Leaders Make Waves

How leadership turns collective action into change

S.8.9 "Discuss the impact of leaders of different social movements."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each leader's name and underline one action that leader took. Number one impact of each leader's action 1, 2, or 3 to match the leaders' order in the passage.

Three Ways to Lead Change

1. In 1963, thousands gathered in Washington, D.C., to demand jobs and civil rights. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a speech that helped make the movement's demands visible across the country. He also worked with other organizers on nonviolent protests, including marches in Birmingham, Alabama. Television coverage of police attacking peaceful protesters stirred public pressure for change. King did not pass laws himself, and the movement depended on many local leaders. Still, his ability to connect protests to a national moral argument helped build support for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed segregation in public places and job discrimination.

2. Across the country, farmworkers faced low pay and dangerous working conditions. Dolores Huerta cofounded the National Farm Workers Association with César Chávez in 1962. She organized workers and helped lead a nationwide boycott of California table grapes. Shoppers who stopped buying grapes gave farmworkers leverage beyond the fields, while Huerta's negotiations helped secure union contracts with growers in 1970. Her leadership turned workplace demands into a public issue that consumers could support. The contracts improved pay and working conditions for many workers, but they did not end every farmworker's struggle. Her impact shows how organizing and bargaining can convert public attention into specific gains.

3. In Kenya, Wangari Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement in 1977. She encouraged women to plant trees where deforestation had damaged soil and reduced access to firewood. Planting trees gave communities a practical way to protect land and offered some women a source of income. Maathai also spoke out against government decisions that threatened public green spaces, linking environmental care to citizens' power to challenge officials. Authorities sometimes opposed her efforts, but the movement spread and planted millions of trees. Her leadership showed that everyday local action could grow into a wider demand for environmental protection and democratic participation.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did King's leadership help build support for a change in law, even though he did not pass laws himself?

2. How did Huerta's boycott and negotiations affect farmworkers?

3. How did Maathai's leadership connect local tree planting to a wider demand for change?

4. Compare King's and Huerta's impacts. How did each leader turn public attention into a different kind of change?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a problem in your school or community that the passage does not discuss. In one paragraph, propose how a movement leader could bring people together, predict one immediate and one longer-term impact, and explain one obstacle.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each leader's name and underline one action that leader took. Number one impact of each leader's action 1, 2, or 3 to match the leaders' order in the passage. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did King's leadership help build support for a change in law, even though he did not pass laws himself?	**His speeches and work with other organizers on nonviolent protests made civil rights demands visible and built public pressure, helping gain support for the Civil Rights Act of 1964.**
2	How did Huerta's boycott and negotiations affect farmworkers?	**The boycott brought consumer support and gave farmworkers leverage. Huerta's negotiations helped secure contracts that improved pay and working conditions for many workers.**
3	How did Maathai's leadership connect local tree planting to a wider demand for change?	**She organized tree planting to protect land and provide income, then challenged decisions threatening green spaces. Her movement linked environmental protection with democratic participation.**
4	Compare King's and Huerta's impacts. How did each leader turn public attention into a different kind of change?	**King helped build support for a national civil rights law. Huerta used consumer attention and bargaining to help win union contracts for farmworkers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A leader could bring students and families together to survey how often late buses cause missed classes. The group could present its results at a school board meeting and ask for a revised bus schedule. This might quickly make transportation problems visible, and over time it could lead to more reliable routes and fewer missed classes. Limited funding could slow the change, so the group would need to show which routes are most urgent.

Accept answers that explain a supported connection between a leader's actions and the movement's impact. For Part 3, look for collective action, two distinct predicted impacts, and a plausible obstacle.