

**CHAPTER**  
**23**

## Section 1

**GUIDED READING** *Latinos and Native Americans  
Seek Equality*

As you read, fill in the chart with answers to the questions.

<b>What did Latinos campaign for?</b>	<b>How did some Latino individuals and groups go about getting what they wanted?</b>	<b>What federal laws (if any) were passed to address these needs?</b>
1. Improved working conditions and better treatment for farm workers		
2. Educational programs for Spanish-speaking students		
3. More political power		

<b>What did Native Americans campaign for?</b>	<b>How did some Native American individuals and groups go about getting what they wanted?</b>	<b>What federal laws (if any) were passed to address these needs?</b>
4. Healthier, more secure lives of their own choosing		
5. Restoration of Indian lands, burial grounds, fishing and timber rights		

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**SECTION 1****RETEACHING ACTIVITY** *Latinos and Native Americans  
Seek Equality***Multiple Choice**

Choose the best answer for each item. Write the letter of your answer in the blank.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. During the 1960s, the Latino population in the United States grew to about  
a. 3 million.  
b. 6 million.  
c. 9 million.  
d. 12 million.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The largest Latino group in the United States is represented by people with ties to  
a. Mexico.  
b. Cuba.  
c. Puerto Rico.  
d. Central America.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. During the late 1960s, César Chávez led a boycott against  
a. auto makers.  
b. grape growers.  
c. restaurant owners.  
d. clothing manufacturers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Russell Means was a leader of  
a. La Raza Unida.  
b. the Brown Berets.  
c. the American Indian Movement.  
d. the National Council on Indian Opportunity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. César Chávez's strategy for improving work conditions for farm laborers was to  
a. organize a sit-down strike.  
b. improve public education.  
c. elect more supportive politicians.  
d. form a union.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Native Americans won various victories in court granting them  
a. voting rights.  
b. land rights.  
c. better housing.  
d. equal employment opportunities.

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## SECTION 1

PRIMARY SOURCE *The Farm Worker Movement*

*César Chávez, himself a former migrant worker, and Dolores Huerta established the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) in 1962 to bargain for higher wages and other benefits. This is Chavez's account of the NFWA's first strike.*

We had our first strike in the spring of 1965. While we didn't win, it gave us a good indication of what to expect in other strikes, how labor contractors and police would be used against us.

Epifanio Camacho, a farm worker from McFarland, just south of Delano, came and told us of all the abuses in the rose industry there. We worked with those workers for more than a month until we had them tightly organized.

Grafting roses is highly skilled work. Grafters crawl on their knees for miles slitting mature rose bushes and inserting buds at top speed. The slightest miscalculation means the bud will not take and the bush will be useless.

Although they were promised \$9 a thousand plants, injertadors—grafters of roses—were actually getting between \$6.50 and \$7 a thousand.

After a series of meetings to prepare the strike, we chose the biggest company, Mount Arbor, which employed about eighty-five workers, not counting the irrigators and supervisors. We voted not to have a picket line, because everyone pledged not to break the strike.

We had a pledge ceremony on Sunday, the day before the strike started. Dolores held the crucifix, and the guys put their hands on it, pledging not to break the strike.

Early Monday morning we sent out ten cars to check the people's homes. We found lights in five or six places and knocked on the doors. The men were getting up.

"Where are you going?" we asked them.

Most of them were embarrassed. "Oh, I was just getting up, you know."

"You're not going to work are you?"

"Of course not!"

The company foreman was very angry when none of the grafters showed up for work. He refused to talk to us. Thinking that maybe a woman would have a better chance, we had Dolores knock on the office door about 10:30.

"Get out, you Communist! Get out," the manager shouted.

I guess they were expecting us, because as Dolores was arguing with him, the cops came and told her to leave.

A day or so later, we had a hunch two or three workers living in one house were going to break the strike. So Dolores drove up to their driveway in a green truck, killed the motor, put it in gear, set the brake, locked the windows and doors, took the keys, and hid them so they couldn't drive out. Even though she was alone, she refused to move.

Then a group of Mexican workers from Tangansiguero helped break the strike. Everybody was angry, and we sent a letter to the mayor of Tangansiguero denouncing them. In those little Mexican towns, they have an old building where people go to read the news. On one side they list things like stray animals, and on the other they have a list of criminals.

The mayor was so upset, he put our letter on the side with the criminals, in effect classifying them as such. We got immediate reactions from the workers. People came and said, "Don't be like that. You're giving me a bad name in my community when I go back."

And I said, "Look, you broke the strike. You deserve that and more."

