



LESSON PLAN

GRADES: 11 -12

Fruits of Labor Lesson Plan: Shining a Light on Invisible Labor



OVERVIEW

Emily Cohen Ibañez' *Fruits of Labor* is the portrait of Mexican-American teenager Ashley Solis, who lives in the agricultural town of Frescaville California. She spends her days either at school or working in the strawberry fields and her nights sorting frozen strawberries at a processing plant. All the while, Ashley does her best to maintain a social life, attend school, and enjoy her teenage years. As if the stress of her intense routine isn't enough, the

possibility of an ICE raid that could send her mother back to Mexico looms over her. This lesson provides insight into the world of child agricultural workers and brings awareness to the kinds of invisible labor that exist within both the paid agricultural sector and the unpaid labor performed at home.

In this lesson, students will do group research on one of three topics related to the film. They will work in small groups to make connections between the film and their research and create a mini presentation on their findings. After students present, they will then engage in thoughtful discussion and feedback from their fellow classmates. This lesson can be modified to be longer and more in depth by having the students do additional research or shortened by giving students direct information rather than having them collect and paraphrase information from the materials given.

A Note from Curriculum Creator, Celia Portman

It is my belief that every teacher should endeavor to know the students they teach, celebrate diversity, and invite honesty and vulnerability into the classroom. Part of this work means giving exposure to the diversity of each student body. As Plato once said, “the highest form of knowledge is empathy,” but in order to have empathy we must be allowed into another’s world. As a teacher in the lower half of Texas, I am no stranger to teaching students who work in the field of agriculture, but it has become clear to me as of late that not everyone is aware of how these students spend their days and nights. I believe this film and lesson call attention to important subject matter, allow students to take a deep dive into a world they may not be familiar with, and potentially, through their work, foster understanding and compassion.

Subject Areas

- English/ Language Arts
- Film Studies
- History
- Spanish
- Latin studies

Grade Levels: Grade Level 11-12

Objectives:

In this lesson, students will:

- identify what the 'invisible labor' is and discuss how it presents in the film and in everyday life,
- make a connection to the film using an outside text that they must analyze,
- research at the history of agricultural labor,
- make real world connections from their research to the film clips.

Materials

- Film Clips and Projector
- Watch Guide (Appendix A, included)
- TPCASTT Poetry Analysis Guide (Appendix B, included)
- Writing utensils and paper for extra notes and research
- Access to computers, tablets, or phones with internet for research
- A copy of the poem [*Who Burns for the Perfection of Paper*](#) by Martin Espada
- [The National Center for Farmworker Health Website](#)
 - > AG Worker Health Tab > History Tab
- [Invisible Labor: Hidden Work in the Contemporary World](#) (excerpts provided)

“Visible Labor has traditionally been defined as work that is readily identifiable and overt. It is located in a physical “workplace” and is self-recognized as work by management, employees, and consumers. It is typically paid, occurs in the public sphere, is directly profit generating, and has historically been full-time, long-term, and state regulated.

Starting in the 1980s, however, sociologists began to write about work that falls outside that domain. Arelene Daniels’s (1987) article “Invisible Work” solidified and propelled the field, becoming a reference point for the social science literature. Centering on the household and voluntary work performed within it, Daniels’s article noted the gendered character of this invisible work, observing that women are often

associated with kinds of labor that are widespread throughout society and yet not conceived as work and, moreover, not valued.

...Other scholars expanded the analysis to women's work performed in the home but more clearly associated with income-generating and productive capacities such as piece-rate electronics assembly, auto parts assembly, seamstress work, and snack food production."

Source: Crain, Marion G, Winifred Poster, and Miriam A. Cherry. (2016) *Invisible Labor: Hidden Work in the Contemporary World*, p. 4.

Time Needed

Two 50-60 minute class periods with optional homework in between

FILM CLIPS

Clip 1: Ashley the caregiver Clip starts at minute 4:08 and ends at 5:16

This clip begins at 4:08 as Ashley combs and braids her sister's hair and ends at 5:16 when she discusses why all the siblings' names begin with "Ash".

