



## RESPECTFUL DEBATE: CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP & SOCIAL CHANGE



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*Do leaders have to be charismatic to lead social change?*

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**Rationale:** As students study transformational historical events across the twentieth century, they will encounter debates on leadership change. In this lesson students will weigh opposing perspectives on qualities of leadership required to lead social change. Students will engage in a respectful debate, listen to both sides of the argument to regulate their emotions, build collective understanding and historical empathy for different leadership styles. Such skills are necessary for students to practice to support their efficacy in participating in and leading respectful debates for healthy civil discourse and understanding the social change process.

**Objective(s):** Students will examine characteristics of charismatic leadership and evaluate if those qualities are essential for leading social change by listening to, summarizing and reflecting on Nelson Mandela's 1990 June speech to practice their perspective taking skills.

## **Standards:**

- **NJSLS-SS. 6.1.2.CivicsCM.2:** Use examples from a variety of sources to describe how certain characteristics can help individuals collaborate and solve problems (e.g., open-mindedness, compassion, civility, persistence).
- **NJSLSA.RI.11-12.7.** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- **NJSLSA.W7.** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

## **Focal SEL Skill:** Social Awareness

- Demonstrate an awareness of the differences among individuals, groups, and others' cultural backgrounds.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ.

## **Materials & Resources**

- Notebook
- Pencil/Pen
- Computer connected to a projector for the teacher
- Chromebooks for students with internet connection
- Access to this web source: [What is Charismatic Leadership? Leading Through Personal Conviction](#); [The Difference Between Charismatic and Transformational Leadership](#); [Transactional Leadership vs. Transformational Leadership](#)
- Copies of the background source:
- Play audio recording of Nelson Mandela's [June 22, 1990 Speech to the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid](#)

Note: Due to the sensitive material consider building in breaks from the heavy nature of the content to help them process the material.

**Timing:** Can range from one 45 minute lesson to two 45-minute lessons.

## **Lesson Procedure:**

### **Part I: Introduction & Preparation (30 minutes):**

## 1. Homework Activity

Assign students the following vocabulary terms to define in their notebook so the terms can be accessed during the learning. If time permits you may review the terms for clarification and deepen the learning.

- Social change
- Charismatic leader
- Transformational leader
- Transactional leader
- Apartheid
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Nuremberg Trials
- Systematic Racism
- Racial Discrimination
- Democratic majority rule
- Crimes against humanity
- African National Congress

## 2. Do Now (5 minutes)

As students get settled into class tell students that ***“today we are going to engage in a respectful debate about leadership and social change in South Africa. We will learn about the characteristics of charismatic leadership using the example of Nelson Mandela’s speech June 22, 1990 to the United Nation Special Committee Against Apartheid”***. To excite their thinking after they settle in, have them respond in writing to the statement below as a focusing/do now activity.

*“Leaders have to be charismatic to lead social change.”*

## 3. Introductory Activity (15 minutes)

To build the concept of charismatic leadership, students will explore the characteristics of charismatic leaders and compare them to non charismatic leadership qualities. Access the following web resources from the materials and resources section to help students distinguish between charismatic leadership, transformational, transactional leadership. Post the links digitally for students to explore and conduct a brief whole class review to assess student’s understanding of these leadership styles.

4. Arrange Student Groups (to be done in advance)

Divide the class into two groups, one group will assume the “pro” side and the other half will assume the “con” side. Tell the students that “***Today we will engage in an activity called Respectful Debate to practice the skill of perspective taking. This is a skill that you will need to be an effective and involved citizen in your school and community as well as a global citizen. It involves debating not just one side of the debate you agree with but also taking the side of a debate that you don’t agree with***”. Inform the class that “***taking the position of a side you disagree with is the essence of Respectful Debate and this part of the lesson will help you build mutual understanding on the topic***”.

5. Prepare for the Respectful Debate (35 minutes)

Distribute materials (optional in advance): Pass out the background information and have students read it to gain a general overview of the debate. Tell the students that “***You are going to hear Nelson Mandela’s Speech to the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid (25:33 minutes) and receive a written copy of the speech to follow along as you listen to the audio recording***”. You may have students underline/highlight the main elements of the speech that reflect and do not reflect charismatic leadership to excite students thinking about their perspectives, leadership and social change.