*from Jacques E. Levy, César Chávez: Autobiography of La Causa (New York: Norton, 1975), 179–180.*

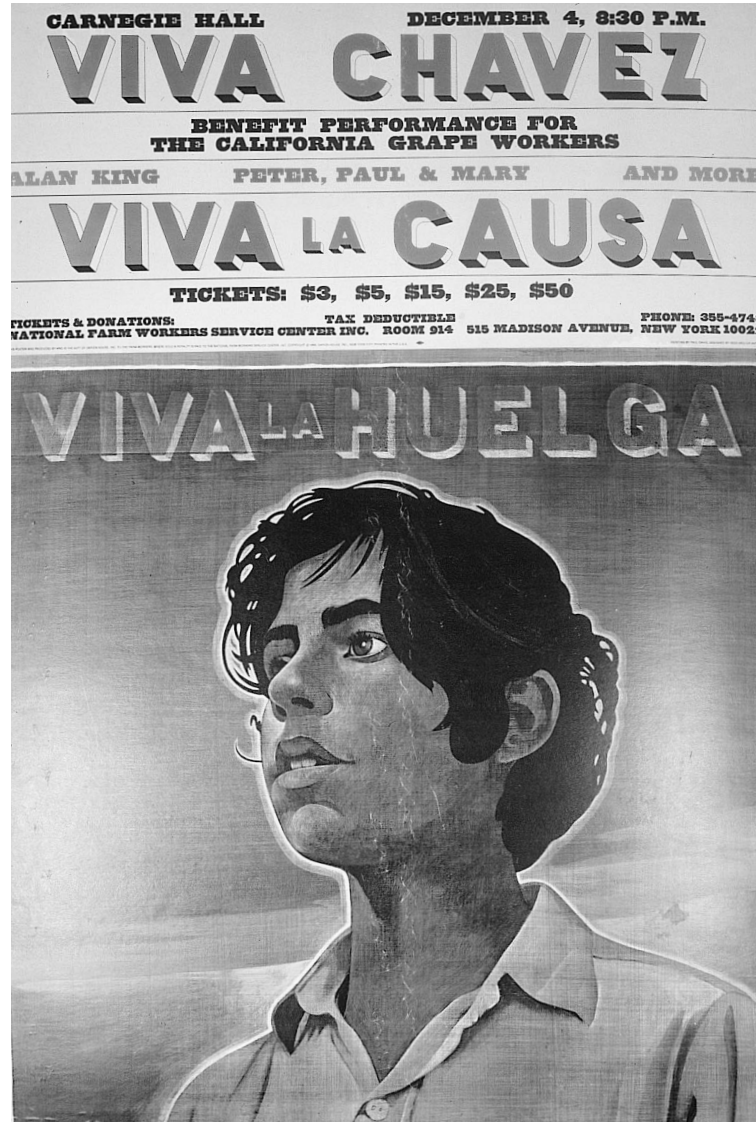
### Discussion Questions

1. Why did the NFWA decide to organize a strike against Mount Arbor?
2. How did Chávez and Huerta try to keep the strike from being broken?
3. Do you think that strikes and boycotts effectively promoted *La Causa*? Why or why not? Cite evidence from your textbook to support your opinion.

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PRIMARY SOURCE *United Farm Workers Poster*

This poster advertises a 1968 benefit performance for the United Farm Workers Union. Examine the poster and then answer the questions below.



Museum of American Political Life, University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT.  
Photo by Sally Andersen-Bruce.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Where was the benefit performance to be held?
2. Who were some of the celebrities who were scheduled to perform?
3. What message do you think this poster was meant to convey? Think about the purpose of the benefit performance as well as what's on the poster.

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LITERATURE SELECTION *from Los Vendidos*  
by Luis Valdez

## Section 1

*El Teatro Campesino (The Fieldworkers' Theater), founded by Luis Valdez to support a farm workers' strike against grape growers, first performed Los Vendidos in 1967 in an East Los Angeles park. This one-act play, or acto, satirizes Latino stereotypes in order to inspire audiences to social action. What stereotypes does Valdez portray in this excerpt?*

**S**cene: Honest Sancho's Used Mexican Lot and Mexican Curio Shop. Three models are on display in Honest Sancho's shop. To the right, there is a Revolucionario, complete with sombrero, carrilleras, and carabina 30–30. At center, on the floor, there is the Farmworker, under a broad straw sombrero. At stage left is the Pachuco, filero in hand. Honest Sancho is moving among his models, dusting them off and preparing for another day of business.

