Mohandas Gandhi: The Art of Nonviolence

Curriculum Unit 98.03.05
by Peter N. Herndon

“Hate begets hate. Violence begets violence. . . . We must meet the forces of hate with soul force. Our aim must never be to defeat or humiliate the white man, but to win his friendship and understanding.”

-Martin Luther King, 1953

This curriculum unit is entitled, “Mohandas Gandhi: The Art of Nonviolence,” and will be taught to tenth-graders at Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School as part of the World History curriculum. I plan to make extensive use of the Academy-Award winning film, “Gandhi,” starring Ben Kingsley in the title role. Additional readings come from my textbook, World Cultures, chapter nine; supplemental readings and activity sheets will be provided by the teacher. Students will learn to use Yale professor Dr. Jules Prown’s method of object analysis to help them improve their observation and deductive reasoning skills. In addition, this unit will emphasize student reading and writing, artistic and verbal skills. This unit will be useful to World History teachers at a middle or high school level who have an interest in presenting lessons that deal with issues of personal integrity, courage, perseverance and personal decision-making. This unit on Gandhi is intended to challenge teachers and students alike to become more aware of the suffering and rewards of a life lived for the benefit of others.

UNIT INTRODUCTION

As the film opens, the viewer observes a thin, brown-skinned old man dressed in a simple flowing white robe, supported by two tall dark-skinned women, walking slowly through what appears to be a garden. There is a crowd of smiling people there who seem to recognize the old man and seem happy to see him. He also is smiling. Suddenly an angry-looking well-dressed younger man with black hair is standing in front of the old man. He bows respectfully, stoops down, then quickly points a pistol at the old man and fires three times. The old man gasps, calls out “Oh God,” and slumps to the ground. The people in the garden are amazed and shocked. In the next scene the audience sees a large flower-covered coffin with the old man lying in it. There is a funeral procession with what seems like thousands of people, mostly dark-skinned, the men wearing turban-like cloth head coverings and the women wearing long dresses with sashes around their waists. Some of the women are veiled; some of the men are wearing western-style suits, and a few are wearing military
dress. As the marchers go past the camera, a broadcast commentator is shown speaking into a microphone with an “ABC-CBS-NBC” label. As the radio announcer speaks of the dead man, whom he calls the “Mahatma,” he reads a quotation from another man named Nehru, who said this about the dead man:

“The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere. . . . Our beloved leader, Bapu as we called him, the father of our nation, is no more. The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong. . . . The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later that light will still be seen in this country and the world will see it.” (quoted in Severance, pages 128-9)

After the long procession is over, the viewers see the coffin by itself, fire engulfing it, smoke rising to the heavens. The screen becomes dark. The classroom lights go back on. Students are asked at random to share their impressions of what they have observed; the teacher records their recollections on the chalkboard/overhead projector. Then the teacher asks that the students try to arrive at consensus about which observations they can all agree to. Once the list is altered, the teacher rewinds the film and the students observe the entire segment again in an attempt to corroborate the observable “facts.” After discussion of the list, and that list is amended, the instructor asks each member of the class to create a written list of questions that the film segment raises in their minds. After an appropriate amount of time, the questions are collected, then selected ones read to the class. Responses should fit into one of several categories including: “what? who? where? when? and why?” If time permits, once the observable facts can be corroborated, students should be encouraged to speculate answers to their questions, based on what they have seen.

This opening exercise is designed to accomplish several goals which are essential to my curriculum unit: one, learning to observe more objectively; two, learning to describe more precisely; three, learning to deduce from the observable evidence; and finally, to speculate about possible scenarios based on events the viewer has just seen.

It is significant that this film segment of Gandhi’s assassination is the first time students have been given information from the teacher about Gandhi, the times in which he lived or even about India or its people. It is possible that some students may have already seen the film or have some knowledge about Gandhi; it has been my experience that such pre-existent knowledge does not significantly alter the value of this assignment.

The teacher should note that this exercise works best if students are not shown the film title and beginning credits. Finally, it is time to inform the students who the old man was, what violent forces were at work in India at the time (Hindu-Muslim enmity following the independence of India just five months before Gandhi died) of his death in January, 1948, and why one of his friends had said of him: “He will always be remembered as one who made his life a lesson for all ages to come.” (Quoted in Severance, page 129)
GOALS AND STRATEGIES

I hope to achieve several goals in creating this teaching unit for my high school World History students. The first is to acquaint students with the cultural and racial differences and conditions in the British colonies of South Africa and India which resulted in a form of legal discrimination. Some of the fundamental human rights questions that should interest my students are the following: How have people historically responded to legal injustice? What recourses other than violent action do people have available to them? What role can effective leaders play in helping to organize effective responses to oppression? Can we judge which responses are most effective given their historical context? What attitude changes are necessary both on the part of the victims and the victimizers in order for the situation to change? I hope this unit on Gandhi will challenge my students to increase their ability to think across cultures and to consider possible applications of Gandhi’s ideas and techniques in twenty-first-century America.

The second goal is to acquaint students with Gandhi’s personal philosophy and goals. We certainly can reason that Gandhi often became frustrated and angry because of the humiliation and physical injuries he suffered as a targeted member of a persecuted group. How was this man able to turn this justifiable anger into a calm determination to win social, economic and political gains for his people? In an attempt to “get inside” Gandhi, students will spend some time learning what effects Gandhi’s various life experiences had on his “world view.” How did growing up in a prominent liberal Hindu middle class (his was the Vaisya caste for farmers and merchants) home affect him? How did being married at thirteen to a girl he had never met before affect his thinking about romantic love? How did his life in England as a law student influence his ideas on Christianity and the industrial revolution? What life experiences caused him to develop such a committed interest in ameliorating conditions of caste, class and poverty for his people?

In order to better understand Gandhi, the teacher will assign short selections from the Bhagavad-Gita, the Sermon on the Mount, Thoreau’s Civil Disobedience, and Tolstoy’s The Kingdom of God is Within You, all of which had a profound effect on the young man. For example, Gandhi was quite moved by the Sermon on the Mount where he was delighted by the passage where Jesus said,

‘But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man take away thy coat let him have thy cloak also.’ Matthew chapter 5, verses 39, 40

Difficult words to live by, but Gandhi, though a Hindu, would spend his life illustrating how these love-principles could work to effect change.

