But Gandhi did not believe it was necessary for victory. Gandhi believed that the masses had already proven that they have learned to act upon self rule. At that point, Gandhi believed it was only a matter of time before Indians achieved self rule through non-violence. Independence was inevitable.

Gandhi's Salt March set the Indian masses on fire, it emboldening them against the colonial powers, infusing Indians with an unprecedented national unity and self-confidence resulting in a colony-wide outbreak of anti-imperial protests, boycotts, strikes and outrage. Ultimately, Gandhi's Salt March precipitated the unraveling of the British Empire's rule over India. The British Empire would lose its legitimacy through the Salt March, and would never gain it back again. The Indian masses tasted self-rule spring of 1930 and there was no turning them back. After the Salt March, Gandhi led Indians to independence as an elevated nationalist leader against a deflated English Empire. Though it wasn't for another 17 years, India won its freedom in August of 1947.

#### **Guiding Questions:**

- Is satyagraha, or non-violence, the best form of revolutionary activism.
- What does it take to be a long lasting revolutionary.
- Why did Mohandas Gandhi believe *satyagraha* was a necessary and effective force to free India from British rule?
- How were Indians being treated by the British under colonialism?

**Materials Needed:** *(list any materials needed for this lesson- e.g., art supplies, LCD projector)*

Supplies: sand, salt, raw salt rocks, table salt, electric hot plate, 2 glass stovetop bowls, DVD player, and film: ***A Force More Powerful: The Salt March.***

#### **Lesson Context:**

This lesson may is designed to be the culminating lesson at the end of a long unit on Imperialism. It is assumed that students have already learned about failed attempts at anti-colonialism such as the China's Opium war. Immediately preceding this lesion is a series of lessons introducing Mahatma Gandhi's biography, his basic teachings about non-violent social action (Satyagraha) and love (Ahimsa).

## Teaching Activities:

### Simulation: Gandhi's Salt March: "With this, I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire."

Supplies: sand, salt, raw salt rocks, table salt, electric hot plate, 2 glass stovetop bowls,

- 1) Write on the board: "1930, India. How to make Salt" . Say to the class: "I want you to imagine that it is the year 1930, and we are in India. During this time, 1930, salt was very important for Indian cooking. So lets learn about salt. Salt is very important to everyone in India, weather rich, or poor, Muslim or Hindu, everyone uses salt. Does anyone know how salt is made?... (have students guess). Today I am going to show you how to make salt in India. But first, remind me, what year is it? That's right 1930. And where are we? India! For this activity I need a volunteer..." (Make this following activity seem like a cooking show on the food network/ pre-heat the water so that is at a warm to begin with).
  - a. Ask for a volunteer in class to come to the front of the class to help you.
  - b. Explain how important salt is for society in India. The majority of India is vegetarian, because they believe it is wrong to kill other life and eat its flesh. So spices are very important to Indian food. Many poor Indians made their own salt for free because they didn't have money to pay for it. Its really easy to make salt.
  - c. Give directions to the volunteer and LET THE VOLUNTEER MAKE THE SALT (this is important for the simulation).
    - i. First, you take sand from the beach and boil it in water. Have student pour a cup of beach sand (or sand with table salt added in) into a clear bowl of boiling water. (make sure the water has been boiling before the lesson has started.)
    - ii. Second, After the sand has boiled for a 1 or 2 minutes pour the water into a second pan, making sure not to spill any sand into the water. Let the water boil. Tell students that after the water fully evaporates the salt in the water will crystallize.
    - iii. Have a bowl of large crystallized salt (purchased at the store), ready since there isn't really time to wait for the water to finish boiling. Have the volunteer grind up some of the salt crystals into small particles. (you can skip this last step if you cant find the salt crystals). Ask if anyone wants to taste the salt, let them taste it if they want.
- 2) As the student volunteer is still standing in front of the class.
- 3) How to make salt... You take sand from the beach and boil it in water, then you remove the sand and let the salty water evaporate into salt. Do this in class by bringing a hot plate, a glass plate, sand that is pre-mixed with table salt.
- 4) To the Volunteer, I'm sorry to tell you there's a something terrible wrong with your salt! (students are perplexed). Did you know it is illegal to make your own salt in India during 1930. Yes, in 1930 Indians could not make their own salt.
  - a. Discussion: Why do you think it was Illegal to make salt in India? (1-2 minutes)
  - b. Post the following Document on an overhead projector: The Salt Tax Law.
  - c. Turn to your student volunteer and say, "I'm sorry, you've been caught making salt and now you'll have to go to prison". Lead the student to the far corner in the room to sit in "prison".
- 5) Discussion:
  - a. What do you think is wrong with the Salt Tax?
  - b. How does the salt tax affect the English? (FACT: *Every year the English government earned about £800,000,000 in profit, and a whopping £25,000,00 of*

