



**Seventy Years: Salt of the Earth
McCarthyism: Then and Now
Time: Four Hours
Grade Level: 9-12**

[Slides](#)

Purpose (What will students learn from this lesson?):

Chicanx mine workers, who bravely faced racism and classism, are the central figures of this story. Their resilience and determination, along with the crucial role of the women who fought alongside them, are the major themes of this film. This lesson will delve into worker solidarity, resistance to discrimination and racism, women's equality, and union organizing. Commissioned by the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, the film soon became controversial. Filmed during McCarthyism, *Salt of the Earth* was the only film ever blacklisted. In this lesson, students will consider the consequences of McCarthyism, past and present, and good and evil.

Unit [Enduring Understandings](#) Alignment:

- Students will be able to identify and appreciate the profound historical significance of 'Salt of the Earth' to the labor movement and the liberation struggle. They will understand the weight and impact of this film and how it has shaped the course of history.
- By the end of this lesson, students will not only understand the historical context of the film 'Salt of the Earth', but also recognize that union organizing is about more than *just* fighting for decent wages and working conditions. It's about advocating for the common good and the rights of all workers.
- Students will acknowledge the trauma and hardship that mine workers experienced under McCarthyism. Most importantly, students will recognize the pivotal role of community cultural wealth in alleviating trauma, producing joy, and fostering hope.

Lesson Guiding Questions:

- What role did powerful interests play in suppressing the voices and organizing efforts of the workers, the filmmakers, and the actors?
- Can you provide examples of powerful interests suppressing voices and organizing efforts of those in the ethnic studies movement?
- How do resistance and community cultural wealth contribute to producing joy, radical healing, and creating hope?

Essential Skills:

- Critical Reading, Writing, and Speaking
- Individual and Group/Collaborative work
- Film Analysis

- Reimagining and recreating a more democratic and racially just world

Cultural Wealth (Yosso, p. 78):

- Aspirational
- Resistance
- Familial
- Social

Note: All elements of Community Cultural Wealth are addressed in the Cultural Production activity.

Ethnic Studies Principles Alignment:

- Celebrate and honor Native peoples of the land and communities of color by providing a space to share their stories of struggle and resistance, along with their cultural wealth
- Critique - empire, white supremacy, anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, racism, xenophobia, patriarchy, cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, anthropocentrism, and other forms of power and oppression;
- Connect - ourselves to past and contemporary resistance movements that struggle for social justice on global and local levels to ensure and truer democracy;
- Conceptualize - imagine and build new possibilities for post-imperial-life that promote collective narratives of transformation and resistance, critical hope, and radical he

Standards Alignment:

- **Standard Identifier: HSS-11.11.3**
Grade: 11
Course: United States History and Geography: Continuity and Change in the Twentieth Century, Grade 11
Overarching Standard:
HSS-11.11 Students analyze the major social problems and domestic policy issues in contemporary American society.
Standard:
Describe the changing roles of women in society as reflected in the entry of more women into the labor force and the changing family structure.
- **Standard Identifier: HSS-11.6.4**
Grade: 11
Course: United States History and Geography: Continuity and Change in the Twentieth Century, Grade 11
Overarching Standard:
HSS-11.6 Students analyze the different explanations for the Great Depression and how the New Deal fundamentally changed the role of the federal government.
Standard:
Analyze the effects of and the controversies arising from New Deal economic policies and the expanded role of the federal government in society and the economy since the 1930s (e.g., Works Progress Administration, Social Security, National Labor Relations Board, farm programs, regional development policies, and energy development projects such as the Tennessee Valley Authority, California Central Valley Project, and Bonneville Dam).
- **Standard Identifier: HSS-11.6.5**
Grade: 11
Course: United States History and Geography: Continuity and Change in the Twentieth Century, Grade 11
Overarching Standard:
HSS-11.6 Students analyze the different explanations for the Great Depression and how the New Deal fundamentally changed the role of the federal government.
Standard:
Trace the advances and retreats of organized labor, from the creation of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations to current issues of a postindustrial, multinational economy, including the United Farm Workers in California.
- **Standard Identifier: HSS-11.8.3**

Grade: 11

Course: United States History and Geography: Continuity and Change in the Twentieth Century, Grade 11

Overarching Standard:

HSS-11.8 Students analyze the economic boom and social transformation of post–World War II America.

Standard:

Examine Truman’s labor policy and congressional reaction to it.

● **Standard Identifier: HSS-PoAD.12.2.2**

Grade: 12

Course: Principles of American Democracy, Grade 12

Overarching Standard:

HSS-PoAD.12.2 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.