A third goal for students is to expect them to distinguish between methods and goals: What were Gandhi’s overall goals and how did he proposed to achieve them? What would it take? Students should be able to compare the English policy of racial segregation in South Africa to the Hindu caste system in Gandhi’s native India where certain people were segregated as “Untouchables” through no fault of their own. Students can read some of the restrictive laws in each system and compare them. Is it possible to condemn one system without also condemning the other? Is discrimination based on race or caste ever morally justifiable? Students will be asked to compare Gandhi’s leadership, goals and methods to those of Martin Luther King in the American civil rights movement. As students examine some typical Jim Crow statutes of Mississippi or Alabama from the 1950’s they may become even more aware that racial-cultural discrimination often occurs when persons in economic and political power choose to misuse that power for their own gain at the expense...
of the unenfranchised. The obvious question arises, “how can those without power gain fair treatment from those in power?” Nelson Mandela, who used nonviolence as a strategy, also was an admirer of Gandhi; students might examine Mandela’s leadership and methods in the early days of the African National Congress if there is sufficient time and interest.

A fourth major goal of my unit is for students to realize how physical objects are often useful as symbols for social movements like Gandhi’s. In Gandhi’s nonviolent resistance there were five goals, (he called it his Constructive Program) like the fingers of a person’s hand. They were: ending Untouchability (racism), home spinning of cloth (rejecting commercialism), sobriety (anti-alcohol, anti-drugs), Hindu-Muslim friendship (religious toleration), and equality for women (ending discrimination in jobs, suffrage). The one I have chosen to emphasize in my unit, because it was a vital part of ending British rule, is Gandhi’s second goal, symbolized by the simple spinning wheel. They will learn how wool is shorn, carded, gathered and spun into yarn. Gandhi was often photographed while spinning, a demonstration of his commitment to boycotting British-made clothing. My project will entail the students’ making yarn on a real spinning wheel. They will see slides which illustrate different types of wheels, including one called the Charka or portable “Gandhi wheel” which Gandhi developed in the late 1920’s. He encouraged everyone in India to spin for an hour “first thing each morning for the beneficial meditative state thereby produced.” (Cummer, A Book of Spinning Wheels, page 18) Another student project is for them to make posters or collages and collect current news or magazine articles that illustrate Gandhi’s five social goals and apply them to today.

To conclude, I plan to create a teaching unit that will help students understand the historic changes that occurred in India over a forty-year period and the leadership qualities that Mohandas Gandhi possessed, among them a great vision, rooted in humility. Who was this skinny brown man who said of himself, “Men say I am a saint losing myself in politics. The fact is that I am a politician trying my hardest to be a saint.” And yet he was a man who also said this: “As soon as a man thinks of himself as a saint he ceases to be one.” There were many struggles: personal struggles, social struggles, political struggles, economic struggles. I believe that by implementing this teaching unit with my students, I will be able to raise questions in my students’ minds that challenge them to think about their unique role in the struggle to alleviate certain aspects of human suffering. I hope that students will understand that art and artifacts (in this case Gandhi’s spinning wheel) can serve as metaphors that remind us that there is a high price to be paid in order to achieve true success. How many in history have been willing to pay such a price as this man Gandhi?

**Gandhi in South Africa**

Students begin their acquaintance with Gandhi as a thirty-two year old barrister who has just made a life-changing decision to take a job in South Africa in 1893. He had spent two years in England studying law and returned home in 1891 to his wife and newly-born son, with no prospects of employment. Fortunately, a family friend in Pretoria, South Africa required a lawyer to assist him. While on the train to meet his client, he was confronted by a European and the conductor who demanded to know how he, a person of dark skin, had obtained a ticket to ride first-class. When Gandhi refused to go to the third-class compartment, he was thrown off the train at the next station where he spent the night. As a result of this personal encounter with racial prejudice, Gandhi met with a group of friends, both Indian and English, and soon reached a landmark decision that would eventually change the lives of hundreds of Indians in South Africa and eventually the lives of
millions in India. That decision was, of course, to peacefully and publicly confront the government that legitimatized the unfair pass laws, property laws, enfranchisement laws and others that relegated Indians to a type of second-class citizenship. According to Gandhi, if Indians did not insist on equal rights before the law, they were admitting to their own inferiority and were willingly giving up their dignity as human beings. He also believed that if white people were allowed to assume they were superior to persons of a darker skin, they became victims of their own prejudice. To quote Gandhi, “It has always been a mystery to me how men can feel themselves honored by the humiliation of their fellow beings.” Gandhi discovered his gift of political organization. He wrote petitions and newspaper articles and mobilized volunteers from the Christian as well as the Hindu and Muslim communities.

Several film segments illustrate Gandhi’s personal courage and leadership qualities. In the first incident, he led a public meeting of Indian citizens to protest the South African pass laws. Gandhi refused to back down when British soldiers threatened to arrest him if he would not cease collecting and burning the discriminatory passes which were so hated by the Indian people. When Gandhi ignored the soldiers’ warnings, and insisted that he was within his rights, he was brutally beaten. In a second instance, he demonstrated what Jesus meant by “turning the other cheek.” He and a new acquaintance, Charlie Andrews, an Anglican missionary, were confronted by a group of street bullies who demanded that “sammy” and his friend get off their sidewalk. Gandhi calmly but respectfully stood up to them and was able to demonstrate to Charlie that being willing to take a blow for human dignity can result in preserving one’s dignity without suffering bodily injury.

In a third film segment, striking Indian workers marched to demand their civil rights as citizens of the British Empire. Mounted police decided to charge the marchers in an effort to disperse them. Gandhi, cool under pressure, instructed the marchers to lie down, in the belief that the horses would not trample them if they did so. He proved to be right. The soldiers rode off, and Gandhi’s followers won another round in the human rights fight. Later, in a very moving speech to a large crowd, Gandhi demonstrated his persuasive logic in advocating confrontational nonviolence. “It takes courage to resist and not strike back. It takes courage to risk going to jail. But I say nonviolent resistance is the only practical means at our disposal. It will force the British to see the logic of our demands.” Gandhi knew that if enough Indian workers went to jail and were removed from the workers’ pool, England’s resulting loss in business profits would force the government to negotiate.

While in Africa, Gandhi began to experiment with ideas of the simple life. An important book which influenced him at this time was Ruskin’s Unto This Last. Gandhi set up two communal farms or ashrams while he was there, his purpose being to demonstrate the practicality of communal living, whatever one’s religion or economic status. Everyone was to share labor equally. One incident recorded in the film that students find interesting is Gandhi’s angry outburst at his wife Kasturba for her refusal to clean the outdoor latrines. To caste-conscious Hindus, cleaning outhouses was a job fit only for “Untouchables,” a notion which Gandhi felt that Hindus must reject since it was much like the racial prejudice whites showed toward Indians and Africans. A bitter argument was resolved only when Gandhi humbled himself and admitted that his behavior was indefensible and asked his wife’s forgiveness. Gandhi’s shocking outburst of verbal and physical anger toward his wife pointed out the difficulty of patiently trying to maintain one’s high principles, especially when one’s beliefs were different from those deeply ingrained by ancient cultural norms. Gandhi’s inclusion of India’s lowest caste into his community caused Gandhi criticism throughout his life, but he was committed on principle to their full acceptance and he ultimately named them Harijans (Children of God). Another point of irritation with Kasturba was Gandhi’s practice of giving away or selling his own possessions and hers as well for the support of the ashram.

