

## About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Biography Page Count: 26 Word Count: 2,189

### Book Summary

Cesar Chavez is one of the most famous labor union leaders in the world. His family lost their farm in 1937 and became migrant farmworkers. His dissatisfaction with the way migrant farmworkers were treated led to his nonviolent fight for dignity and fairness for farmworkers everywhere.

## About the Lesson

### Targeted Reading Strategy

- Summarize

### Objectives

- Summarize to understand text
- Identify elements of a biography
- Recognize compound sentences
- Understand and use synonyms and antonyms

### Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*The Life of Cesar Chavez* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Thesaurus
- Summarize, compound sentences, synonyms and antonyms worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on an interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if the books are reused.)

### Vocabulary

\*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](http://VocabularyA-Z.com).

- Content words:

Story critical: *boycotts* (n.), *civil disobedience* (v.), *labor contractors* (n.), *labor union* (n.), *migrant farm workers* (n.), *nonviolence* (n.)

Enrichment: *barrios* (n.), *drudgery* (n.), *fasts* (n.), *grass roots* (n.), *Great Depression* (n.), *meager* (adj.), *picket line* (n.), *poll* (n.)

## Before Reading

### Build Background

- Have students explain what they think it would be like to work for someone who paid them an unfairly low wage. Ask students to brainstorm ideas of what they could do to change the situation.
- Ask students if they have ever heard of a man named, Cesar Chavez (CHA-vez). Invite students to share any prior knowledge they may have about Mr. Chavez. Explain that Cesar Chavez played an important role in helping people who were paid an unfairly low wage receive better wages. Invite students to share what they know about labor unions. Explain that they will be reading about how Cesar Chavez created a labor union to help people.

## Preview the Book

### Introduce the Book

- Give students a copy of the book. Have them preview the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers and offer ideas as to what kind of book this is and what it might be about.
- Direct students to the table of contents. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. Each section title describes a topic they will read about in the book. Have students discuss what they know about any of the topics listed.

### Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Summarize**

- Review or explain to students that one way to understand and remember information in text is to summarize paragraphs or sections of the book in their mind or on paper.
- Model how to summarize as you preview the book.  
*Think-aloud: To summarize what I've read, I need to decide what's important and what isn't. Then, in my mind, I organize the important information into a few sentences and think about them. If I am writing a summary, I put the information in my own words. Since I haven't read the book yet, I don't know what's important. After looking at the section titles in the table of contents, I think all of the sections must contain some important information about Cesar Chavez, but I'll have to read the book to find out.*
- Have students preview the rest of the book. Discuss the photos and captions. Encourage students to turn to page 25, which lists resources for learning more about Cesar Chavez.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

### Introduce the Vocabulary

- Remind students of the strategies they can use to work out words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letter and sound correspondence to figure out a word. They can look for base words within words, prefixes, and suffixes. They can use the context to work out meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. Point out a word in bold, such as the word *nonviolence* on page 4. Model how students can use prior knowledge along with prefix and context clues to get an idea of the word's meaning. Review or explain that the prefix *non-* means *not or the opposite of*. Point out that many prefixes have more than one meaning and it's up to them to determine which meaning fits best. Have students look at the word *nonviolence* again. Explain that they can use what they know about the prefix to figure out the meaning of the unfamiliar word.
- Write the words *civil disobedience* on the board. Tell students that a prefix has been added to the beginning of the word *disobedience* to make a new word that means "the opposite of obedience." Have students identify the prefix.
- Remind students to check whether a word makes sense by rereading the word in the sentence.

### Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about the life of Cesar Chavez. Remind them to pause at the end of each section to summarize what they have read. Reinforce that putting the summary into their own words, rather than trying to memorize the author's words, will help them understand and remember what they read.


## During Reading

### Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 7. Encourage them to think about the topic and important information in each section.

## Lesson Plan *(continued)*

## The Life of Cesar Chavez

- When they have finished reading, ask students to tell what the “Introduction” is about (a brief summary of Chavez’s life organizing farm laborers). Ask students to explain what the section on page 5, “A Humble Beginning,” is about (his early childhood experiences). Ask students to explain what information they found as they read this page. Make a list on the board. Review the list and have students explain which details are important and which aren’t. Cross out the unimportant information.
  - Model summarizing the important information in this section, using the information students provide.  
*Think-aloud: I’ll use the information on the board to create a summary in my own words. I might say: Cesar Chavez was born in 1927 near the town of Yuma, Arizona. He grew up on the family farm. He enjoyed learning and reading, but did not like the way he was treated at school because he was Mexican-American. When he was young he learned that he shouldn’t fight with people who mistreated him or made fun of him.*
  - Encourage students to read the remainder of the book, looking for the most important information in each section. Remind students to stop after each section to summarize the important information in their minds.
  - Independent practice: Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [summarize worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.
-  Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

### After Reading

- Ask students what words they marked in their books. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

### Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Reinforce how mentally summarizing the important information in each section helps keep them actively engaged as they are reading and helps them understand and remember what they have read.

### Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Elements of a biography**

- Have students tell what they learned about Cesar Chavez that they did not know before reading the book. Discuss what it would be like to leave their homes and live like the Chavez family did as migrant workers. Discuss why Cesar’s mother gave food to people who were even less fortunate than they were. Ask students how they think this affected Cesar. Have students explain the effect the teachings of Gandhi had on Chavez. Ask students to explain how Chavez worked to promote freedom.
- Ask students to explain the difference between a biography and an autobiography (biography: a story of a person’s life; autobiography: the story of a person’s life written by that person). Ask students which kind of book this is. Explain that the information written in a biography often answers the questions of *Who?*, *What?*, *Where?*, *When?*, *Why?*, and *How?* Explain to students that by structuring the story around these questions, the author is able to present important information about the life of the person. Explain to students that by using these same questions, they can summarize the main events that happened in Chavez’s life.

### Build Skills

#### Grammar and Mechanics: **Compound sentences**

- Write the following sentence on the board: *Cesar Estrada Chavez was born March 31, 1927, near Yuma, Arizona.* Explain that this is a *simple sentence*. It has one subject and one predicate. Review or explain that the *subject* of a sentence tells who or what the sentences is about, and that the *predicate* tells what the subject is or does.

## Lesson Plan *(continued)*

## The Life of Cesar Chavez

- Write the following sentence on the board and have students find it on page 5 in the book: *Cesar loved reading and learning, but his early experiences with school were not positive.* Review or explain that a *compound sentence* contains two or more simple sentences connected by a connecting word called a *coordinating conjunction*. Write the following list of connecting words on the board: *and, but, or, nor, and yet*. Explain that in a compound sentence, each simple sentence expresses a complete thought. In a compound sentence a comma is used before the connecting word to join the two thoughts. Point out the word *but* in the sentence on the board and explain that the comma is used to join the two sentences.
- Encourage students to find another compound sentence in the same paragraph that is connected using the word *but* (*Cesar's family spoke only Spanish at home, but at school Cesar was punished with a smack of a ruler across his knuckles if he used his native language*). Have them identify the two simple sentences joined to form the compound sentence. Point out that a comma has been used before the word *but*. Have students find a compound sentence in the first paragraph that is connected with the word *and* (*He and his younger brother Richard were inseparable, and...*). Have them identify the simple sentences that were joined to form the compound sentence.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [compound sentences worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss student responses.

### Word Work: **Synonyms and antonyms**

- Write the word *bad* on the board. Ask students to suggest a word that means almost the same thing (*poor, terrible*). Review or explain that a word that means the same or almost the same as another word is called a *synonym*. Ask students to suggest a word that means the opposite of *bad* (*good, excellent*). Review or explain that a word that means the opposite of another word is called an *antonym*.
- Have students turn to the second paragraph on page 5 and find the word that tells how Cesar felt about reading and learning (*loved*). Ask students to suggest a synonym (*cherished, treasured, and so on*). Ask students to suggest an antonym (*hated, disliked, and so on*).
- **Check for understanding:** Have students find the word in the last sentence on page 6 that tells the kind of shacks that many families had to crowd into (*tiny*). Give pairs of students a thesaurus. Ask them to find the word *tiny*. Have a volunteer name the synonyms listed. If the thesaurus lists antonyms, have them also find antonyms for *tiny*. If needed, provide additional practice using a thesaurus.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [synonyms-and-antonyms worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

## **Build Fluency**

### Independent Reading

- Invite students to read their book independently. Additionally, encourage partners to take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

### Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends.

## **Extend the Reading**

### Writing Connection

The Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award, recognizes exceptional meritorious service. Explain to students that thirteen people were given this honor in 2004, including Doris Day, Pope John Paul II, Estee Lauder, Arnold Palmer, and others. Have students research this prestigious award. Review the work Chavez did for farm laborers. Encourage students to write why Chavez or any other people they found in their research deserved this honor. Have students share their information with the class.

### Social Studies Connection

Discuss labor unions. If possible, have a representative from a teacher's union and/or another local union talk to students about the benefits of unions. Have students discuss what a students' union might represent.

### Skill Review

**Discussion cards** covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

### Assessment

#### Monitor students to determine if they can:

- accurately determine important information in text during discussion and use it to create a written summary on a worksheet
- correctly identify the elements of a biography during discussion
- correctly recognize and write compound sentences in discussion and on a worksheet
- consistently understand and use synonyms and antonyms during discussion and on a worksheet

### Comprehension Checks

- **Book Quiz**
- **Retelling Rubric**