Directions: Practice active reading by interacting with the text (highlighting essential passages or phrases, writing notes in the margins, etc.). When your group finishes reading each source, answer each of the questions that follow.


Madras, India. March, 1919: The idea came to me last night in a dream that we should call on the country to observe a general hartal... (O)urs is a sacred fight, and it seems to me to be in the fitness of things that is should be commenced with an act of self-purification. Let all the people in India, therefore, suspend their business on that day and observe the day as one of fasting and prayer.

• What is a “hartal”?

• How did Gandhi connect this “general hartal” to the religious act of “fasting and prayer”?

Source B: This article is taken from the book “The selected works of Mahatma Gandhi”

The principle called Satyagraha came into being before that name was invented. Indeed when it was born, I myself could not say what it was. In Gujarati also we used the English phrase ‘passive resistance’ to describe it. When in a meeting of Europeans I found that the term ‘passive resistance’ was too narrowly construed, that it was supposed to be a weapon of the weak, that it could be characterized by hatred, and that it could finally manifest itself as violence, I had to damur to all these statements and explain the real nature of the Indian movement. It was clear that a new word must be coined by the Indians to designate their struggle.

But I could not for the life of me find out a new name, and therefore offered a nominal prize through Indian Opinion to the reader who made the best suggestion on the subject. As a result Maganlal Gandhi coined the word ‘Satyagraha’ (Sat=truth, Agra=firmness) and won the prize.

• Why did the English phrase “passive resistance” not translate directly to the Sanskrit word of Satyagraha?
How did Gandhi end up settling on the word Satyagraha?

**Source C:** Excerpt from the weekly journal *Young India*, published by Gandhi and his followers, Aug. 11th, 1920

The religion of nonviolence is not meant merely for the rishis and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Nonviolence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law - to the strength of the spirit. I have therefore ventured to place before India the ancient law of self-sacrifice. For satyagraha and its off-shoots, non-co-operation and civil resistance, are nothing but new names for the law of suffering. The rishis, who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through nonviolence.

What does Gandhi mean when he writes: “The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law.”?

Who were Newton and Wellington? Why do you suppose Gandhi used those two individuals in his argument?

**Source D:** Gandhi’s letter to Lord Irwin, English governor in India, before marching to the sea and breaking the English Salt Tax Law, Sabarmati, India. March, 1930

Before embarking on Civil Disobedience and taking the risk I have dreaded to take all these year, I would approach you and find a way out. I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less human beings, even though they may do the greatest wrong to me and mine. Whilst therefore I hold the British rule to be a curse, I do not intend harm to a single Englishman or to any interest he may have in India... And why do I regard the British rule a curse?... Even the salt [the peasant] must use to live is so taxed as to make the burden fall heaviest on him... The tax shows itself still more burdensome on the poor man when it is remembered that salt is one thing he must eat more than the rich man... My ambition is no less than to convert the British people through nonviolence, and thus make them see the wrong they have done to India... But if you cannot see your way to deal with these evils and if my letter makes no appeal to your heart, on the eleventh day of this month I shall proceed with such coworkers of the Ashram [community] as I can take, to disregard the provisions of the Salt Laws...
Discuss and understand the word *passive*. Does this sound like a *passive* letter?

Make assumptions: How might Lord Irwin responded if Gandhi would have sent him a letter explaining that he was planning a violent revolution?

**Source E:** reporter Webb Miller’s description of the Salt March (May 5, 1930):

...The famous Indian poetess Mme Naidu called for prayer before the march started and the entire assemblage knelt. She exhorted them, ‘Gandhi’s body is in goal but his soul is with you. India’s prestige is in your hands. You must not use any violence under any circumstances. You will be beaten but you must not resist; you must not even raise a hand to ward off blows.’ Wild, shrill cheers terminated her speech.

Slowly and in silence the throng commenced the half-mile march to the salt deposits.... The salt deposits were surrounded by ditches filled with water and guarded by 400 native Surat police in khaki shorts and brown turbans. Half-a-dozen British officials commanded them. The police carried lathis -- five-foot clubs tipped with steel. Inside the stockade twenty-five native riflemen were drawn up.

In complete silence the Gandhi men drew up and halted a hundred yards from the stockade. A picked column advanced from the crowd, waded the ditches, and approached the barbed-wire stockade, which the Surat police surrounded, holding their clubs at the ready. Police officials ordered the marchers to disperse... The column silently ignored the warning and slowly walked forward.

Suddenly, at a word of command, scores of native police rushed upon the advancing marchers and rained blows on their heads with their steel-shod lathis. Not one of the marchers even raised an arm to fend off the blows. They went down like ten-pins. From where I stood I heard the sickening whacks of the clubs on unprotected skulls. The waiting crowd of watchers groaned and sucked in their breaths in sympathetic pain at every blow.

Those struck down fell sprawling, unconscious or writhing in pain with fractured skulls or broken shoulders. In two or three minutes the ground was quilted with bodies....