Cooperation and self-reliance were the basis of Gandhi’s ashrams, and were twin cornerstones in Gandhi’s
foundational principles of satyagraha from two Sanskrit words, satya, meaning truth and love, plus agraha, meaning force or firmness. Gandhi believed that all people were brothers and sisters, and that his nonviolent means of resistance to the British would eventually persuade the oppressors to see for themselves the dishonesty and injustice of the colonial system. Meanwhile, the ashrams provided a living laboratory for people from different social, economic and religious backgrounds to learn to understand and respect one another in spite of their differences. One interesting footnote regarding Gandhi’s adherence to his belief in self-reliance: he refused to allow his four sons to attend the local schools for fear of their becoming Westernized, hoping to tutor them himself. Once they were grown, all four resented their father for not allowing them to obtain a formal education as Gandhi himself had.

By examining Gandhi’s words and seeing them illustrated by his actions in the film, students should see Gandhi as someone who had important ideas he needed to try out. Was he always certain as to what to do or what the impact of his actions might be? Clearly there were no guarantees, only a remarkable faith that truth and right would eventually triumph. One had to be patient, but one had to be practical as well. Civil resistance, which Gandhi called ahisma, was a way that people could get involved; it was a practical test of their profession of opposition to the discriminatory conditions. Talk was cheap; would people be willing to “walk Gandhi’s walk” and thereby take a risk? Their courageous actions sent a message to the British and the world: “Enough!”

In 1915 Gandhi helped to negotiate the Indian Relief Bill, which granted important civil rights concessions to South Africa’s Indian community. Upon his signing the bill, Gandhi was called before the Minister of Asiatic Affairs, General Jan Smuts. In a humorous scene in the film, Gandhi, still in his prison uniform, politely refused to leave Smuts’ office until Smuts provided Gandhi with cab fare; Gandhi, a shilling in hand, dignity intact, “sees himself out,” much to the amazement of the British officers in charge. Having won this important victory, Gandhi decided that after twenty years, his movement in South Africa had reached its conclusion. On to India!

**Gandhi in India**

Gandhi’s successes in South Africa had not been unnoticed in his native India. He landed in Bombay in January 1915 at the age of forty-five to a hero’s welcome. Shortly afterwards he met with a number of influential Indian political figures, among them Sardar Patel, Annie Besant and Mohamed Ali Jinnah. What course of action should Gandhi take? Gandhi was persuaded by his very old friend and mentor, Professor Gokhale, to tour India for a year before giving any public speeches or making any commitments. For twelve months Gandhi traveled the land by train and by foot. The film viewer observes the beautiful Indian countryside, with its people, most of whom live at a subsistence level. We also see results of several violent acts by insurgent Indian nationalists to call attention to despotic British rule.

The first major campaign Gandhi became involved with was the result of an elderly starving peasant’s plea for his help in alleviating the suffering inflicted on tenant farmers by British landlords in his native province of Champaran. The British jailed Gandhi in an attempt to stop the people’s protests. When this action proved counterproductive, a frustrated British magistrate, under pressure from dangerous mobs and his own government, released Gandhi after he refused to post bail. After several years of courtroom drama and presentation of a voluminous amount of legal evidence collected by Gandhi and his young associates, he won a sizable victory against the British landlords. They were required to pay rent rebates to the peasants who were then allowed to grow crops of their own choice. Gandhi emerged as a nationally prominent figure. In a
moving scene in the cells below the Motihar courthouse where he awaited trial, Gandhi told his Episcopal friend Charlie that their partnership must end. He explained to the priest that he had to be sure and the people had to be sure that the movement’s accomplishments could be made by Indians alone. Sadly, he and Charlie, his loyal friend of nearly twenty years, parted company.

In a speech at the first National Congress Conference in 1917, Gandhi stunned his audience when he boldly declared that the politicians had better get in touch with the “true India,” the peasants, if they were to have any hope of leading India to independence. He said later that the people’s victory against the British was a mathematical certainty. “100,000 English cannot control 35 million Indians who choose to disobey.” Two years later, in April 1919, after the British proposed new laws which would deny Indians basic civil liberties, Gandhi demonstrated this power of disobedience by calling for a “national day of prayer and fasting” which had the effect of a national strike. He understood the power of right and the power of non-cooperation, and used them successfully for the first time. The British responded by jailing Gandhi, a technique that they would employ over and over with little effect, other than to increase Gandhi’s popularity and influence.

The eventual demise of British rule in India was played out in the brutal massacre at Amritsar in northwest India, just a few days after the successful national strike virtually shut India down. A crowd of 15,000 had gathered for a public meeting to listen to speakers talk about nonviolent non-cooperation. General Dyer commanded his mostly Indian regulars to fire on the helpless citizens, which resulted in 379 killed and 1,137 injured men, women and children. This is a very dramatic moment in the film. Under investigation for the incident, we see the General unmoved and bewildered by all the attention. After all, wasn’t he attempting to enforce his order banning public meetings? Remarkably, although Dyer’s actions were officially condemned, he was not dismissed from the army but merely relieved of his command. Upon his return to England, the House of Lords “passed a vote of thanks, acknowledging his ‘patriotism’ and a national newspaper was responsible for raising some 20,000 pounds which was handed over to him together with a silver sword with a laudatory inscription.” (Attenborough, page 94). Gandhi and the Indian Congress were defiantly outraged. Britain must leave! As of September, 1920, Congress took up Gandhi’s policy of “peaceful, nonviolent non-cooperation.” This would continue on and off for twenty-seven more years, until India’s independence was finally granted.

Other notable incidents from the film include the following:

The Tragedy of Chauri Chaura. A peaceful protest in support of Gandhi’s Home Rule campaign turned into an attack on a local police station. Twenty-two local policeman were hacked to death by a mob who set the police station on fire and then murdered them as they emerged. Gandhi, in order to enforce the end of non-cooperation with the British, told the people he would go on a fast unto death if necessary; he would fast until the people stopped protesting. He achieved his goal but almost died in the process.

