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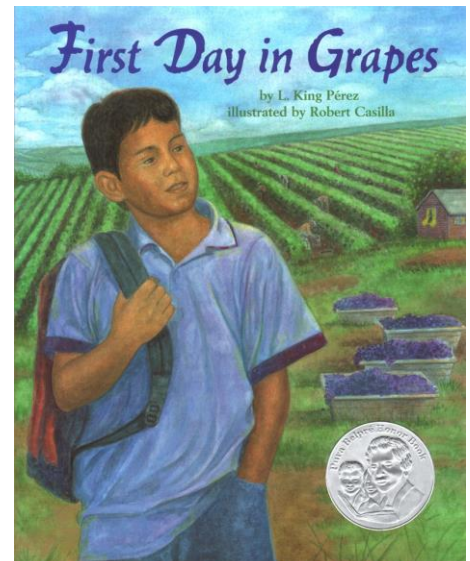
First Day in Grapes

By: L. King Pérez

All year long Chico and his family move up and down the state of California picking fruits and vegetables. Often other children pick on him - maybe because he is always new or maybe because he speaks Spanish sometimes.

Chico's first day in third grade turns out to be different. His teacher likes him right away, and she and his classmates are quick to recognize his excellent math skills. When the fourth-grade bullies confront Chico in the lunchroom, he responds wisely with strengths of his own.

Readers of all backgrounds will relate to Chico's bravery and the creative way he finds to resolve conflict. This story of personal triumph is a testament to the inner strength in all of us. ¹



Did You Know? (Ag Facts) ²

- The majority (73%) of all farm workers in the US were not born in the United States. The overwhelming majority of farm workers in the United States were born in Mexico.
- Farmers rely on farm workers to complete many tasks on the farm and compensate them with money for their time, housing for their families, and daily necessities to keep them working on the farm.
- There are many laws in place to keep farm workers safe and making money for their families such as the Fair Labor Standards Act or Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Discussion Questions

- Why did Chico's family move around so often? Have you ever moved?
- What does the title of the story mean?
- What did you learn from this story?

Grade Level(s): 2-6

Purpose: Students will explore the importance of migrant labor in agriculture as well as the contributions of Cesar Chavez to farm workers' rights. Students will also identify how fruits and vegetables have been harvested historically and how they are harvested currently.

Vocabulary:

- **migrant** - a person who moves from place to place
- **family farms:** farm owned and/or operated by a family of individuals related by blood, marriage, or adoption (The majority of farms (97%) in the USA are owned and operated by families.)

Background Agricultural Connections: ³

We live in a highly mechanized and sophisticated world. While agriculture has seen numerous advances in technology to decrease labor in the farm-to-fork process of food in the last 100 years, there is still a large number of processes that are performed manually by skilled laborers.

Fruit and vegetable crops in the United States are among the most labor-intensive. Fruit and vegetable producers are highly dependent on large crews of skilled laborers, especially during harvest when precise timing is critical. An early or delayed harvest can significantly decrease the quality of the food product. Many challenges exist for farm producers to secure the labor necessary to successfully grow and harvest the food that we eat. A few challenges include:

- Many farm jobs are short-term or seasonal. For example, many crops are harvested only once per year. In this case, farmers need a large number of laborers to work for a short period of time until the harvest is complete. The timing for harvest is also impacted by changing weather and can be sped up or delayed with little notice.
- Many jobs include work that is physically demanding and requires lifting heavy loads and performing repetitive tasks in the hot sun, rain, humidity, or other uncomfortable environments.
- Relatively low wages, especially in comparison to the hard work performed, are prevalent in agriculture. Farms are businesses. In order to be economically sustainable, they must keep their production costs below their sale price or the farm will fail.
- Because many agricultural workers are natives of countries outside of the United States, immigration reform impacts the availability of workers in agriculture. Although the working conditions are difficult and the pay is low, farm work in the United States can be an improvement to the situation of some immigrant workers. While immigration is a complicated matter, consider the dependence we currently have on migrant labor. Watch [Will the Last Farmer in America Please Turn Out the Light?](#) where Nicole Jolly, host of True Food TV, shares her perspective of hard working farm laborers after visiting dozens of farms across the U.S. filming episodes of [How Does it Grow?](#)

