

Unit 13 - Yes We Can

13A Introduction

This is the true story of Dolores Huerta, a Latin woman born in New Mexico in 1930. As she grew up, Huerta looked around her and noticed something. Most of the people who worked on farms picking fruit and planting crops were recent immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries. Because the workers weren't organized, farm owners were able to pay them very low wages and have them work long days. Huerta decided to dedicate her life to fighting on behalf of poor workers. What would you fight for?

13B Song Lyrics

Si se puede, yes we can!
Si se puede, yes we can!
Si se puede, yes we can!
Yes we can, yes we can!
x2

Let me **recount** the tale, and tell it now,
About a young Latin girl, who acted out.
The war was over, finally peace,
Strangers **literally** kissed in the street.
The mood was **vibrant**, full of life,
The stars shone pale, the air was ripe.
Dolores left her **habitat**, where she lived,
In her yellow dress at half-past six.

Nervous and **anxious** to be alone,
Dolores was only fifteen years old.
But she didn't always act her age,
Each day she would **adapt** and change,
To whatever life threw her way.
Turning lemons on a hot day to lemonade in the shade.
But in the streets that night, there was a fight,
Or a beating to be exact and **precise**.

Ten against one, they chanted racist words,
Pushed the Latin kid against the curb.
They weren't careful, didn't act with **discretion**,
They beat him, "This'll teach you a lesson."
When they left, Dolores went to the kid,
To help him, she turned him over,
And found out it was none other than her own brother.

Hook

Twenty years later, Dolores is grown,
Beyond **domestic**, more than the home.
She saw that many Latin farmers didn't have
Access or a way to a better path.
Farmers had been **abandoned**, left behind,



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By the companies who ran them, every time.
So she fused and joined her love of the land,
With her hatred for racist woman and man.
Now the farmers who were growing grapes,
Worked hard, but hardly got paid.

She led us in the grape **boycott**,
Nobody bought them like they were rotten.
Yes, we have **civic** duties, duties to our city,
But we can fight for a cause, and change the laws.
Even when others agree, we can offer **dissent**,
Disagree for real, like we're rocking the set.

Hook

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13C Words Defined

abandon / access / adapt / anxious / boycott / civic / discretion / dissent / domestic / fuse / habitat / literal / precise / recount / vibrant

Below you'll find each vocabulary word that was used in the song. Each word is followed by the part of speech, a simple definition and a meaningful sentence. Some words will also have synonyms, antonyms and other forms of the word listed.

1. **abandon** (verb) to leave behind or desert

Harvey is going to *abandon* his dreams of ever becoming a famous actor.

Antonyms: to keep

Other forms: Something that has been left behind has been *abandoned* (adj.).

2. **access** (noun) a way in, or the right to go in

Only the celebrity's bodyguards were given *access* to her dressing room.

Synonyms: entry, passage

3. **adapt** (verb) to change in order to fit a new situation

The polar bears are having to *adapt* to climate changes.

Synonyms: adjust, conform

Other forms: A change or alteration is an *adaptation* (noun).

4. **anxious** (adj) greatly worried or eager

Leroy was *anxious* to know if he had made the basketball team.

Other forms: *Nadia anxiously* (adverb) awaited the birth of her first grandchild.

5. **recount** (verb) to tell in detail

Sophie tried to *recount* the daily adventures of her vacation in the Amazon.

Synonyms: to describe, report

6. **boycott** (verb) to avoid doing something as an act of protest

Lisa is going to *boycott* all school dances until they agree to play only hip-hop songs.

Other forms: A *boycott* (noun) happens when people are *boycotting* something.

7. **civic** (adj) relating to citizenship or to a city

One of the great *civic* projects was building a bridge from San Francisco to Oakland.

Synonyms: public

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8. discretion (noun) judgment or caution

Ursula used good *discretion* when she chose not to cut class with the rest of her friends.

Antonyms: foolishness, recklessness

Other forms: If you do something with *discretion*, you do it *discretely* (adverb), and you are *discrete* (adj.).

9. dissent (noun) a disagreement

Unfortunately there was *dissent* at our meeting about the number of skunks we should buy for the skunk raise.

Antonyms: agreement

Other forms: *Dissent* can be used as a verb, meaning “to disagree”: The two lawyers *dissented* from the opinion of the majority.