The Great Trial. Following Gandhi’s fast, the British brought charges of sedition against him. Judge Broomfield, who presided over the trial, was very respectful of Gandhi, and, contrary to all legal precedent, the judge rose as the prisoner, Gandhi, was led in to testify. He was sentenced to a
term of six years. At the close of the trial Gandhi quipped to the judge (and this is quoted in the film): “If at some later date His Majesty’s Government should see fit to reduce the term, no one would be better pleased than I.”

The Salt March. In April of 1930 Gandhi, along with eighty or so of his ashramites, marched 240 miles to the Indian Ocean at Dandi beach where he was met by thousands of supporters. In defiance of the British law forbidding Indians to manufacture or sell salt, Gandhi, now called Mahatma (“Great Soul”), urged the people to ignore the law and make their own salt from crystallized sea water. The idea caught on to the extent that the British were totally ineffective to stop the illegal activity. The jails were filled, but the people continued to make and sell salt.

The Conference on Indian Independence. As an admission of England’s helplessness to oppose Gandhi’s popularity, they invited Gandhi to England to participate in the 1931 Conference on India as the Indian Congress representative. Gandhi was welcomed in England as a celebrity, but he returned home frustrated, having made virtually no progress toward his ultimate goal of freedom from Great Britain.

The ‘Quit India’ Movement. Gandhi and his wife Kasturba were arrested in 1942, following the issuing of the resolution for England to leave India signed by all the Congress leaders. Kasturba died two years later while still incarcerated in the Aga Khan palace at Pune.

The end of World War II and the Partition of India. In 1945, Congress leaders were released from jail and negotiations began for India to be carved up into a Hindu-controlled India and a Muslim-dominated Pakistan. This was deeply hurtful to Gandhi, who had long campaigned for Hindu-Muslim unity within India.

India’s Independence. August, 1947. Gandhi underwent two more fasts which helped to quell the inter-religious cycle of vengeance and bloodletting between Hindus and Muslims precipitated by the partition of India and Pakistan. Gandhi persuaded the Indian government to grant financial help to Indian Muslims who fled to the new state of Pakistan, a policy which proved very unpopular with Hindu extremists.

Gandhi’s Assassination. January 30, 1948. The assassin was a Hindu fanatic named Godse who believed that the Mahatma was a betrayer of Hindu principles. Gandhi’s body was cremated and
his ashes scattered on the waters on the Ganges River where it meets the Jumna River. Albert Einstein said of Gandhi at the time of his death, “It may be in years to come men will scarce believe that one such as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.”

**Spinning and the Spinning Wheel**

Gandhi was a middle-aged man when he first asked his wife Kasturba to teach him to use the spinning wheel. Once he had mastered the wheel, he practiced spinning every day for the rest of his life. Home-spinning became a symbol for independence and self-reliance throughout India under his encouragement and direction.

The spinning wheel has a central place in my teaching unit. The culmination of this unit will be in giving my students a hands-on experience where they will be shown how to actually operate a spinning wheel. In the Lesson Plan section below I further explain how I plan to guide my students step-by-step through Dr. Jules Prown’s process of Object Analysis that instructs students how to Observe, Describe, Deduce and Speculate about an object or artifact. By employing this “O.D.D.S.” method of analysis, students should learn important techniques that are transferable to the analysis of other artifacts or art objects.

**Observation.** Briefly, the teacher shows them the object (or an illustration of the object) and proceeds to ask specific questions about what they can observe. (What materials went into the manufacture of this object? What are the various lengths and widths of the parts that make up this object? What two-dimensional shapes or configurations does this object contain? What parts are stationery and which parts seem to be moving?)

Next, I plan to have them write a Description, based on our common Observations, which will include the various measurements of the pieces that make up the object. For the Deduction part of this exercise, the students will be asked to take their Observations a step further and begin to form tentative conclusions about how the object functions and how it may operate. (There are eleven grooves in the horizontal cylinder which is held fast by two leather pieces; if some grooves are more worn than others, what can you deduce from this? If the leather pieces that attach the cylinder to the two supporting pieces are relatively new, what does this reveal about their function and use? What about the way the pieces are fashioned indicates that this object can be quickly disassembled? What purpose is served by the six-inch piece at the end of the long dowel containing a hole large enough for a person to insert his finger?)

Finally, students are encouraged to Speculate about the object. From the teachers’ experience in Dr. Prown’s seminar, this is the part the students have been eagerly waiting for. If this wheel can be turned, which way? how fast? would it make a difference? why or why not? Were the people who used this object nomadic or farmers? What kind of training would be necessary to operate it? What about the carvings: do they represent the natural or supernatural world? Is this object one-of-a-kind or mass produced? The teacher should encourage students to be imaginative in their discussion at this point. Their assignment will be to write an imaginary story about a person or family of another culture who had one of these objects in their possession and how this object might have influenced their lives either for good or evil.

Students will learn more about the spinning wheel the next day when I plan to demonstrate how spinning wheels like the one we have analyzed actually operated. A friend of mine, Paul Thompson, a wood-working teacher from Norwalk, using plans from Gandhi’s book, Wheel of Fortune, has helped to reconstruct a working model of Gandhi’s Charka wheel. The students will be able to see first-hand how this contraption actually was
supposed to work!

To enhance the students’ learning experience I plan to invite a local spinning and weaving instructor, Joyce Brockway from Clinton, CT, to demonstrate for the students how a real spinning wheel works. She lived the “simple life” among the moose and bear in New Hampshire for many years, and has the ability to “spin yarns” about living and surviving in the near-wilderness. Presently Ms. Brockway is part-owner of a handicraft shop in Clinton where she gives spinning lessons and uses authentic homespun wool to make hats, sweaters, scarves and mittens.

In preparation for Ms. Brockway’s visit, students will read a three-page article, “The History of Sheep,” published by the American Wool Council, which explains the important role wool has played in various parts of the world since ancient times. Students will read, for example, that the first wool spinning took place in central Asia in about 3500 B.C. The Romans established the first woolen “manufactory” in England in 50 A.D. In the twelfth century, captured Greek weavers taught the Italians in cloth-making regions such as Florence how to weave wool more expertly. Christopher Columbus imported the first sheep to Cuba and Santo Domingo in 1493; offspring of these sheep were bred for meat that helped Cortez and his men to survive their campaigns in Mexico. In the American colonial period restrictive trade laws were designed to protect England’s superiority in woolen manufacture; by 1664 a Massachusetts law required the youth of the Commonwealth to learn how to spin and weave, proving the ineffectiveness of England’s trade laws. Sheep herding and wool making were an important part of the Westward Movement during the 1800s; today, sheep are kept in each of the fifty states. This lesson on wool and spinning is important of students not only from an historical perspective but also to give them an appreciation for the many elements that are necessary in order to manufacture a raw material (wool) into a finished product, in this case articles of clothing. Spinning and weaving are timeless occupations. I feel privileged to instruct my students in these traditional skills that remind us of simpler and quieter times. The fact that some people can use these skills today for pleasure and profit hopefully will not be lost on my students. This lesson on spinning should lead us naturally into our next topic, Gandhi’s advocacy of home spinning as a way of helping the impoverished farmers in India to lift themselves from poverty.

