

Featured Artifact: United Farm Workers Poster

<http://historyexplorer.americanhistory.si.edu/resource/?key=746>
Era 10: Contemporary United States (1968 to the Present)



Look at the artifact presented to you. In a few sentences, respond to the following questions:

Describe: Objectively describe the artifact. What do you think it is made of? What does it look like? Does it look old or new? Is it intact, or is it damaged in some way?

Analyze: When, where or how do you think this item was used? What kind of person may have created or used this item? What significance do you think the object held, either for the creator or the user? Do you see words or images on the artifact that connect it to others (besides the creator and user)?

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Share your conclusions with a partner, then discuss the following:

Evaluate : Justify why you came to those conclusions about the artifact. What further questions do you have about the object? Of those questions, which could you solve by observing the object in person and which would you need to solve with research?

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Background Information

Cesar Estrada Chavez, the founder of the United Farm Workers of America, is one of the most recognized Latino civil rights leaders in the United States. A Mexican American born in Yuma, Arizona, his family lost their small farm in the Great Depression (1930s). Like many Americans, they joined the migration to California and worked for low wages in its great agricultural fields. The agricultural industry in the West was a modern, market-driven phenomenon. In 1965, the United Farm Workers of America, led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, began its five-year Delano grape strike against area grape growers for equal wages for foreign workers. Filipino and Mexican Americans who labored in California vineyards were suddenly visible in the eyes of American consumers. The movement to boycott table grapes mobilized students and educated consumers across America. The text on this poster, printed around 1970, describes Chavez's vision of political and economic emancipation for farm workers. La Causa, or The Cause, as it was known among Mexican Americans, was the political and artistic touchstone of the Chicano movement.

After reading and considering the background information, compose a response to the following:

Analyze: Address the following object-specific questions:

- How is the juxtaposition of the text with the photograph particularly persuasive?
- Who was the targeted audience for this poster? What evidence suggests this?

Synthesize: What does this object tell us about the era in which it was created, or the American experience as a whole? How would you describe the social, economic, or political climate of America during this time? What connections can you make between this object and other things that you have seen, read, or experienced?

Analyze: Address the following era-specific questions:

- How have economic, social and cultural developments in contemporary America shaped who we are as a country today?