Gandhi Movie Notes:

Name: Mohandas Gandhi

Gandhi is assassinated 5 months after India and Pakistan win their independence from Great Britain. Jan. 30th 1948 due to hatred between Hindus and Muslims

Mahatma, means “Great One”

Movie opens with his assassination then backtracks on life of Gandhi and his non-violence disobedience philosophy.

Gandhi is a lawyer and a citizen of the the British Empire. He expects to be treated as a citizen in South Africa, also a colony of the British Empire.

Gandhi first encountered racism, and injustice when he worked as a lawyer in South Africa 1893, he was thrown off a train for not sitting in the “colored” section” despite having a first class ticket.

South African Govt. passed laws not allowing Indians to vote

1906 South African Govt. passed laws for all Indians to have registration cards and cards to pass through town. 7 year struggle using non-violence techniques to change the laws

In 1915 Gandhi helped to negotiate the Indian Relief Bill, which granted important civil rights concessions to South Africa’s Indian community

1915 Gandhi returns to India, forms the Indian National Congress.

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 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 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?

). 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.

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 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’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.”

**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.

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

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.

\_\_\_\_

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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 Lindburgh 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.

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