SANCHO: Bueno, bueno, mis monos, vamos a ver a quién vendemos ahora, ¿no? (To audience.)

¡Quihubo! I'm Honest Sancho and this is my shop. Antes fui contratista, pero ahora logré tener mi negocito. All I need now is a customer. (A bell rings offstage.) Ay, a customer!

SECRETARY: (Entering.) Good morning, I'm Miss Jimenez from . . .

SANCHO: Ah, una chicana! Welcome, welcome, Señorita Jimenez.

SECRETARY: (Anglo pronunciation.) JIM-enez.

SANCHO: ¿Qué?

SECRETARY: My name is Miss JIM-enez. Don't you speak English? What's wrong with you?

SANCHO: Oh, nothing. Señorita JIM-enez. I'm here to help you.

SECRETARY: That's better. As I was starting to say, I'm a secretary from Governor Reagan's office, and we're looking for a Mexican type for the administration.

SANCHO: Well, you come to the right place, lady. This is Honest Sancho's Used Mexican Lot, and we got all types here. Any particular type you want?

SECRETARY: Yes, we were looking for somebody suave . . .

SANCHO: Suave.

SECRETARY: Debonaire.

SANCHO: De buen aire.

SECRETARY: Dark.

SANCHO: Prieto.

SECRETARY: But of course, not too dark.

SANCHO: No muy prieto.

SECRETARY: Perhaps, beige.

SANCHO: Beige, just the tone. Asi como cafecito con leche, ¿no?

SECRETARY: One more thing. He must be hard-working.

SANCHO: That could only be one model. Step right over here to the center of the shop, lady. (They cross to the Farmworker.) This is our standard farmworker model. As you can see, in the words of our beloved Senator George Murphy, he is "built close to the ground." Also, take special notice of his 4-ply Goodyear huaraches, made from the rain tire. This wide-brimmed sombrero is an extra added feature; keeps off the sun, rain and dust.

SECRETARY: Yes, it does look durable.

SANCHO: And our farmworker model is friendly. Muy amable. Watch. (Snaps his fingers.)

FARMWORKER: (Lifts up head.) Buenos días, señorita. (His head drops.)

SECRETARY: My, he is friendly.

SANCHO: Didn't I tell you? Loves his patrones! But his most attractive feature is that he's hard-working. Let me show you. (Snaps fingers. Farmworker stands.)

FARMWORKER: ¡El jale! (He begins to work.)

SANCHO: As you can see he is cutting grapes.

SECRETARY: Oh, I wouldn't know.

SANCHO: He also picks cotton. (Snaps. Farmworker begins to pick cotton.)

SECRETARY: Versatile, isn't he?

SANCHO: He also picks melons. (Snaps. Farmworker picks melons.) That's his slow speed for late in the season. Here's his fast speed. (Snap. Farmworker picks faster.)

SECRETARY: Chihuahua . . . I mean, goodness, he sure is a hardworker. . . . But is he economical?

SANCHO: Economical? Señorita, you are looking at the Volkswagen of Mexicans. Pennies a day is all it takes. One plate of beans and tortillas will keep him going all day. That, and chile. Plenty of chile jalapeños, chile verde, chile colorado . . .

SECRETARY: What about storage?

SANCHO: No problem. You know these new farm labor camps our Honorable Governor Reagan has built out by Parlier or Raisin City? They were designed with our model in mind. Five, six, seven, even ten in one of those shacks will give you no trouble at all. You can also put him in old barns, old cars, riverbanks. You can even leave him out in the field over night with no worry!

SECRETARY: Remarkable.

SANCHO: And here's an added feature: every year at the end of the season, this model goes back to Mexico and doesn't return, automatically, until next spring.

SECRETARY: How about that. But tell me, does he speak English?

SANCHO: Another outstanding feature is that last year this model was programmed to go out on STRIKE! (*Snap.*)

FARMWORKER: ¡Huelga! ¡Huelga! Hermanos, sál-ganse de esos files. (*Snap. He stops.*)

SECRETARY: No! Oh no, we can't strike in the State Capitol.

SANCHO: Well, he also scabs. (*Snap.*)

FARMWORKER: Me vendo barato, ¿y qué? (*Snap.*)

SECRETARY: That's much better, but you didn't answer my question. Does he speak English?

SANCHO: Bueno . . . no, pero he has other . . .

SECRETARY: No.

SANCHO: Other features.

SECRETARY: No! He just won't do!

SANCHO: Okay, okay, pues. We have other models.

SECRETARY: I hope so. What we need is something a little more sophisticated. . . .