Next play the June 22, 1990 audio recording of Nelson Mandela’s speech, where he presented a call to action after the first convening of the UN’s Special Commission Against Apartheid in 1946. Impress upon the students to listen carefully with their full attention as he presents his idea in detail with historical background knowledge. Feel free to assign listening to the speech as homework to help students familiarize themselves with the debate. They can even take notes on the key points to support homework.

Generate ideas: Both sides have five minutes to write down as many examples as they can to support their position.

Assign roles: You may wish to have students assign roles in their respective groups, determining who will be the *note taker*, the *time keeper*, *debaters*, and *debate researchers* who can go back to the lesson resources to gather key points made in the debate. Note the number of debaters can range from one student presenting every point to multiple students presenting fewer points each. Explain to the students that your role is to guide the students through the debate steps

## **Part II: Engaging the Respectful Debate (15 minutes)**

1. **Reconvene** as a whole class.
2. **Pro side starts the debate:** “Pro” side gives their position and supports with one or two examples to support their position.
3. **Con side summarizes** (“reflects back”) what the “pro” side said and confirms with the pro side whether they summarized accurately. If not the “pro” side can offer clarifying statements. Then the “con” side gives their own position and supports with one or two examples.
4. **Pro side responds:** “Pro” side summarizes what the “con” side said and confirms with the “con” side whether they summarized accurately. If they did not, they can provide clarifying statements. The “pro” side then has the option of providing one additional example in support of their own position, if they wish.
5. **“Con” side responds:** “Con” side summarizes what the pro side said and confirms with the pro side whether they summarized accurately. If not the “pro” side can provide clarifying statements. The “con” side then has the option of providing one additional example in support of their own position.

## **Part III: Debaters Switch Sides for Perspective Taking (15 minutes)**

1. **Debaters will swap sides:** Using the same debate statement, have the “pro” side and “con” side switch and repeat steps 1-5 as well as the “generate ideas” and “assign roles” steps of the lesson preparation. The switching of sides is a *critical element of the lesson* to help stretch student thinking to see the topic from a different perspective.

## **Part IV: Reflection & Assessment (8-10 minutes)**

1. Facilitate a conversation about the skill of “Perspective Taking”, which is the ability to see situations from multiple perspectives. Sample questions include:
  - Has your opinion changed at all about charismatic leadership and social change from when we started? How so?
  - Did summarizing what the other side said and/or switching sides change your opinion about leadership? What about the summary was helpful?

- What lessons does this activity teach us about opinions we have today about leadership issues witnessed in news or as we study historical events?
- How might debates like this help you question issues in history, current events, or the school, and consider other perspectives?
- How does exercising mutual respect for opposing views bring different results from debating opposing views?
- What did it feel like to disagree with someone's points of view but also hold appreciation for their point of view? How might this skill be helpful for a democratic society?

**Formative Assessment:** After the discussion have students choose any one of the questions, or you may assign a question, to write in on a paper for an exit ticket or a digital padlet posting [padlet website](#). Padlet is a Google-chrome extension. Feel free to modify this step as you see fit for your learners. As a complement to one of the questions above, assign students to write a final reflection on the lesson statement: "Leaders have to be charismatic to lead social change" for homework or if time affords in class.

**Lesson Extension:** To learn about the end of Apartheid in June of 1991, have students engage in a web based exploration to determine how the end of apartheid came about through South Africa's government actions between 1990-1991. Then, discuss what leadership skills were needed to bring about social change.

## **Nelson Mandela's June 22, 1990 Speech to the 641st Meeting of the United Nations Special Commission on Apartheid**

**Source: Nelson Mandela International Day July 18th. Website.**

[https://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/statement\\_SCAA\\_1990.shtml](https://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/statement_SCAA_1990.shtml)

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Your Excellency Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid; Your Excellency Mr. Joseph Garba, President of the General Assembly; Your Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, Secretary-General of the United Nations; Your Excellencies Permanent Representatives; Heads of Observer Missions; ladies and gentlemen, friends and comrades:

We feel especially honoured and privileged to have the possibility today to stand at this particular place, to speak to all of you, who represent the peoples of the world. We are most grateful to you, Mr. Chairman, the Special Committee against Apartheid, the Secretary-General and all Member States of the Organization for making it possible for us to be here.