**The Benefits of Hand Spinning**

Gandhi believed that hand spinning, combined with weaving on hand looms, was the only logical way for the people of India to become self-sufficient and independent. He claimed that if India employed his methods, poverty would be greatly reduced if not totally eliminated. He said, “I feel convinced that the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving will make the largest contribution to the economic and the moral regeneration of India.” (Young India, July 21, 1920). Consider the fact that at the time Gandhi returned to India in 1914 most of India’s farmers were idle for four months of the year, a factor which greatly contributed to their poverty and hopelessness. Gandhi believed that if the poor people of India would learn to spin thread from cotton or flax at home and diligently applied these newly learned skills they could overcome many of their economic and social ills. Among Gandhi’s arguments for home spinning were these:

1. it is easily learnt;
2. it requires practically no outlay of capital;
Gandhi realized early on that there were many obstacles to his program. First, the middle classes would also have to take up this cause in order to recruit the numbers necessary to supply the need for domestic cloth. Second, the people would have to be convinced to wear a rougher type of cloth than the fine mill cloth already available. Third, there were huge logistical problems pertaining to training, manufacture and distribution. Could enough people be found who were willing to volunteer their time to help alleviate the poverty of others? Could a sufficient market for homespun Indian cloth be created? It would take a major effort from students and members of India’s middle class to instruct and organize the poor villagers so that the country as a whole would benefit. Yet Gandhi’ logic was simple and difficult to refute:

Is it waste of energy for young men to be going to the villages, studying their wants, feeling for them and helping them onward? Is it waste of energy for thousands of well-to-do young men and women to think of the poor half-fed millions and for their sake to set apart half an hour religiously to spinning on their behalf? . . . If one man or woman spins as a sacrifice, it is also much gain. If there is one activity in which it is all gain and no loss, it is hand spinning.” (Young India, August, 21 1924)

Sacrifice would be the key for Gandhi. Sacrifice and organization. Mobilize the people. Give them a cause worth fighting for and he believed they would respond. He saw idleness as a great evil which was destroying the will and initiative of the Indian people. In addition to helping to alleviate poverty and end idleness, Gandhi saw that the spinning movement would help to organize the people in villages, give them a sense of hope and help to instill a sense of community across barriers of class and caste. He believed with all his soul that India could turn its winter of despair into a “sunshine of hope” through the life-giving wheel, the Charka.

What Gandhi called “Khadi economics” was unique in several ways. The home-spinning movement was rooted in people’s need for cloth and clothing, but with no sense of competition with other villages or even the making of profits beyond paying for materials and a living wage to the workers. The spinners and weavers were not producing for export, but primarily to meet the immediate needs of a local geographical area. A major key to success, according to Gandhi, was to convince the local people of the importance of wearing articles of homespun (khadi) so that production efforts met local needs in response to local styles and preferences. The temptation to produce for profit at any level, whether it be cotton growers or cloth distributors had to be balanced with the overall goal of keeping the khadi cloth prices at the lowest possible level. Again, Gandhi’s emphasis on the principle of self-sacrifice was paramount.

For Gandhi, spinning was a universal cure for suffering and poverty. It was also a means of uplifting a
nation that was under the heel of a foreign power, England. Gandhi saw himself as a man with a vision, but also a man who had an obligation to communicate by deed as well as word. For Gandhi the activity of spinning was much more than an economic exercise, it had moral and spiritual implications as well.

I think of the poor of India every time that I draw a thread on the wheel. For a person suffering from the pangs of hunger, and desiring nothing but to fill his belly, his belly is his God. To him anyone who gives him bread is his master. Through him he may even see God. . . . Therefore I have described my spinning (a daily activity) as a penance or sacrament. And, since I believe that where there is pure and active love for the poor there is God also, I see God in every thread that I draw on the spinning wheel. (Khadi, pages 110-111)

By “penance” Gandhi meant a duty or sacrifice to make up for years of neglect and exploitation by the upper and middle classes which resulted in the widespread poverty of the lower classes. He believed that it was the moral duty of all middle and upper class people to devote time to help India’s Harijans, or outcasts.

Gandhi widely promoted the idea that if everyone in India devoted just a half-hour each day to what he called “sacrificial” or voluntary spinning, this effort would provide the poor weavers with enough yarn to make a decent living and also create a spiritual revolution in India. Gandhi called his vision for India “illimitable faith.” Just as the spinner had to believe that his small contribution of yarn, when pooled together with others’ contributions, would be enough to clothe all of India, Gandhi asked of all citizens to have the faith that truth and non-violence would eventually overcome all obstacles, providing that the leaders and disciples of the home spinning movement continually devoted themselves to principles of truth and purity.

According to Gandhi, the Indian people’s proper attitude toward hand spinning was inexorably linked to one’s ability to put aside one’s own personal needs and desires and replace them with a love for others, particularly the poor. For Gandhi, to achieve this attitude was impossible without a belief in the unconditional power of the love of God working within a person’s heart.

You might ask how it is possible to find God through the spinning wheel. . . . One has to learn to efface self or the ego voluntarily and as a sacrifice in order to find God. The spinning wheel rules out exclusiveness. It stands for all, including the poorest. It, therefore, requires us to be humble and to cast away pride completely. When self is shed the change will be reflected in our outward behavior. . . . Everything we do will be undertaken not for little self but for all. (Khadi, page 115)

The activity of the wheel allowed the spinner precious time to reflect and think, even meditate or pray. The repetitive spinning of the wheel was an activity that, once initiated, had no real beginning or end, and perhaps reminded the operator of things eternalthe nature of God, the eternal nature of poverty and suffering, or the continuous cycle of birth and rebirth. During this process the mind was free to dwell on things other than one’s personal worries and cares. Gandhi believed to the extent that the spinner was able to turn away from self-centered thoughts and became more others-centered he or she would reach a higher sense of purpose and become more aware of God and His purposes. Pride would be replaced with compassion for the poor. With an attitude of what Gandhi called “penance” the operator’s mind would be renewed as he or she became more and more aware of the small but important part he or she was playing in a greater Plan.