Grape Expectations ²

Materials:

- [Grape Expectations: Delicious California-Grown Table Grapes](#)
- Poster Board
- [California Agricultural Fact and Activity Sheets](#)

Procedures:

1. Ask the students to name their favorite fruits and vegetables.
2. Ask students what they know about each of the crops. Do they know where they are grown? Where and when are they harvested? How are they harvested? Do they know any of the nutritional value of these crops? Are these crops economically important to the growers and the states that produce them? Do you know any farming families in your community? What do you see growing on farms in your community? Do you know of someone in your family that works on a farm? What kind of work have you seen happening on a farm?
3. Show the video [Grape Expectations: Delicious California-Grown Table Grapes](#).
4. Ask the students the following questions:
 - a. What kind of grapes do you like to eat?
 - b. What new things did you learn from the video about growing grapes?
 - c. What part of the United States are grapes mostly grown?
 - d. What foods do we eat or drink that contain grapes?
 - e. How are grapes harvested?
5. Tell the students that they are going to become experts on a specific (or their favorite) crop. Teachers could also assign crops to students based on what is currently in season for South Carolina: <https://certifiedsc.com/where-to-buy-local/whats-in-season/>. Randomly select or allow groups (pairs or groups of three depending on the size of the class) to choose one of the crops.
6. Using either poster board or a technology tool such as [Glogster](#), ask students to use the [California Agricultural Fact and Activity Sheets](#) or other online sites to develop a visual presentation they can share with others (students, parents, or community members). The poster (paper or online) should include basic information about how the plant grows, when it is planted, how it is harvested, and how people prepare or consume the crop to meet nutritional needs. Students should also add some cool facts that are really interesting about the crop. In addition to the visual product created, ask the students to prepare to present to others what they have learned.

Sí, Se Puede ⁴

Materials:

- [Graphic Organizer](#)
- [PBS Video – Cesar Chavez](#)

Procedures:

1. Ask students: Have you ever been part of an organized group that successfully achieved a goal? What was the key to your group's success?
2. Introduce Cesar Chavez: A migrant farmer himself while still a boy, Cesar Chavez became a leader of agricultural workers in the western United States. Through his organizational efforts, poor farm laborers were able to substantially improve their wages and working conditions.
3. Distribute the **Graphic Organizer** for students to fill out while viewing the video.
4. After playing the video, lead a discussion with students.
 - a. How do you think Chavez's background helped him to emerge as the leader of the migrant farm workers' movement?
 - b. What were some of the strategies used by Chavez as he led the migrant farm workers' movement?

- c. At several points in his career, Chavez went on prolonged hunger strikes--one lasted 36 days. Why do you think he did this? Does this seem like an effective technique?
- d. Compare Chavez to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. How were they similar and different?

Extension Activities:

- Have students research the H2A program to highlight the ways farm workers are protected from exploitation today.
- Statistics from the National Agricultural Worker Survey (NAWS) show that 80 percent of all migrant workers in the United States are of Mexican descent. As an interesting social studies activity, have your students find out the countries from which the other 20 percent of migrant farmworkers originate and develop a demographic profile of the people involved in migrant farmwork. As a follow-up, compare the results with figures from previous years to see how the ethnic makeup of the migrant workforce has changed over time.
- To acquaint students with notable as well as little-known figures from migrant culture, have them research the lives of innovative political, scientific or artistic leaders who were once migrants themselves. Have students write biographies on the role models of their choice, and then ask them to dramatize what they learn about each person's influence on history to share with the class. Students may chose to study such famous figures as César Chávez, Dolores Huerta, Tomás Rivera, Paul Rodriguez, Luis Valdez and Sauveur Pierre, in addition to distinguished individuals from local migrant communities.