Standard:

Explain how economic rights are secured and their importance to the individual and to society (e.g., the right to acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property; right to choose one’s work; right to join or not join labor unions; copyright and patent).

Materials:

Handouts (embedded in template) Film clips (embedded in template) Access to computer Internet Access	Poster paper Markers Screen
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Modifications, Accommodations, and Resources for Multilingual Students :

- Additional background information and websites are embedded into the lesson template and slides.
- The teacher should use appropriate ELL activities, such as aloud, think-pair-shares, and anticipation guides, to scaffold complex terms. Some of those activities are embedded in this lesson.
- Translanguaging activities are a valuable tool in supporting ELL students. They include using bilingual dictionaries for complex concepts, prewriting assessments of vocabulary terms, and encouraging students to negotiate the target language using their home language with other bilingual students. Finally, an explicit set of language objectives should be developed to guide teaching.

Critical Vocabulary:

CRITICAL VOCABULARY	Definition and Rationale for choosing this word, phrase, or concept
Organizing for Common Good	When union organizers align their bargaining demands to include outcomes that benefit the entire community, including those outside the bargaining unit.
Women’s Equality	A central theme in the film is the women's challenge to the men to

	include familial issues in their labor disputes. The men are also forced to acknowledge the women's significant contributions to the strike and treat them with dignity and respect.
Taft Hartley	Legislation prohibited various types of strikes, such as wildcat strikes, certain kinds of boycotts, restricted picketing, and imposed restrictions on union political activities. It also mandated unions to certify that their elected officials were not members of the Communist Party to use the National Labor Relations Board.
Solidarity	Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.
Blacklisted	A term used during McCarthyism to identify a list of people, leaders, organizations, and unions ostracized by elected leaders, excluded or removed from prominent positions, or lost jobs or projects due to their alleged political beliefs or related activities.
The Hollywood Ten	Ten motion picture producers, directors, and screenwriters who appeared before the House of Un-American Activities Committee and refused to answer questions regarding their political affiliations. These men were cited for contempt and arrested. They were Alvah Bessie and Herbert Biberman. Lester Cole, Edward Dmytryk, Ring Lardner, Jr., John Howard Lawson, Albert Maltz, Samuel Ornitz, Adrian Scott, and Dalton Trumbo. Dmytryk broke ranks and eventually testified. Herbert Biberman was the director of "Salt of the Earth." Many other Hollywood notables were blacklisted, including Michael Wilson (screenwriter of Salt of the Earth) and Paul Jarrico (producer).
HUAC	(House of Un-American Activities Committee): HUAC was created to investigate alleged disloyalty and activities by activists and organizations suspected of ties to Communism—those called to testify before HUAC could be arrested, tried, and imprisoned.
McCarthyism & New McCarthyism	The definitions for these terms are embedded in the slide show.

	DESCRIPTION	TIME
STEP 1	Land and Labor Acknowledgement	1 minute
	<p>Ancestor Acknowledgement</p> <p>According to the Zinn Education Project, Emma Tenayuca's Contact with fired workers led her to join the Communist Party in 1937 and the Workers Alliance (WA) in 1936. The WA was an organization of the unemployed founded by Socialists and Communists, 90 percent of whom were pecan shellers and agricultural workers. The WA held demonstrations for jobs, not relief, and demanded that Mexican workers have the right to strike without fear of deportation and to a minimum wage and hour law. As a result of anti-Mexican, anti-Communist, and anti-union hysteria, she was forced to leave Texas to ensure her own safety and well-being. She returned to San Antonio years later to work as a teacher.</p> <p>Points about her listed on the PowerPoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An American labor leader, union organizer, civil rights activist, and educator. • “La Pasionaria,” born in San Antonio. Emma was known for leadership in the San Antonio Pecan Shellers Strike of 1938 when she was 21. • The Pecan Strike was one of the first significant victories of Mexican workers in the U.S., and she organized 20,000 workers. • Her activism focused on livable wages, brutality by the US border patrol, education, and women’s rights. 	2 minutes
Step 2	The Four C’s : Lesson Progression	1 minute
Step 3	<p>Cultural Energizer</p> <p>Gente: Do you Know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study the handout for about ten minutes and mentally note the labor activists or significant labor struggles that you recognize. You may only sign <u>one box</u>. • Take a copy of the “Gente, Do You Know” handout as you walk around the venue. • Recognition and a short explanation of the individual/event is crucial. When you find someone claiming to recognize the leader and/or event, ask that person to write their name on the box corresponding to the person’s answer. Once signed, go on to someone else until each box contains a signature. • A person can only sign once. • When the handout is complete, shout “Si Se Puede” or wait until time is called. 	20 - 30 minutes
Step 4	Debrief those answers on the handout that will NOT be explained later in the lesson. Students may check the box as they are discussed in class. The unchecked boxes remind the teacher and students to cover all the concepts on the “Gente, Do you Know” handout during the lesson.	