To find God one need not go out anywhere. He resides in our hearts. But if we install self or ego there we dethrone God. . . . Although He is the King of kings, Most High, Almighty, yet He is at the beck and call of anyone who has reduced himself to zero and turns to Him in uttermost humility of spirit. Let us then become poor in spirit and find Him within ourselves. (Khadi, page 115)
LESSON PLAN ONE: The Silent Object (One Class Period)

Objectives:

1. To introduce students to Jules Prown’s unique methods of Object Analysis;
2. To encourage students to observe details in an object they would normally tend to overlook;
3. To encourage students to use and improve their speaking and writing skills;
4. To introduce them to an object that in many ways is a metaphor for another time and discuss the object in those terms.

Procedures:

1. Warmup Activity. Introduce the lesson by telling them they are going to observe a “Silent Object.” After looking at the object (a wooden model of a spinning wheel) for a short time, the teacher tells the students to imagine that this object can tell us about itself. Students will write down three interview questions of the object. Then, the teacher proceeds to ask several students to share one of their questions with the rest of the class. The teacher then writes these questions on the chalkboard. Students should come up with the basic “What (is it for)? Where (does it come from)? When (was it made)? How (does it work)? and even Who (would use it)?

2. Observation and Description of the Object. The teacher then passes a picture-diagram of the object which includes dimensions of all the parts. (see Appendix Section) The diagrams will help shorten the time spent in having to measure the parts. The teacher then asks students to describe the object in a certain manner and follow a suggested order. Normally Observation follows a pattern of larger to smaller elements.

Geometric lines. Students should be able to identify the horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines that help to define the object. (vertical posts, horizontal cylinder, diagonal from top of taller post to top of smaller post, etc.) Also, they should see lines that are parallel to one another (the larger and smaller base boards)

Shapes (two-dimensional). This would include circles, triangles, rectangles, and squares; and (three-dimensional) cylinders, spheres, rectangular solids and pyramids.

Numbers. This would include any parts of the object that are repeated in two’s (there are many paired items), three’s (the pair of carved sticks that turn on the horizontal bar), and multiples of twos and threes.
Fixed and Moveable parts. It is important that students become aware that there are two horizontal axles which allow for movement of pieces at both ends of the object.

3. Deduction: What can students “deduce” from what we have observed about the object? The teacher needs to be clear in his or her mind of the difference between this stage and the final “Speculation” stage of the exercise (see above Narrative). Typical deductions have to do with the materials used (mostly wood, also leather and string) and how they are put together for use. How much time and care was needed to build, assemble and decorate the object? How are the various parts kept in place? Why do some parts seem to be newer (leather pieces) than others? Why are holes cut in different parts of the object? How are the pieces kept in place? If parts of this object move, in which direction, and how fast? How are the smaller and the larger extremities joined? Would this object survive use by a child or is it a machine for use by trained adults?

4. Speculation. This is where the students’ imaginations take over. Postulated on various hypotheses developed during the Deduction phase of the discussion, students should be able to imagine how an ancient craftsman or medical healer or priest might have put such a “machine” to use. Were the people who used these objects from the desert? from farming areas? from cities? from small villages? What about the many geometric designs carved into the base: what does their repetitiveness and symmetry suggest? What could the symbols represent? Imagine using this machine to continue some tradition of value to an African or Asian or European civilization.

After students have discussed several of their ideas, they are told it is time to write.

Their assignment: Write an original story about a person from a faraway culture who owns one of the objects we have described, and how he or she uses for either good or evil.

Conclusion. The object in discussion is a spinning wheel which originated in India. Its design dates back several centuries, although the one in the picture is most likely one hundred to one hundred and fifty years old. The design is identical to that of the earliest spinning wheels known to mankind. The two shorter posts hold a cylinder which acted as a spindle, hence the need for the small grooves. The spinning “wheel” is rimless. Instead of a rim, as on traditional wheels, string is laced across the six sticks and the fiber is then spun across the string. The drive band rests on the lacing and passes to the multi-grooved spindle. The hole in the handle is for the spinner to either insert a finger or a handle to turn the wheel. The spinning wheel that Gandhi first used was similar in design to this wheel.

LESSON PLAN TWO: Use of the Motion Picture, “Gandhi”

(Minimum of three class periods, using selections from the three-hour film)

Objectives:

1. To acquaint students with the life and philosophy of Mohandas Gandhi;
2. To raise certain ethical and philosophical questions that pertain to treatment of poor people throughout history and conditions that still exist today;
3. To evaluate the practicality of Gandhi’s peaceful non-cooperation methods to other times and places in history and in the world today.
4. To appreciate the impact that one person can make in a lifetime of struggle.

Procedures: First Day

1. Begin the film (see Narrative section above) with no introduction to the students except to tell them to observe the events carefully, because they are going to have to write an accurate account of the incidents they are about to see. Show them the assassination and funeral scene only, preferably with no title credits, then stop the video, ask them for their reactions and questions, and then replay the film segment. Then have them write what they saw. Discuss their paragraphs for accuracy.

2. Hand out “Film Questions” “Gandhi” (see APPENDIX) and begin watching the film, stopping to discuss the questions when it seems appropriate. The first film segment deals with Gandhi’s twenty-year stay in South Africa. Terms you may have to help students define:
   - apartheid laws
   - Untouchables
   - pass laws
   - nonviolent non-cooperation
   - ashram
   - satyagraha (“truth force”)
   - caste system
   - miners’ strike

Procedures: Second and Third Days

1. Hand out second set of film questions “Gandhi Film, Part 2” (see APPENDIX) and “Gandhi Film, Part 3”). Continue to stop film at strategic spots. Help students understand the following events
or concepts:
tenant farmer
boycott of British-made cloth
cash crops
home rule
homespun cloth
Salt March
Amritsar massacre
Partition of India
Hindu-Muslim question
Indian Independence Act

2. Assignments during the film can include outside readings on Gandhi or situations that arise from the film relating to “turning the other cheek,” how it would feel being beaten or jailed after you had been arrested for protesting an unfair law, how easy or difficult it would have been to be a follower of Gandhi’s, or what would life be like on an ashram.

LESSON PLAN THREE: Gandhi’s Life and Ideas, an Assessment (One Class Period)

Objectives:

1. To review some of the significant ideas and concepts that have arisen from watching the film, “Gandhi”;
2. To put the events of Gandhi’s life in a chronological order;
3. To get students discussing and working in small groups.

Procedures:
1. Warmup Activity: Students are given a series of jumbled terms (see above lessons) to unscramble as a way of reviewing key concepts from the film, “Gandhi.” For Example: “RASHMA” (ashram), “BOSSKAPO” (passbook), “TOTYBOC” (boycott), etc.