The tragedy is that what has created the need for this gathering and made it seem natural that we must gather in this historic meeting place is the fact of the continuing commission of a crime against humanity. How much better it would have been if we were meeting to celebrate a victory in hand, a dream fulfilled, the triumph of justice over a tyrannical past, the realization of the vision enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It will forever remain an indelible blight on human history that the apartheid crime ever occurred. Future generations will surely ask: what error was made that this system established itself in the wake of the adoption of a Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

It will forever remain an accusation and a challenge to all men and women of conscience that it took as long as it has before all of us stood up to say enough is enough. Future generations will surely inquire: what error was made that this system established itself in the aftermath of the trials at Nuremberg?

These questions will arise because when this august body, the United Nations, first discussed the South African question, in 1946, it was discussing the issue of racism. They will be posed because the spur to the establishment of this Organization was the determination of all humanity never again to permit racist theory and practice to dragoon the world into the deathly clutches of war and genocide.

And yet, for all that, a racist tyranny established itself in our country. As they knew would happen, who refused to treat this matter as a quaint historical aberration, this tyranny has claimed its own conclave of victims. It has established its own brutal worth by the number of children it has killed and the orphans, the widows and widowers it can claim as its unique creation.

And still it lives on, provoking strange and monstrous debates about the means that its victims are obliged to use to rid themselves of this intolerable scourge, eliciting arguments from those who choose not to act, that to do nothing must be accepted as the very essence of civilized opposition to tyranny.

We hold it as an inviolable principle that racism must be opposed by all the means that humanity has at its disposal. Wherever it occurs it has the potential to result in a systematic and comprehensive denial of human rights to those who are discriminated against. This is because all racism is inherently a challenge to human rights, because it denies the view that every human being is a person of equal worth with any other, because it treats entire peoples as sub-human.

This is why it was correct to characterize the apartheid system as a crime against humanity and appropriate that the international community should decide that it should be suppressed and punishment meted out against its perpetrators. We pay tribute to this Organization and its Member States for this and other decisions and actions it took to expunge this crime.

We also take this opportunity to salute the Special Committee against Apartheid, which has been and is a very important instrument in our struggle against the iniquitous and oppressive policies of the South African Government. We salute also the States that make up its membership, which have been unrelenting in their resolve to contribute everything they could to ensure that the world was mobilized to act against the apartheid system.

In this connection also, Sir, allow us to express a well-deserved tribute to your country, Nigeria, which you so ably represent, as did your predecessor in this important office, His Excellency Major-General Joseph Garba, current President of the General Assembly, under whose leadership the United Nations Declaration on South Africa was adopted by consensus at the sixteenth special session of the General Assembly last December.

That Declaration will go down in history as one of the most important documents in the struggle of the international community against apartheid. The fact that it was adopted by consensus was itself a telling blow against the apartheid system and a vital statement underlining the unity of the world community on the South African question and its resolution.

We look forward to the report that the Secretary-General of the United Nations will submit dealing with the question of the implementation of the Declaration in South Africa. This report will also be important to the extent that it will provide a basis for further decisions by the United Nations regarding future action on the question of apartheid.

What must, however, be clear is that the apartheid system remains in place. None of the principles laid down in the Declaration has been implemented to provide what the Declaration characterized as an internationally acceptable solution of the South African question. Similarly, the profound and irreversible changes which the Declaration visualized have not yet occurred.

The conclusion from these observations would seem clear to us. It is that nothing which has happened in South Africa calls for a revision of the positions that this Organization has taken in its struggle against apartheid. We therefore strongly urge that there should be no relaxation of existing measures. The sanctions that have been imposed by the United Nations and by individual Governments should remain in place.

We also urge that the United Nations should do everything in its power to maintain the unity it achieved when it adopted the Declaration on South Africa last December. We therefore hope that all Member States will continue to act in concert so as not to create any situation in which those who are opposed to change in our country find encouragement to resist change, because some countries would have destroyed the



consensus that has been achieved. In this regard, we take this opportunity once more to call on the countries of the European community, which are holding a summit meeting in a few days' time, themselves to remain faithful to the purposes of the Declaration to whose elaboration they were party and for which they voted.