10. domestic (adj) related to the home or the family

Some *domestic* duties are mopping, vacuuming and dusting.

Other forms: A *domesticated* (adj.) animal is one that has been tamed.

11. fuse (verb) to combine or blend together

They were so alike, you could almost *fuse* their identities into one.

Other forms: *Fuse* is also a noun meaning “a circuit,” as in: The electrician was careful not to touch the live *fuse* sticking out of the wall. The word *fusion* (noun) means combination, as in: Flocabulary is the *fusion* of vocabulary and rap.

12. habitat (noun) something’s natural environment or home

The squirrel’s *habitat* was ruined by a bulldozer, which was grading the area for a grocery store.

Synonyms: abode, residence, dwelling

13. literal (adj) actual, true to fact

Ben gave a *literal* translation of the poem instead of a creative interpretation..

Other forms: He *literally* (adverb) ran seven miles to get home in time for the premier of his favorite show.

14. precise (adj) exact or specific

She was so *precise* about the directions that no one got lost on their way to the party.

Antonyms: imprecise, inaccurate

15. vibrant (adj) energetic and lively

The kite’s *vibrant* colors were beautiful against the clear, blue sky.

Synonyms: vivid

Antonyms: dull

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13D Fix the Mistake

abandon / access / adapt / anxious / boycott / civic / discretion / dissent / domestic / fuse / habitat / literal / precise / recount / vibrant

Each of the sentences below has a mistake. The wrong vocabulary words have been used, so the sentences don't make sense. Rewrite each sentence using the correct vocabulary word from this unit.

1. Veronica had to **fuse** to a new school when her family moved from Michigan to California.

2. After the 1955 arrest of Rosa Parks in Montgomery, Alabama, African-Americans who lived in the city **dissented** the use of public transportation for over a year.

3. Nicole was **vibrant** to meet her idol, Jennifer Lopez, backstage after the concert.

4. Muhammad felt that it was his **domestic** duty to report to the police that his neighbors were setting off illegal fireworks.

5. People need to act with **access** before making friends with anyone online.

6. Following the natural disaster, many people were forced to **recount** their homes and belongings.

7. Many Americans who **adapted** with the United States military held protests in Washington, D.C.

8. The surgeon had to make a **literal** cut when performing the delicate heart surgery.

9. The manager has full **habitat** to all of the apartments in the complex.

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10. Pablo Picasso's use of **precise** colors in his artwork really livens up a dark room.
-
11. The eyewitness provided the reporter with a detailed **boycott** of the tragedy she had witnessed.
-
12. **Civic** violence, or violence that takes place between people who live in the same home, is unacceptable and punishable by the law.
-
13. The pond located on our property is a natural **discretion** for frogs.
-
14. At six o'clock, Travis finally figured out why he had been walking so funny all day: His shoes were **anxiously** reversed, and he was wearing each shoe on the wrong foot.
-
15. My family was **abandoned** together with another family when my dad got remarried.
-

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13E Pick the Winner

abandon / access / adapt / anxious / boycott / civic / discretion / dissent / domestic / fuse / habitat / literal / precise / recount / vibrant

Circle the word that best fits into the sentence. Then write a sentence below that uses the word you didn't pick in a meaningful way.

1. Tiger Woods (**vibrantly OR anxiously**) awaited the news on whether or not he had posted a good enough score to qualify for the championship golf round.

2. The teacher asked her students to write the (**literal OR domestic**) definition for each of the science vocabulary terms.

3. Many students (**dissented OR adapted**) with the principal's decision to ban hats in school.

4. My parents have full (**discretion OR access**) to my bedroom at all times.

5. Diane organized a (**boycott OR habitat**) of beauty product lines that used animals for testing.

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13F Draw the Relationship

abandon / access / adapt / anxious / boycott / civic / discretion / dissent / domestic / fuse / habitat / literal / precise / recount / vibrant

In each grouping of eight words below, draw straight lines between the synonyms (words that mean similar things) and squiggly lines between any antonyms (words that mean nearly opposite things). Every word should have at least one line connected to it. Some may have more.

1 relating to citizenship literal habitat exact
 home civic precise unclear

.....

2 right of entry domestic vibrant dull
 describe recount access happening in the house

.....

3 eager keep abandon dissent
 anxious adjust agree adapt

.....