Step 6	<p>Explanation for <i>Pecan Shellers Strike</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the strike made famous by Emma Tenayuca (Ancestor Acknowledgment) Use the following resource as a guide to explain the slide https://guides.loc.gov/latinx-civil-rights/pecan-shellers-strike 	
	<p><i>Ludlow Massacre (Colorado)</i> La Agrupación Protectora Mexicana (Mexican Protective Association) was founded in 1911 to defend Mexicans' human rights.</p> <p>During the Ludlow Massacre, Mexican American mine workers were attacked and killed. The strike in Ludlow was a multi-racial group of workers who were massacred by the Colorado National Guard hired by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. The workers and their families were in tents. David Rockefeller was part owner. The workers resisted. One hundred and eighty-six workers were killed.</p>	
Step 7	<p><i>Cesar Chavez</i>- Chicano leader of the United Farmworkers and civil rights icon.</p> <p><i>Naji Ballah</i>- An Arab American leader in the United Farmworkers. He was killed along with Juan De La Cruz in Arvin, California, on August 15, 1973.</p>	

C2: Critical Concepts/Content

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Step 8	<p>Ask students to stand up. It is recommended that they face one another as they participate in this activity. This is a silent activity. Ask students to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to recall a time when somebody silenced you. When you were told that you could not share something of great importance? Where did you feel it? <p>On the count of three, ask students to place their hand where they felt it. Ask a few students to share their responses. The teacher may wish to hold a collective breath after this activity.</p>	5 minutes
Step 3	<p>The teacher frontloads vocabulary. The first set of terms is related to the film. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing for Common Good: When union organizers align their bargaining demands to include outcomes that benefit the entire community, including those outside the bargaining unit. Women's Equality: This is a central theme in the film, as the women challenge the men to include familial issues in their labor dispute, are forced to acknowledge the significant contributions the women make to the strike, and treat them with dignity and respect. 	2- 3 minutes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Taft Hartley: Legislation prohibited various types of strikes, such as wildcat strikes, certain kinds of boycotts, restricted picketing, and imposed restrictions on union political activities. It also mandated unions to certify that their elected officials were not members of the Communist Party to use the National Labor Relations Board. ● Solidarity (LESMCC glossary) Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group. 	
Step 4	<p>The teacher frontloads vocabulary. The first set of terms is related to the era. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Blacklisted: A term used during McCarthyism to identify a list of people, leaders, organizations, and unions ostracized by elected leaders, excluded or removed from prominent positions, or lost jobs or projects due to their alleged political beliefs or related activities. ● The Hollywood Ten: Ten motion-picture producers, directors, and screenwriters appeared before the House of Un-American Activities Committee and refused to answer questions regarding their political affiliations. These men were cited for contempt and arrested. They were Alvah Bessie and Herbert Biberman. Lester Cole, Edward Dmytryk, Ring Lardner, Jr., John Howard Lawson, Albert Maltz, Samuel Ornitz, Adrian Scott, and Dalton Trumbo. Dmytryk broke ranks and eventually testified. Herbert Biberman was the director of "Salt of the Earth". Many other Hollywood notables were blacklisted, including Michael Wilson (screenwriter of Salt of the Earth) and Paul Jarrico (producer). ● HUAC (House of Un-American Activities Committee): HUAC was created to investigate alleged disloyalty and activities by activists and organizations suspected of ties to Communism. Those called to testify before HUAC could be arrested, tried, and imprisoned. 	2- 3 minutes
Step 6	<p>The teacher may engage students in reading, discussing, and writing activities. The reading activity is individual, silent, and reflective. The directions below are on the slide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read Salt of the Earth: Grounds Students in Hope. ● Insert the following metacognitive markers in the article: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Place a question mark (?) on questions you may have about the text. ○ Place a circle around important points. ○ Underline key ideas, concepts, and/or words ○ Place an exclamation mark (!) for identifying any "aha" moments in the text. ○ Place and Asterisk (*) next to text where you would like to comment. <p>Teachers may have students share their responses in small groups. Teachers can clarify outstanding questions or further define misunderstood concepts</p>	20-30 minutes