At the initiative of ANC, the process has begun which could lead to a just political settlement in our country. At our well-known meeting in Cape Town, at the beginning of last month, we agreed with the South African Government on the removal of the obstacles to negotiations which are identified in the Declaration. The process of implementing that agreement has started, but as this distinguished gathering knows, a lot still remains to be done before we can say that a climate conducive to negotiations has been created.

We therefore still have some distance to travel before we undertake the further steps outlined in the Declaration, leading to negotiations for the adoption of a new, democratic constitution. The fact that a good beginning was made in Cape Town should not lead us to conclude that further progress is assured or that we will not have to confront major obstacles in future.

In this regard, we would like to reiterate what we have said before, that we believe that President de Klerk and his colleagues in the leadership of the ruling party are people of integrity. We are of the view that they will abide by decisions that are arrived at in the course of our discussions and negotiations. This, in itself, is an important victory of our common struggle because it is that struggle which has made the cost of maintaining the apartheid system too high and helped to convince the ruling group in our country that changes can no longer be resisted.

It is, however, also true that there are many among our white compatriots who are still committed to the maintenance of the evil system of white minority domination. Some are opposed because of their ideological adherence to racism. Others are resisting because they fear democratic majority rule. Some of these are armed and are to be found within the army and the police.

Outside of these State agencies, other whites are working at a feverish pace to establish paramilitary groups whose stated aim is the physical liquidation of ANC, its leadership and membership, as well as other persons or formations which these right-wing terrorists see as a threat to the continued existence of the system of white minority domination. We cannot afford to underestimate the threat that these defenders of a brutal and continuing reality pose to the whole process of working towards a just political settlement.

The ANC is determined to do everything in its power to ensure speedy movement forward towards the peaceful abolition of the apartheid system. To this end we are engaged in many initiatives within South Africa aimed at bringing into the process of negotiations all the people and the representative political formations of our country. We have to overcome the mistrust that exists on both sides and reinforce the understanding that the only victory we should all seek is the victory of the people as a whole and not the victory of one party over another.

It is obvious that none of these processes can be easy. We are, however, inspired by the experience of the people of Namibia and our comrades-in-arms of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), who also overcame the divisions and the mistrust generated by the apartheid system, carried out a peaceful political process within a relatively short period of time and are today a proud nation of

independent people. We take this opportunity to salute the representatives of the Namibian people who are present in this Hall and acknowledge the debt we owe them for the contribution they have made to our own liberation.

We also salute the front-line States of southern Africa and the rest of our continent for their own enormous contribution to the struggle against apartheid, which has brought us to the point today when we can say that the victory of the struggle for a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa is within our grasp.

Tribute is also due to the non-aligned countries and Movement and the peoples of the rest of the world for their own sterling efforts in pursuit of the common cause. What we must once more urge is that all these forces should maintain their unity around the perspectives contained in the United Nations and Harare Declarations on South Africa. How fast we progress towards liberation will depend on how successful we are in our efforts to sustain that united resolve.

This is for us a moving moment because we know that as we stand here we are among friends and people of conscience. We know this because we know what you did over the decades to secure my release and the release of other South African political prisoners from Pretoria's dungeons. We thank you most sincerely for this, especially because you have thus given us the opportunity to join hands with you in the search for a speedy solution to the enormous problems facing our country, our region and continent and humanity as a whole.

We know also that you harbour the hope that we will not relent or falter in the pursuit of that common vision which should result in the transformation of South Africa into a country of democracy, justice and peace. Standing before the nations of the world, we make that commitment, strengthened by the knowledge that you will fight on side by side with us until victory is achieved.

We also take this opportunity to extend warm greetings to all others who fight for their liberation and their human rights, including the peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara. We commend their struggles to you, convinced that we are all moved by the fact that freedom is indivisible, convinced that the denial of the rights of one diminishes the freedom of others.

We thank you for your kind invitation to us to address this gathering and for the opportunity it has given us to pay homage to you all: to the Secretary-General, to the President of the General Assembly, to the Special Committee against Apartheid and to the United Nations itself for the work that has been done to end the apartheid crime against humanity.

The distance we still have to travel is not long. Let us travel it together. Let us, by our joint actions, vindicate the purposes for which this Organization was established and create a situation wherein its Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will become part of the body of law on which will be based the political and social order of a new South Africa. Our common victory is assured.