2. Small Group Activity. Arrange students into groups of four or five and hand them a list of quotations Gandhi made in the film:
   “Poverty is the worst form of violence.”
   “An eye for an eye results in the whole world going blind.”
   “Satisfaction comes from hard work and pride in what you do.”
   “Happiness does not come from possessions but from spiritual peace.”
   “We must free women and Untouchables from second-class citizenship.”
   “Do not accept injustice in any form. Make the injustice visible. Be prepared to die for it.”

Instruct students to read the quotations and discuss them. Do they agree or disagree with the quote? Explain. Give an example from the film that illustrates the quote. Can they think of other sayings or actions by Gandhi that were worth remembering? List them.

Pick one or two and discuss with the rest of the class.

3. Assignment. Complete a Timeline. Using notes and your textbook, fill in the following list of dates* (student worksheet should have blanks not the dates already filled in) and then create a timeline on a separate sheet of paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES*</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_____</td>
<td>(1917) Amritsar Massacre: over 1,400 Indians killed or wounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____</td>
<td>(1947) Indian Independence Act passed by British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____</td>
<td>(1915) Gandhi returns to India after spending 20 years in S. Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____</td>
<td>(1870) Mohandas Gandhi born in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____</td>
<td>(1948) Gandhi assassinated at age 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____</td>
<td>(1930) Protest on British-made salt begins with the Salt March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____</td>
<td>(1948) People of India elect Jawaharlal Nehru prime minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____</td>
<td>(1893) Gandhi travels to South Africa to do legal work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____</td>
<td>(1939) World War II breaks out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____</td>
<td>(1945) World War II ends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Teacher can plan to use this timeline to have students compare events in other parts of the world which occurred in the early twentieth century. For example: Where does an event like Pearl Harbor fit on the timeline? Or the Great Depression? The Harlem Renaissance? The inventions of the telephone, electric light bulb and the automobile? The flights of the Wright brothers, Charles Lindbergh and Amelia Earnhart? These events may help give the timeline exercise some perspective.
LESSON PLAN FOUR: What is truth (force)? (One Class Period)

Objectives:

1. To have students grapple with the concepts of objective (absolute) and subjective (relative) truth;
2. To discover why “the truth” can often be elusive;
3. To engage in an activity that will enhance their cognitive, listening and writing skills.

Procedures:

1. Warmup Activity. The teacher introduces the lesson by calling students’ attention to several quotes about truth she has written on the chalkboard:
   1. “Truth is stranger than fiction.”
   2. “The truth shall set you free.”
   3. “Say not, ‘I have found the truth,’ but rather, ‘I have found a truth.’”

The teacher asks what all these quotations have in common. (They all have to do with truth). In court witnesses are told to tell the “truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth...”) Why? (Juries and judges need to know what happened in order to make a just decision) Is it reasonable to expect that witnesses will always agree on ‘what happened?’ (Not necessarily) Why? (Memories fade, inattention to detail, some people have better powers of observation than others).

The final question to students is about the nature of people. “If the truth seems so important, why do people often cover up or deny the truth?” (Answers will range from: to save embarrassment, to avoid blame or punishment, and to enhance ourselves by exaggerating or changing the truth.) So the truth may be hard to get at, given our human tendencies to cover up or deny or exaggerate.

2. Transitional Activity. The teacher tells the students that one of Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi’s beliefs was in satyagraha, or “truth force.” What we are going to try to discover (or review) is: (1) what did he mean by “truth force?” and (2) what was necessary for this force to be effective in changing the lives of millions of impoverished Indians in India?

3. Main Lesson. The teacher asks the students, “How good are you at determining what the truth really is?” Today you will have a chance to play detective. You are going to participate in a simulation where you will have to expose the impostors and identify the person instructed to answer all questions truthfully.”
(In preparation for this lesson, the teacher has pre-selected three students to impersonate Gandhi by answering a series of questions posed by the teacher in front of the other students). Only one will answer all the questions correctly. The other two will exaggerate or embellish or give wrong answers in an attempt to mislead the students in the class.)

The teacher introduces the activity by saying this is a panel of three persons all whom claim to be Mohandas K. Gandhi. Your job is to reveal who the “real” Gandhi is. Remember, the “real Gandhi” will answers all questions truthfully; the impostors will answer some questions correctly, but others will be false answers. Who is the “real” Gandhi?

Each “Gandhi” enters the room (preferably with towel turbans on their heads) and is asked the first question: “Who are you?” Each in turn answers, “Mohandas K. Gandhi.” With that the questions begin; the students in the class taking notes; the Role Players referring to their Fact Sheets which they have been given the day before.

The activity continues for about 15 to 20 minutes. The teacher should leave 10 to 15 minutes at the end of the class period in order to allow students to vote, and tell why they voted as they did. Finally the “real” Gandhi stands up, to the surprise of some students, if the activity works correctly. The teacher asks the class why some of them had difficulty deciding which person to vote for.

At the end of the class period the teacher hands each student a Fact Sheet summarizing important events in Gandhi’s life. What did the Role Players say that did not agree with this Fact Sheet? If you had this Fact Sheet, would it have been easier to spot the Phonies? (Of course) So what have we learned about truth today? (You can’t always believe everything people tell you; you need facts to determine what is really true, etc.)

The follow up assignment is that students try to answer two questions: 1. What do you think Gandhi meant by “truth force”? 2. How can truth be transformed into a force that could change people’s lives for the better? You can apply this second question to Gandhi’s India or the present day.

AUTHOR’S NOTE: This activity is designed as a review activity, but it can be modified and used at any time during the unit.

ADDENDUM: SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED DURING THE SIMULATION, “TO TELL THE TRUTH.” (20 questions)


APPENDIX A:
Gandhi Film Questions, Part One (To be used with Lesson Plan 2 above)

In the introduction to the film, Gandhi says to his people, “We will not strike a blow, but we will receive them.” This was an important part of his philosophy. His people were oppressed by a foreign colonial government, England. He proposed a practical program of nonviolent resistance. He claimed victory was a certainty. “One hundred thousand Englishmen simply cannot control 350 million Indians if they do not want to cooperate.”

The film opens in January, 1948, in India at the end of World War II. After Gandhi’s funeral, the film flashes back to 1893, as the young lawyer Gandhi enters South Africa by train.

1. What happens to Gandhi to introduce him to racial separation (“apartheid”) in South Africa?
2. What were Gandhi and his Indian followers protesting at the rally?
3. Why is one man arrested and Gandhi beaten?
4. What is Gandhi (along with his friend Charlie) trying to prove by “turning the other cheek” to the street bullies? Does it work? Explain.