[He shows her the Pachuco and Revolucionario models, both of which she rejects.]

SECRETARY: You still don't understand what we need. It's true we need Mexican models, such as these, but it's more important that he be American.

SANCHO: American?

SECRETARY: That's right, and judging from what you've shown me, I don't think you have what we want. Well, my lunch hour's almost over, I better . . .

SANCHO: Wait a minute! Mexican but American?

SECRETARY: That's correct.

SANCHO: Mexican but . . . (*A sudden flash.*)

American! Yeah, I think we've got exactly what

you want. He just came in today! Give me a minute. (*He exits. Talks from backstage.*) Here he is in the shop. Let me just get some papers off. There. Introducing our new 1970 Mexican-American! Ta-ra-ra-raaaa! (*Sancho brings out the Mexican-American model, a clean-shaven middle class type in a business suit, with glasses.*)

SECRETARY: (*Impressed.*) Where have you been hiding this one?

SANCHO: He just came in this morning. Ain't he a beauty? Feast your eyes on him! Sturdy U.S. Steel Frame, streamlined, modern. As a matter of fact, he is built exactly like our Anglo models, except that he comes in a variety of darker shades: naugahide, leather or leatherette.

SECRETARY: Naugahide.

SANCHO: Well, we'll just write that down. Yes, señorita, this model represents the apex of American engineering! He is bilingual, college educated, ambitious! He is intelligent, well-mannered, clean. . . . (*Snap. Mexican-American turns toward Sancho.*) Eric? (*To Secretary.*) We call him Eric García. (*To Eric.*) I want you to meet Miss JIM-enez, Eric.

MEXICAN-AMERICAN: Miss JIM-enez, I am delighted to make your acquaintance. (*He kisses her hand.*)

SECRETARY: Oh, my, how charming!

SANCHO: Did you feel the suction? He has seven especially engineered suction cups right behind his lips. He's a charmer all right!

SECRETARY: How about boards, does he function on boards?

SANCHO: You name them, he is on them. Parole boards, draft boards, school boards, taco quality control boards, surf boards, two by fours.

SECRETARY: Does he function in politics?

SANCHO: Señorita, you are looking at a political machine. Have you ever heard of the OEO, EOC, COD, WAR ON POVERTY? That's our model! Not only that, he makes political speeches!

SECRETARY: May I hear one?

SANCHO: With pleasure. (*Snap.*) Eric, give us a speech.

MEXICAN-AMERICAN: Mr. Congressman, Mr. Chairman, members of the board, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen. (*Sancho and Secretary applaud.*) Please, please. I come before you as a Mexican-American to tell you about the problems of the Mexican. The

problems of the Mexican stem from one thing and one thing only: he's stupid. He's uneducated. He needs to stay in school. He needs to be ambitious, forward-looking, harder-working. He needs to think American, American, American, American, American! God bless America! God bless America! God bless America! (*He goes out of control. Sancho snaps frantically and the Mexican-American finally slumps forward, bending at the waist.*)

SECRETARY: Oh my, he's patriotic too!

SANCHO: Sí, señorita, he loves his country. Let me just make a little adjustment here. (*Stands Mexican-American up.*)

SECRETARY: What about upkeep? Is he economical?

SANCHO: Well, no, I won't lie to you. The Mexican-American costs a little bit more, but you get what you pay for. He's worth every extra cent. You can keep him running on dry Martinis, Langendorf bread . . .

SECRETARY: Apple pie?

SANCHO: Only Mom's. Of course, he's also programmed to eat Mexican food at ceremonial functions, but I must warn you, an overdose of beans will plug up his exhaust.

SECRETARY: Fine! There's just one more question. How much do you want for him?

SANCHO: Well, I tell you what I'm gonna do. Today and today only, because you've been so sweet, I'm gonna let you steal this model from me! I'm gonna let you drive him off the lot for the simple price of, let's see, taxes and license included, \$15,000.

SECRETARY: Fifteen thousand dollars? For a Mexican!!!!

SANCHO: Mexican? What are you talking about? This is a Mexican-American! We had to melt down two pachucos, a farmworker and three gabachos to make this model! You want quality, but you gotta pay for it! This is no cheap run-about. He's got class!

SECRETARY: Okay, I'll take him.

SANCHO: You will?

SECRETARY: Here's your money.

SANCHO: You mind if I count it?

SECRETARY: Go right ahead.

SANCHO: Well, you'll get your pink slip in the mail.

Oh, do you want me to wrap him up for you?

We have a box in the back.