The viewer sees Ashley as a caregiver to her siblings. The audience gets the sense that she does much more for her family than a typical American teenager. Ashley discusses why her mother named all of her siblings with the words "Ash" and how it symbolizes a, "meadow of trees with roots that establish us {their family} here in the United States".

Clip 2: Dream Big, Work Hard

This clip begins at 6:16 with the school's motto of Dream Big, Work Hard and ends at 7:23 with a lecture on Worker Protection and why children are still allowed to work in the field with unlimited hours.

This clip begins with the principal of Ashley's school making an announcement about the Softball team's win and how they "have demonstrated that if you work hard, you can get to your dreams". This is sharply contrasted with Ashley's teacher giving a lecture on The New

Deal and how it excluded protections for agricultural workers and domestic workers. The teacher points out how this allowed landowners to exploit Black and Brown workers, and that this mistreatment continues as many young people in their community are allowed to work unlimited hours in the fields. Ashley looks on, nervously shaking her leg, but says nothing.

Clip 3: History to present

This Clip begins at 20:26 with Ashley's mother explaining why she came to America. It leads into news of ICE raids that raise concerns within the family, and ends at 27:50 with Ashley's worries about having to become a full caretaker for her family.

Ashley's mother discusses why she came to the United States, her illness, her temporary Visa, and the 22 years that followed. As news of ICE raids reach them, Ashley and her mother worry about her undocumented status and the possibility of her getting deported. Ashley bemoans the fact that she has to work day and night while her brother gets to enjoy his youth. She wishes her life were easier and that she only had to worry about the trivial things that other girls her age have to worry about.

ACTIVITIES

Day one

Students will read all questions on the watch guide before watching the clips. Encourage students to hold the questions in their mind while watching the clips and not to write anything down until each clip has finished playing. Once they have had a moment to look over the watch guide, show the clips. Give students a minute or so to take notes between each clip. If necessary, you can play each clip a second time.

After students have taken their notes, break them into groups of 4-5. There should be 6 groups depending on how many students are in the classroom. Students will have the remainder of the class period to research and analyze their given topic and connect each topic to the film clips they watched at the beginning of class. After they have gathered

information, they will create a brief 4 minute presentation on their findings. They must use their time wisely, as they will only be given a short amount of time the following class period to wrap everything up. To ensure full engagement and participation, make sure each group assigns a role to every member. Ex: 1- Recorder/transcriber, 2- Researchers 1- Connection maker, 1- Organizer

2 groups will receive a copy of the poem "Who Burns for the Perfection of Paper" by Martin Espada as well as a TPCASTT worksheet. These students will analyze the poem, look at figurative language, discuss its meaning, and make connections between the poem and the clips viewed in class. Students will then put together a quick 4 minute presentation on their findings.

2 groups will perform research on the NCFH website about the History of America's Agricultural Workers and the Migrant Health Movement. Students will create a brief 4 minute presentation on the history of America's agricultural workers and relate it to the film clips.

2 groups will perform research on invisible labor, using an excerpt from *Invisible Labor: Hidden Work in the Contemporary World* and their own independent research. Students will look at invisible labor as it applies to migrant work and work inside the home. They will then create a 4 minute presentation on their definitions of both types of invisible labor and correlate the term to the film clips.

Day 2: Presentations

Students will be given 15-25 minutes (depending on 50 or 60 minute period) at the beginning of the period to wrap up their presentations and research. Each group will get up and present for roughly 4 minutes on their topic.

Each group will be given 2 minutes afterwards to answer any questions from fellow students.

If time allows, depending on how long the question period for each group, the teacher can perform a wrap up with the students summing up their ideas and thoughts about what they learned using these questions:

- What are two or three new things you learned from watching the film?
 - Did the film encourage you to reconsider and subsequently change any ideas, views, or assumptions you had about immigrants and immigrant families prior to watching the film?
 - Which person in the film could you most relate to and why?
 - Did the film leave you with any questions or something you'd like to learn more about? If yes, what?
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RESOURCES

Helpful Sources

Invisible Labor: Hidden Work in the Contemporary World By Marion Crain, Winifred Poster, Miriam Cherry

"History of America's agricultural workers & the migrant health movement" from the [National Center for Farmworker Health](#)

Learn more about these organizations and ways you can take action:

[American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\) and the Immigrants' Rights Project](#): ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project is dedicated to expanding and enforcing the civil liberties and civil rights of immigrants and to combating public and private discrimination against them. Learn more about the current issues affecting unauthorized immigrants and how you can help take action.