5. We observe Gandhi at his “ashram” village with an American news reporter. What does Gandhi tell the reporter he hopes to accomplish there?
6. Gandhi and his wife, Kasturba, argue. Why does he lose his temper with her?
7. How do they resolve their disagreement?
8. New laws are passed in South Africa which further discriminate against Indian immigrants. What actions does Gandhi propose in order to change these unfair laws? How does Gandhi win their support?
9. What happens at the mines to prevent many of the marchers from being injured or killed?
10. We see many of the Indian people in jail along with Gandhi. What purpose does going to jail accomplish in the fight against the British?
11. Gandhi, still in his jail uniform, is offered a compromise agreement by South Africa’s Governor Jan Smuts. What do Gandhi and his people gain from these new laws?
12. How does Gandhi manage to keep the upper hand as he concludes his business with the Governor?

Gandhi Film Questions, Part Two

Gandhi, after he is released from prison in South Africa, wins a victory for his people. The laws that required fingerprinting and unlimited searches have been cancelled, as long as Gandhi agrees to stop further protests.

Gandhi returns to India. He is greeted as a hero. The colonial British government there is opposed to Indian “home rule,” which would allow Indian citizens to have a voice in running their own country. Gandhi
realizes that many of his people live in poverty because of British laws that exploit the people in favor of British business interests.

1. What is Gandhi’s plan to help win rights for the Indian tenant farmers?

2. How does he gain a release from prison after refusing to pay bail?

3. What plan of Gandhi’s do the other Indian political leaders agree to put into effect?

4. Does the plan work? Explain the British reaction.

5. Describe what happens at Amritsar after the people gathered to listen to speeches.

6. What does General Dyer say in defense of his actions at Amritsar?

7. What is Gandhi’s response to the massacre of innocent civilians? What does Gandhi propose to do about this tragedy?

*8. Gandhi makes a radio speech heard by millions. He makes 3 main points: (1) Promote Hindu-Muslim unity; (2) Get rid of personal anger; (3) Defy the British. Explain why each of these points was important to Gandhi’s goals.

**Gandhi Film Questions, Part Three**

Gandhi has had several legal and political victories in India. The British realize that they are helpless to stop his popularity. People in other parts of the world are reading about Gandhi and the people’s struggle. The Amritsar tragedy in which over 1,100 Indians were either killed or wounded, added to England’s ugly image in the world’s opinion polls. Gandhi wants to call the people’s attention to their overall goal: Indian independence with dignity. He proposes different ways to hurt British interests.

1. Why does he propose that the people burn articles of clothing? How will this hurt the British economy?

2. What does he ask the people to do to prove they can survive without British products?

3. What sacrifices does he ask the people to make in the cause of freedom?

4. Why do the marchers riot in front of the police station at Chauri? What happens?

5. What is Gandhi prepared to do to end the violence? What is the result?

6. Gandhi makes a 200-mile “Salt March” with many of his supporters to symbolize India’s defiance of British laws. What do his supporters do in large numbers?

7. Why do the British decide to arrest Gandhi and his supporters? Why is this event called a “turning point” in the people’s struggle for independence?

8. While in prison in the Aga Khan’s palace, Gandhi’s wife, Kasturba dies. How does Gandhi handle this?

9. Gandhi is invited to go to England to represent India for discussions about independence. Why is Gandhi disappointed at the results?
10. What does Gandhi do to try to stop the Hindu-Muslim violence? What advice does he give to people who have been hurt by the violence?

*11. The day of India’s independence finally comes. Why is Gandhi troubled and sad? Gandhi was a great leader but seems to have made little progress in some areas. After he is killed, what issues are left for the new democratic government to deal with? How successful has the government of India been?

APPENDIX B

Object Analysis (To be used with Lesson Plan 1)

Lesson: The Silent Object

Source: A Book of Spinning Wheels, p. 15

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Well-illustrated book by the director of the Academy-award winning film, Gandhi. Many personal anecdotes, as well as a brief summary of events covered in the film. Readable for students as well as teachers.


Written by a disciple of Gandhi who lived on one of his ashrams in India; has taken Gandhi’s ideas and systematized them, tracing some of them back to ancient sources. Many appealing topics for student discussion and debate.


A principally psycho-biographical work that examines Gandhi the person and applies his principles to present-day situations, including the American civil rights movement.


Firsthand quotations on a number of subjects, including “The Power of the Mind” and “Gandhi’s Advice to Negroes.”


Based on personal interviews with Gandhi.


Contains an especially helpful section on spinning and spinning wheels. Over 160 topics written in diary form. Excellent 20-page index of topics covered.

This book is the result of twenty-five years of research done by Gandhi on the use of the charkha wheel as a means to produce better yarn (khadi) and make spinning and weaving a profitable occupation. A valuable history lesson of the economics and early success of the spinning movement in India in the 1920's through the early 1940’s. 609 pages of text, plus a seventeen-page index, plus an excellent fourteen-page Forward by R. Prasad.


A collection of readings from various works of Gandhi. Sections include "Why Spinning?" "Why not Industrialism?" "Spinning for Self" "Spinning for Hire" "The Government and Khadi" and "Handlooms". Concludes with Gandhi's belief that "We have got enough artisans and indigenous skill in our country to produce all the cloth that we require for ourselves." (page 266)


This rare little book is covered in khadar, a product of India’s hand spinning industry. It includes a working diagram of Gandhi’s modified charkha wheel and operator’s instructions. Contains a wonderful chapter called “The Music of the Spinning Wheel.” Two quotes: “We are living in a spiritual war... We must concentrate upon our goal to the exclusion of everything else.” (page 11) “If you want to see the cessation of our slavery in which we are living for close upon two centuries, it requires from you a peaceful battle the battle of the Charka.” (page 86)


Gandhi comments on 85 topics from the necessity of Hindu-Muslim unity to “God is One” to “Is Islam Inspired?” to “Treatment of Minorities.” Recommended as a primary source. (Part of the 10-part “Pocket Gandhi Series”)


The story of Gandhi’s 21 years in South Africa and the beginnings of his nonviolent resistance philosophy of revolution (satyagraha)


A clear account of Gandhi’s embodiment of his principles, written by an Indian educated in England and the United States, who interviewed many of Gandhi’s followers and admirers. Gandhi’s humor and personal lifestyle come to life.


Excerpts from “Nonviolence in Peace and War.” Gandhi’s ideas in his own words.


Gandhi’s influence on the reorganization of the Congress Party, Hindu-Muslim relations, and the theory and practice of nonviolence.


How Thoreau’s ideas of nonviolence influenced Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Written at a high school level, I plan to quote extensively from this very readable book.


Written by a reporter-historian who became a friend of Gandhi. Writes about Gandhi’s human weaknesses as well as accomplishments (1930-1947)