SECRETARY: No, thank you. The Governor is having a luncheon this afternoon, and we need a brown face in the crowd. How do I drive him?

SANCHO: Just snap your fingers. He'll do anything you want. (*Secretary snaps. Mexican-American steps forward.*)

MEXICAN-AMERICAN: ¡Raza querida, vamos levantando armas para liberarnos de estos desgraciados gabachos que nos explotan! Vamos . . .

SECRETARY: What did he say?

SANCHO: Something about taking up arms . . . [against] white people, etc.

SECRETARY: But he's not supposed to say that!

SANCHO: Look, lady, don't blame me for bugs from the factory. He's your Mexican-American, you bought him, now drive him off the lot!

## Activity Options

1. With your classmates, discuss what stereotypes Valdez satirizes in this excerpt and why it is important to recognize—and reject—such stereotypes.
2. This *acto* reflects political and social issues that concerned Latinos in the 1960s. Write a satirical sketch in the style of *Los Vendidos* about an aspect of today's society that you would like to change.
3. The first *actos* were often improvised by striking farm workers and performed with a few simple props in parks and meeting halls. Create a playbill—a poster that announces a theatrical production—for a performance of *Los Vendidos* in keeping with the social purpose and spirit of *actos*.

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AMERICAN LIVES

**César Chávez**  
*Organizing for Action*

Section 1

*"I am convinced that the truest act of courage, the strongest act of manliness, is to sacrifice ourselves for others in a totally nonviolent struggle for justice."*  
—César Chávez, on ending a hunger strike, 1968

César Chávez (1927–1993) grew up seeing migrant farm workers suffer from low pay and poor conditions. Consequently he dedicated his adult life to improving the lives of oppressed farm workers. By working tirelessly and using nonviolence, he built the first successful union of farm workers. In his obituary in the *New York Times*, Chávez was depicted as humble, with an air that was “almost religious”; his \$5 weekly salary was described as “a virtual vow of poverty.”

In the 1920s Chávez’s parents toiled on their small farm near Yuma, Arizona. (His grandparents had migrated from Mexico in 1880.) Then Chávez’s father lost the farm in the Depression, and the family moved to California to pick crops. There young Chávez watched his father join every agricultural union that came along, though none survived long. Through him, Chávez came to understand what was required to organize farm workers successfully: a long-term effort and close personal contact.

In the 1950s, Chávez met two people who changed his life. One was a Catholic priest who increased his knowledge of labor history and his devotion to the principles of nonviolence. The other was a social activist from a group called the Community Service Organization (CSO). Chávez learned from him how to organize.

Although very shy, Chávez became an excellent CSO recruiter. He started twenty-two chapters in California and became the CSO’s general director. However, he felt that the CSO was not committed enough to the farm workers. He left the CSO in 1962 and used his small savings to launch a new union of farm workers.

Each night after a long day’s work in the fields, Chávez met with farm workers in their homes. He was so poor that he often had to beg for food for his family from the workers he tried to recruit. After two years, he had about a thousand members in his National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). In 1965, the union won wage increases from two small growers. That year, the Department of Labor

ordered that growers had to pay \$1.40 an hour to workers brought in from Mexico. This was more than American farm workers—whether Filipino, Mexican, or white—earned. A group of Filipino workers led by Larry Itliong struck to demand an equal wage. Chávez did not want to break the strike, but he did not believe that his union was strong enough to strike yet. Still, he put the issue to a vote. NFWA members chose to join the strike.

Soon Chávez and Itliong agreed to merge their organizations to have a stronger force. Finally, the union won contracts with the companies that grew grapes for wine. It was a remarkable success—but only a partial one. Table grape growers still refused to recognize the union.

Chávez staged a national grape boycott. The strike dragged on for many months. Over that time, Chávez tried to ensure that his workers upheld the principles of nonviolent protest that he valued. When he felt that union members were becoming too angry, he staged a hunger strike. For 25 days he refused to eat as he rededicated himself—and the union—to nonviolence. As the strike continued, support for the boycott grew. Finally, the growers agreed to recognize the union. It took almost five years, but NFWA won better wages and working conditions for its members.

Chávez’s work was not completed, however. In later years, he fought growers’ efforts to install a rival union that would accept less expensive contracts. He also tried to organize lettuce pickers. When he died in 1993, he was on the road in Arizona supporting another union effort.

## Questions

1. Why did Chávez once say that acting in a nonviolent way is the “truest act of courage”?
2. What obstacles blocked migrant workers’ efforts to organize?
3. What sacrifices did Chávez make for the union cause?