[Coalition of Immokalee Workers:](#)

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is a worker-based human rights organization internationally recognized for its achievements in fighting human trafficking and gender-based violence at work. The CIW is also recognized for pioneering the design and development of the Worker-driven Social Responsibility

paradigm, a worker-led, market-enforced approach to the protection of human rights in corporate supply chains.

Built on a foundation of farmworker community organizing starting in 1993, and reinforced with the creation of a national consumer network since 2000, CIW's work has steadily grown over more than twenty years to encompass three broad and overlapping spheres

[Community Agroecology Network](#): Non-profit organization with a mission to sustain rural livelihoods and environments in the global south through the integration of agroecology-based research, education, and development strategies.

[Farmworker Justice](#)

A nonprofit organization that seeks to empower migrant and seasonal farmworkers to improve their living and working conditions, immigration status, health, occupational safety, and access to justice

[Fruits of Labor](#): Film's official website

[Grassroots Leadership](#)

Grassroots Leadership works for a more just society where prison profiteering, mass incarceration, deportation, and criminalization are things of the past by working with communities across the nation to abolish for-profit private prisons, jails, and detention centers.

[Migrant Justice](#)

Migrant Justice's mission is to build the voice, capacity, and power of the farmworker community and engage community partners to organize for economic justice and human rights. We gather the farmworker community to discuss and analyze shared problems and to envision collective solutions.

[National Immigration Law Center](#): One of the leading organizations in the U.S. exclusively dedicated to defending and advancing the rights of immigrants with low income.

[Student Action with Farmworkers](#)

Student Action with Farmworkers is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to bring students and farmworkers together to learn about each other's lives, share resources and skills, improve conditions for farmworkers, and build diverse coalitions

working for social change

[United Farmworkers of America](#)

Labor Union for Farmworkers in America.

Standards

[RH.11-12.2](#) : Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1](#) : Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.B](#): Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

[SL.11--12.3](#) : Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis and tone used.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4](#) : Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Celia Portman is a first-generation Mexican-American educator living and working in San Antonio, Texas where she teaches 8th grade English Language Arts.

FRUITS OF LABOR WATCH GUIDE (Appendix A)

Please look at the following questions before you begin watching the clips. Do not write anything down while the movie plays— watch and pay close attention. Once each film clip is over, you will be given 1-2 minutes to write down your thoughts. These notes will assist you in the second part of the assignment, so take note of as much as you can.

- 1.) Is it usual for your older sibling to comb your hair before school? If you are the oldest, is this a usual part of your morning routine to help groom your younger siblings?
- 2.) What is symbolic about “Ash” being the root of all the siblings’ names? What does Ashley say is the significance?
- 3.) How is the principal's speech about “work hard, dream big” contrasted with Ashley’s teacher’s lecture on the New Deal? What does she say about agricultural workers?
- 4.) What is Ashley’s demeanor during this lecture?
- 5.) How did Ashley’s mom come to stay in the U.S.? What does it represent for her?
- 6.) What could the possible deportation of her mother mean in terms of Ashley’s already overextended role in the family? How does this make Ashley feel?
- 7.) How does she feel about her duty to the family versus that of her brother?

TPCASTT Poem Analysis Method (Appendix B)

Title of poem means:	
Paraphrase the poem, sentence by sentence	
Connotation Identify and explain how diction, imagery, figures of speech, point of view, and sound devices contribute to meaning.	
Attitude What are the multiple attitudes of the speaker?	
Shift At first we think or feel one way – then there is a shift: identify the shifts and explain them	

Title revisited Any new insights on meaning or significance of title?	
Theme What does this poem say about its subject? About being human?	