

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Cesar Chavez



# Cesar Chavez

Cesar Chavez was a Latino Civil Rights leader who spent his life improving working conditions for farm workers. Chavez was born in Arizona. He left school after the eighth grade and did agricultural work full-time to help support his family. He was a migrant worker in California, meaning that he moved around, following the work. While laboring in fields, orchards, and vineyards during his youth and into adulthood, he saw firsthand the difficult and unfair working conditions that farm workers faced.

After a few years serving in the Navy after World War II, he returned to California in 1948 to marry Helen Fabela, a young woman he had met while working in fields. He got a job at the San Jose chapter of the Community Service Organization (CSO), the most prominent Latino civil rights group of its time. For ten years, he helped to register voters and worked for equal rights for Latinos.

Influenced by such influential leaders of the time as Mohandas Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Chavez wanted to use the practices of peaceful non-violence to better the working and living conditions of migrant farm workers. So in 1962, he left his work at the CSO and started a union called the National Farm Workers Association.

His union grew slowly. Chavez returned to working in the fields of California, where he talked to the other workers and tried to convince them to join his union. Many were afraid that if they joined the union they would lose their jobs, or even get beat up. But Chavez continued trying to persuade them. More and more people joined. Chavez referred to his movement to improve working conditions for farm workers as "La Causa", or The Cause.

What was "La Causa?" \_\_\_\_\_

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Why did Cesar Chavez take up "La Causa?" \_\_\_\_\_

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