*those profits were from revenue salt. The English made huge profits from this monopoly and tax.)*

- c. How does the salt tax affect Indians? (FACT: *Many Indians were very poor and the only food they had to eat was bread and salt, high priced and heavily taxed salt was a difficult burden on poor Indians. This tax is not just an offence against poor Indians, it was a law that humiliated all Indian rich a poor).*)
- d. What do you think Indians can do to help defend themselves from unfair laws and treatment like the Salt Tax law? (Ideas...)

6) PREPARE FOR THE SIMULATION of the Indian National Congress.

“Our class is now going re-enact a meeting of the Indian National Congress in 1930. The Indian National Congress was made up of Indians from diverse ethnic, religious, and language groups throughout India, and it was led by Mahatma Gandhi. The goal of the Indian National Congress is to make India free and independent from England. Today our class is going re-enact a meeting of the Indian National Congress. During this meeting we are going to try figure out a way to get rid of the Salt Tax law, and hopefully find a way to make India free.”

Divide the class into 6 student teams. Hand out the **“Character Role Sheet for the Indian National Congress.”** Tell students that for our class simulation they will no longer be themselves, instead, they become a new character: one which I will assign to them. Students will think and speak from their character’s point of view. Before assigning Character roles to the teams read through each of the roles and beliefs with the class, making sure students understand the roles.

7) Assign Character Roles to each of the teams. Post the following question:

*“You are members of the Indian National Congress. Describe from your character’s point of view what the Indian National Congress should do to fight against the England’s Salt Tax and other humiliating laws like it? Explain your answer in 1 or more paragraphs.*

*\*Keep in mind Gandhi’s ideas about non-violent methods of “Satyagraha”, as well as other methods that revolutionaries have used.*

8) *Teams will need to arrive at a consensus about the answer to this solution.*

REMINDER: tell students to remember they must think, speak, and write from their assigned characters point of view, NOT their own personal points of views.

- a. Recommended Strategy: Think, Write, Pair, Group Share. For 3 minutes, students silently write their answer to the question. Then for another 2-3 minutes students share their answers with a partner. Then, the entire team discusses their answers. The teams must come to an agreement about their answer.

(Since the previous lesson students were already exposed to Satyagraha methods, since prior in the year they have studied other violent revolutionaries, students should have more than enough information to develop a thoughtful answer.)

- b. HOMEWORK: Each student must write a speech addressing the Indian National Congress. They must explain from their characters point of view, what they believe the Indian National Congress should do to fight against the Salt tax and other offensive laws like it, and why.

Day 2) Simulation of the Indian National Congress meeting, 1930, India. Tell students, imagine our classroom has transformed magically into the meeting hall of the Indian National Congress. The year is 1930, Mahatma Gandhi is the leader of this large and diverse organization. Tell students that today we are going to hold a meeting to decide what to do against unfair laws like the Salt Tax which is hurting the poorest Indian, often forcing them to go to jail. This is most

unfair.

- 1) Give students 5 minutes to pick a representative to read their own speech to the class. However, whoever reads the speech will not be allowed to participate in the debate following the speeches.
- 2) Student teams give their speeches. An short informal debate will follow, and then a class vote. (To encourage participation in debates, I usually give participation points to individuals.)
  - a. The above should be done quickly, in 20 minutes time or less. To assure that you will have enough time to watch the film.
- 3) **Show ½ of film: “A Force More Powerful: The Salt March”**
  - a. At this point students are always curious about what really happened. This film will describe Gandhi’s actions and strategy. Only show the first half of this film, stopping it at the part where Gandhi is imprisoned for his act of defiance. Stop here without giving away what happens next.
  - b. As students watch the film they will be answering the following questions:
    - i. What did Mahatma Gandhi do to fight against the England’s Salt Tax?
    - ii. What did Gandhi hope to accomplish through this?
    - iii. Explain why Gandhi’s fighting method is non-violent, and explain how Gandhi thinks this method will work.
    - iv. Is Gandhi’s non-violent method successful or not? Explain.
  - c. Hold a class discussion on the topic.
- 4) Optional Homework: Handout the Wikipedia article on the Salt march. Tell students to read the article and then use it to finish answering the above movie questions.

