

# Teaching history from **DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES:**

## Kindergarten Lesson on Labor Day and Larry Itliong

### GA Social Studies Standards

**SSKHI Identify the national holidays and describe the people and/or events celebrated.  
e. Labor Day**

In Asian American communities, there is a long history of labor activism. For a lesson on Labor Day, you can introduce students to Larry Itliong, a Filipino migrant worker who initiated the Delano Grape Strike and co-founded the United Farm Workers with Cesar Chavez.

**Larry Itliong** was born in the Philippines in 1913 when the country was under the U.S. colonial rule after the Spanish-American War. At school, he learned that the U.S. was a place where anyone who worked hard would be rewarded. With the American Dream, he came to the U.S. in 1929 to go to college and become a lawyer.

However, he realized the American Dream was not for everyone. He worked very hard, moving up and down from California farms to Alaska canneries to save money for his education. But, the pay was not enough. He had to give up his dreams of pursuing higher education.

While working as a farmworker, he experienced how badly laborers were treated. So, he became an activist and organizer.



He joined the **Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC)** and recruited members throughout California in 1959. When Filipino and other workers in AWOC went on strike for better working conditions, owners brought in Mexican workers. Itliong knew that the two groups would keep fighting each other while white owners continued to grow rich by exploiting both groups.





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He approached Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta of the largely Latinx National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) with the understanding that if the two largest ethnic groups in agricultural work united, their chances for success would increase.

The two groups went on strike from vineyards around Delano, California from 1965 until 1970. During the strike, AWOC and NFWA merged to become the United Farm Workers (UFW) and finally won concessions from the grape growers, such as higher pay and medical insurance.

You can bring the story of Larry Itliong and farmworkers movement through a picturebook, video clips, and photos. Use QR code for the complete article and teaching resources!

Do you want to include more stories of Asian America into your lessons? Check out this fabulous book, *Teaching Asian America in Elementary Classrooms* by Noreen Naseem Rodríguez, Sohyun An, & Ester June Kim.

### Complete Article and Lesson Plan



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**Photo credit:**

**(Top to Bottom, Left to Right)**

1. Mabalon, Dawn Bohulano et al. *Journey for Justice : The Life of Larry Itliong*. Bridge and Delta Publishing 2018.
2. Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Image Galleries, Labor Movements and Organizations, United Farm Workers
3. Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Image Galleries, Labor Movements and Organizations, United Farm Workers