Then another column formed while the leaders pleaded with them to retain their self-control. They marched slowly toward the police. Although everyone knew that within a few minutes he would be beaten down, perhaps killed, I could detect no signs of wavering or fear. They marched steadily with heads up, without the encouragement of music or cheering or any possibility that they might escape serious injury or death. The police rushed out and methodically and mechanically beat down the second column. There was no fight, no struggle; the marchers simply walked forward until struck down....
I counted 320 injured, many still insensible with fractured skulls, others writhing in agony from kicks in the testicles and stomach....Scores of the injured had received no treatment for hours and two had died...

I was the only foreign correspondent who had witnessed the amazing scene -- a classic example of satyagraha or non-violent civil disobedience.

- Who were the Surat police? Why might the British colonial government choose them to guard the Dharasana Salt Works?

- Why might the leaders of the march not include music or cheering to encourage the protesters?

Source F: Harijan (a newspaper published and distributed by Gandhi’s Ashram, or community), Nov. 16th, 1934

Khadi is the sun of the village solar system. The planets are the various industries which can support khadi in return for the heat and the sustenance they derive from it. Without it other industries cannot grow. But during my last tour I discovered that, without the revival of other industries, khadi could not make further progress. For villagers to be able to occupy their spare time profitably, the village must be touched at all points.

- Explain the analogy of khadi being “the sun of the village solar system”?

- What other “industries” is Gandhi referring to?
**Source G:** Excerpt from the weekly journal *Young India*, published by Gandhi and his followers, June 29th, 1921

*It is my claim that as soon as we have completed the boycott of foreign cloth we shall have evolved so far that we shall necessarily give up the present absurdities and remodel national life in keeping with the ideal of simplicity and domesticity implanted in the bosom of the masses. We will not then be dragged into an imperialism which is built upon exploitation of the weaker races of the earth, and the acceptance of a giddy materialistic civilization protected by naval and air forces that have made peaceful living almost impossible. On the contrary we shall then refine that imperialism into a commonwealth of nations which will combine, if they do, for the purpose of giving their best to the world and of protecting, not by brute force but by self-suffering, the weaker nations or races of the earth. Non-cooperation aims at nothing less than this revolution in the thought world. Such a transformation can come only after the complete success of the spinning wheel. India can become fit for delivering such a message, when she has become proof against temptation and therefore attacks from outside, by becoming self-contained regarding two of her chief needs—food and clothing.*

- According to Gandhi, the khadi movement will help “refine” the system of imperialism into what? Explain.

- In order to resist “attacks from outside” of India, what do the people of India need to do?

**Source H:** Excerpt from the *Quit India Speech* given by Mohandas K. Gandhi on August 8th, 1942

*. . .it is my conviction that inasmuch as these struggles [French and Russian Revolutions] were fought with the weapon of violence they failed to realize the democratic ideal. In the democracy which I have envisaged, a democracy established by non-violence, there will be equal freedom for all. Everybody will be his own master. It is to join a struggle for such democracy that I invite you today. Once you realize this you will forget the differences between the Hindus and Muslims, and think of yourselves as Indians only, engaged in the common struggle for independence.*

- What is Gandhi calling on Hindus and Muslims to do?
According to Gandhi, democracy must also be coupled with what other belief?

**Source I:** Garretto, *The London Graphic Illustrator*, May 24, 1930

*Note: This cartoon shows Gandhi salting the tail of the British lion. It is based on an old folk belief that if you put salt on a bird’s tail you will then be able to catch it.*

- How is the British Empire represented in the cartoon?
• What is Gandhi’s relationship with the lion? Is it as a friend? As an enemy? Explain.

**Source J**: *Harijan* (a newspaper published and distributed by Gandhi’s Ashram (community), Sept. 5\(^{th}\), 1936

_Individuals and nations who would practise nonviolence must be prepared to sacrifice (nations to the last man) their all except honour. It is therefore inconsistent with the possession of other people’s countries, i.e. modern imperialism which is frankly based on force for its defence. Nonviolence is a power which can be wielded equally by all—children, young men and women or grown up people, provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have therefore equal love for all mankind. When non-violence is accepted as the law of life it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts. It is a profound error to suppose that whilst the law is good enough for individuals it is not for masses of mankind._

• According to Gandhi who can wield the power of non-violence? Provided that they have what?

• Make assumptions: This quote is in response to what argument made by others in regard to the validity of the non-violent approach between individuals as well as between nations?

**Source K**: Excerpt from the weekly journal *Young India*, published by Gandhi and his followers, Oct. 8\(^{th}\), 1925

_Nonviolence is ‘not a resignation from all real fighting against wickedness’. On the contrary, the non-violence of my conception is a more active and real fight against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness. I contemplate, a mental and therefore a moral opposition to immoralities. I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant’s sword, not by putting up against it a sharper-edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul that I should offer would elude him. It would at first dazzle him and at last compel recognition from him, which recognition would not humiliate him but would uplift him. It may be urged that this is an ideal state. And so it is._

• According to Gandhi, what is at the core of “retaliation”?
• According to Gandhi, why would the “tyrant” be disappointed?

**Source L**: *Newark Evening News*, Feb. 1st, 1948. Artist: Lute Pease

• Based off of the date of the cartoon, what event is this cartoon depicting?

• Explain the “choice” that India (represented by the woman beginning to stoop down) has in regards to non-violence.