Day 3

- 1) Show the remainder of the film: “A Force More Powerful: The Salt March”
- 2) At the close of the film have students answer the following questions: Answer each in 4 or more sentences each. These answers are to be graded as the final assessment.
  - a. *In what ways did Mahatma Gandhi and his followers show fearlessness?*
  - b. *Why was the Salt March eventually successful/*
  - c. *Why do you think Gandhi and his followers continued to be non-violent, despite being severely attack, tortured and killed?*
  - d. *Does the Salt March prove that Satyagraha (non-violence activism) works? Why or why not?*

#### **Assessment/ Evaluation:**

Students will complete 4 short answer questions requiring students to analyze the Salt March’s influence on the Indian nationalism, and students will analyze how the Salt March validated non-violence.

#### **Bibliography:**

Fischer, Louis. *Gandhi: His Life and Message for the World*. New York: Penguin, 1954.

*A Force More Powerful*. United States Institute of Peace, 1999.

Gandhi, Mohandas K. *Gandhi An Autobiography: The Story of my Experiments With Truth*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1957.

Gandhi, Mohandas K., Anthony Parel, ed. *Hind Swaraj and other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 (in the editorial matter).

Handout, "They Called Him Mahatma." Source Unknown.

Handout, "Gandhi, Peaceful Patriot." Source Unknown.

## The Salt Tax Law

No one in India is allowed to make or sell salt except the English colonial government. That means only the English government is allowed to earn a profit from selling salt. And it means that England can charge as much as it wants for salt.

If you are caught making or selling salt, you will be prosecuted as a criminal. This law was forced on India in 1835 by England, and now, in the year 1930, the law still exists!

The punishment for breaking the Salt Tax Law is 6 months imprisonment, and, of course, your salt is taken away by the government.

## *Character Role Sheet for the Indian National Congress.*

### Gandhi's Satyagrahis

1. Believe that you must be fearless in using non-violence methods to improve society.
2. People should be given the opportunity to work to support themselves.
3. Wanted India to be free from England
4. Wanted Indians to be free from greed, evil passions, the love of material goods.
5. Wanted people to be morally good.

### "Untouchables" caste

1. The poorest people in India. .
2. Lowest caste of society, you're born into the caste, you can never leave this cast. Your parents were untouchables, you're an Untouchable, your children and grandchildren will be untouchable.
3. No one can touch you or they will be considered dirty

### Moderates: led by Mr. Gokhale

1. Gokhale and his followers wanted India to gain its independence, however, they did not want India to gain its independence through military violence and war against England.
2. Instead, Gokhale wanted India to gain its independence from England peacefully.
3. Gokhale was good friends with Gandhi, but Gokhale had a mind of his own, and was willing to disagree with Gandhi if necessary.

### Militants: led by Mr. Subas Chandra Bose

1. They created the Indian National Army (INA)
2. They wanted to bring independence to India
3. They were willing to use any means necessary, meaning they were willing to use violence to win independence if it was necessary necessary.
4. They accepted Mahatma Gandhi as the leader of the Indian National Congress, even though they disagreed with Gandhi about non-violence.

### Members of the Muslim League

1. Organization that represented the concerns of Muslims in India
2. Wanted India to be free from England.
3. Even though Muslims and Hindus have gotten along fairly well in India, some Muslims were becoming suspicious of the Hindus. They worried that if India becomes independent of England, the Hindus will treat them unfairly.
4. Muslims made up only 11% of Society. The majority of Indians are part of the Hindu religion.

### Salt Workers

1. They made salt for a living.
2. They were often poor.
3. If they continue to make salt, they will be put in prison.
4. They are desperate for other Indians to help.