	or terms. The teacher might highlight the key ideas and aha moments.	
Step 7	<p>The teacher should explain the critical content/concepts on the slide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Story of the 1951 Miners Strike in Silver City, New Mexico ● A true story raises questions on women’s inequality, worker discrimination, and union busting. ● Commissioned by United Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers. ● 4 blacklisted actors, plus Rosaura Revueeltas. ● The remaining actors were organizers and workers. Director and Screenwriter were also blacklisted. ● The only film in history to be blacklisted. 	2 minutes
Step 8	<p>The teacher should explain the critical content/concepts on the slide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● During the 1950s, actors, politicians, doctors, and others appeared before HUAC. ● Joseph McCarthy was the catalyst of the Congressional hearings. ● While most who were called before the committee agreed to testify, Bertolt Brecht and The Hollywood Ten refused to testify and were subsequently blacklisted. ● The blacklist was instituted on November 25, 1947, the day after the ten writers and directors refused to testify before Congress. They lost jobs and contracts and could no longer work in the industry. ● Some used fake names to secure work, others were imprisoned. <p>The teacher should solicit students' responses to the question on the final bullet, understanding that their knowledge of the question may be limited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is there anything like McCarthyism happening today? 	2 - 5 minutes
Step 9	<p>From the Hollywood Ten to the Present:</p> <p>Teachers should re-introduce students to the Hollywood Ten and, on the click, describe the New McCarthyism as it applies to LGBTQIA issues and curriculum, critical race theory, and liberatory ethnic studies.</p>	2 minutes
Step 10	<p>Berkeley</p> <p>The teacher may show the clip of the Superintendent of Berkeley Unified, who was recently called before Congress along with the Superintendent of Montgomery County and New York.</p> <p>The second picture is of an art teacher, Eric Notber (Berkeley High), who was suspended for teaching about Palestine. He taught for 23 years. Hundreds of parents and teachers organized to bring him back.</p>	4 minutes
Step 11	<p>Key Elements of Resistance (From the previous article above).</p> <p>The teacher should ask students to refer to the previous article and recall the key elements of resistance. Despite the horrible treatment, discrimination, and harassment during McCarthyism, the key elements of resistance enabled the workers to fight back. Fighting back is a form of community cultural wealth (Resistance), and community cultural wealth reaffirms the humanity of the marginalized, sustains their spirits, and helps</p>	

	<p>the oppressed negotiate injustice.</p> <p>In this next section, we will review clips of Salt of the Earth and identify forms of CCW and key resistance elements.</p>	
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C3: Community Collaboration and Critical Cultural Production

STEP	DESCRIPTION: COMMUNITY COLLABORATION	TIME
Step 1	<p>Review, explain, and scaffold the following handouts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read the handout Community Cultural Wealth and ask students to identify and provide examples of each form of CWW using examples from their racialized communities. ● The teacher should place students into five groups, assigning one of the following clips to each group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consuelo’s Announcement ○ Real Music ○ Taft Hartley ○ Queremos Formula ○ Evictions: ● The teacher should review the directions on the Worksheet and ask students to complete the assignment. ● Students should watch ONLY the video clip assigned to their group. ● Each group should select reporters for each question on the handout. ● The teacher might want students to chart responses for <i>Reflection and Teachable Moment</i> and <i>Question: Community Cultural Wealth</i>. 	20 - 30 minutes
Step 2	<p>Debrief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask students to return to the structure for the entire class. ● Ask groups to post their chart paper. ● Ask students to stand by their chart papers after showing the corresponding clip to the class. ● After each group has reported, ask students to compare responses. ● Ask students to compare resistance elements to CCW, describe how both are healing aspects and discuss why engaging in activities that celebrate resistance and struggle during difficult moments is essential. 	30-45 minutes
STEP	DESCRIPTION CULTURAL PRODUCTION	TIME
Step 1	<p>The Three-Step Interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask students to identify an activist from a list provided by the teacher. Students may wish to team up. ● The teacher and the class might want to identify questions to be asked during the interview.. ● Disseminate handout ● Explain the “three-step interview” ● Have students conduct the interview. 	15 minutes to explain. 30 minutes to identify questions 1 hour for the interview.
Step 5	Creative Synthesis of the Interview	1 -2 hours to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students construct one of the following from the interview. • Present in class or at a community event where interviewees are invited. 	<p>create</p> <p>Several hours to present.</p>
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C4: Conclusive Dialogue/Critical Circular Exchange

COMMUNITY CIRCLE	
STEP 1	<p>Ask students to reflect on the following question related to the workers and makers of the film: how did their lives and struggle reflect what is said in the quote by Dolores Huerta:</p> <p>We must use our lives to make the world a better place, not just acquire things. That is what we were put on earth for.</p>

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