4 fuse vibrant judgment split
 lively willing to purchase discretion boycott

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13G Understanding What You Read

abandon / access / adapt / anxious / boycott / civic / discretion / dissent / domestic / fuse / habitat / literal / precise / recount / vibrant

Read the passage below. Then answer the questions.

I was anxious to learn more about Dolores Huerta when my teacher mentioned her accomplishments during Women’s History Month. But I was very disappointed when I opened my U.S. history textbook and found that Dolores Huerta wasn’t mentioned at all. She is often left out of the history books, but she definitely should not be. She played an important role in giving a voice to many workers and immigrants in America.

Huerta and her former brother-in-law, Cesar Chavez, noticed that many of the people working in the fields on farms weren’t treated with respect. Many of the workers didn’t speak English, and had difficulty fighting for their own rights. So Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez formed the United Farm Workers organization to give these workers a voice. Later, they successfully organized a California grape boycott, which resulted in improving the wages and working conditions of the migrant farm workers.

Huerta also accomplished a lot on her own. She was the coordinator of the East Coast portion of the grape boycott and a political leader for the United Farm Workers. In the 1970s, she went in front of lawmakers and urged them to protect the rights of farmers. In the 1980s she shifted her focus and was able to bring about change in the way police officers dealt with protests. Unfortunately, this came as a result of a personal experience when Huerta suffered very serious injuries while attending a political protest that was broken up by the police. Police officers had used violent force against the people, and she was later awarded money from the police for the damages. Luckily, Huerta made a full recovery and since then, she has continued to work for UFW while being the busy mother of eleven children. There is also a non-profit organization in her name that works to provide equal access to health care, jobs, housing, civic participation, and education, especially for women and children.

I feel that more history books need to adapt and include Dolores Huerta’s name when recounting the migrant farm workers movement of the 1960s. I feel it is important to give students precise information about her inspirational story.

1. According to the text, Dolores Huerta

- (A) never had any children
- (B) never met Cesar Chavez
- (C) was not mentioned in the author’s history textbook
- (D) was mentioned in the author’s history textbook

2. Which of the following statements is NOT supported by facts from the reading passage?

- (A) Dolores coordinated the east coast portion of the grape boycott.
- (B) Dolores lives on a farm.
- (C) Dolores tried to get laws passed to protect the rights of farm workers.
- (D) Dolores suffered injuries while at a political protest.

3. After reading this passage I can infer that the author:

- (A) thinks boycotts are bad
- (B) respects the work accomplished by Huerta
- (C) disrespects the work accomplished by Huerta
- (D) prefers women to men

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4. What does the author encourage?

- (A) more people to learn about Dolores Huerta
- (B) fewer people to learn about Dolores Huerta
- (C) more people to go to protests
- (D) fewer people to go to protests

5. After the author's teacher mentions Dolores Huerta in class, the author

- (A) leads a grape boycott
- (B) looks up her name in a history book
- (C) writes a history of the grape boycott
- (D) writes Dolores Huerta a letter

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13H Thinking Creatively

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Answer each question below. Don't be afraid to think creatively.

1. If you were forced to abruptly **abandon** your home and you only had time to safely pack one item to take with you, what would the one item be and why?

2. Write a one-sentence description of an imaginary TV show named “*Now That’s Precise!*”

3. What do you feel is the most important **civic** duty of a person and why?

4. **Fuse** two animals together that you already know well to make your own unique animal. What is the name of your newly invented animal, and which animals does it combine?

5. What is the difference between the words “**recount**” and “recall”? Why do you think they both start with “re”?

Word Breakdown

The word *vibrant* is closely related to *vibrate*, which means “to move quickly back and forth” (like the strings on a guitar). Vibrant came from the idea that something vibrating hums with energy and noise. In his song “Vibrant Thing,” the rapper Q-Tip created a new word “vibrant” by combining “vibrant” with “vivacious” (meaning “full of life”). The word hasn’t exactly caught on, but it sure is creative!

A lot of people use the word *literal* very loosely. Have you ever heard someone say, “I literally died” or “That was literally the grossest thing I’ve ever seen.” Obviously, no one could ever really say, “I literally died,” but that doesn’t stop people from saying it. The word derives from the same root as “literature” or “literary.” The root “litera” means “letter” in Latin. *Literal* originally meant taking a word or letter to mean exactly what it says: no more, no less.