Suggested Companion Resources:

- [A Seedy Fruit Challenge](#)
- [Amelia's Road](#)
- [An Orange in January](#)
- [Ancient Agriculture](#)
- [Calling the Doves](#)
- [Carlos and the Cornfield](#)
- [Esperanza Rising](#)
- [Everybody Cooks Rice](#)
- [Gathering the Sun](#)
- [Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez](#)
- [Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice](#)
- [Migrant](#)
- [Ode to an Onion](#)
- [Radio Man](#)
- [Side By Side: The Story of Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez](#)
- [This Land Is Your Land](#)
- [Agricultural Fact and Activity Sheets](#)
- [What is a Fruit? What is a Vegetable? Bulletin Boards](#)
- [Will the Last Farmer in America Please Turn Out the Light? video](#)
- [Food and Farm Facts Booklet](#)
- [State Agricultural Facts](#)

Sources/Credits:

1. King Pérez, L. *First Day in Grapes*, Lee & Low, 2002.
2. NC Ag in the Classroom
3. National Center for Ag Literacy
4. PBS

Suggested SC Standards Met:

English/Language Arts:

- 2.RL.5.1 Ask and answer literal and inferential questions to demonstrate understanding of a text; use specific details to make inferences and draw conclusions in texts heard or read.
- 2.RL.5.2 Make predictions before and during reading; confirm or modify thinking.
- 2.RL.8.1 Read or listen closely to: a. compare and contrast characters' actions, feelings, and responses to major events or challenges; b. describe how cultural context influences characters, setting, and the development of the plot; and c. explain how cause and effect relationships affect the development of plot
- 2.RL.10.1 Use context to determine the meaning of words and phrases.
- 3.RL.5.1 Ask and answer literal and inferential questions to determine meaning; refer explicitly to the text to support inferences and conclusions.
- 3.RL.6.1 Determine the theme by recalling key details that support the theme.
- 3.RL.8.1 Use text evidence to: a. describe characters' traits, motivations, and feelings and explain how their actions contribute to the development of the plot; and b. explain the influence of cultural and historical context on characters, setting, and plot development.
- 3.RL.10.1 Use paragraph-level context to determine the meaning of words and phrases
- 4.RL.5.1 Ask and answer inferential questions to analyze meaning beyond the text; refer to details and examples within a text to support inferences and conclusions.
- 4.RL.6.1 Determine the development of a theme within a text; summarize using key details.
- 4.RL.8.1 Use text evidence to: b. explain the influence of cultural, historical, and social context on characters, setting, and plot development.
- 4.RL.10.1 Use definitions, examples, and restatements to determine the meaning of words or phrases
- 5.RL.5.1 Quote accurately to analyze the meaning of and beyond the text to support inferences and conclusions.
- 5.RL.6.1 Determine and analyze the development of a theme within a text; summarize using key details.
- 5.RL.8.1 Cite evidence within text to: a. analyze two or more characters, events, or settings in a text and explain the impact on the plot; and, b. explain the influence of cultural, historical, social and political context on characters, setting, and plot development.
- 5.RL.9.1 Cite examples of the author's use of figurative language, dialogue, imagery, idioms, adages, and proverbs to shape meaning and tone.
- 5.RL.9.2 Analyze and cite examples of how the author's choice of words and conventions combine to create mood, shape meaning, and emphasize aspects of a character or setting
- 5.RL.10.1 Use cause and effect relationships and comparisons to determine the meaning of words or phrases.
- 6.RL.5.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- 6.RL.6.1 Determine a theme of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- 6.RL.10.1 Use the overall meaning of a text or a word's position or function to determine the meaning of a word or phrase.

Social Studies:

- 2.H.1 Identify and compare significant historical events, moments, and symbols in U.S. history
- 2.CG.1 Identify cultural and ethnic groups in the U. S., explore their characteristics, and communicate how civic dispositions build relationships between groups in a diverse society
- 3.4.1.PR Investigate the cultural characteristics of places and regions around the world.
- 3.4.2.HS Investigate the economic and land use characteristics of places and regions around the world.
- 3.5.3.HS Investigate and explain the economic, social, political, and environmental motivations behind human migration and how places can change as a result
- 5.4.CE Analyze the causes and impacts of social movements in the U. S. and South Carolina
- 6.5.CO Compare the global movements that resulted in the advancement or limitation of human rights during the 20th and 21st centuries

Iconic American Video Notesheet

Cesar Chavez (1927-1993)

As you watch the video, fill in the graphic organizer below:

Strategies	Successes

Why do you think Cesar Chavez is considered an American Icon?