

a SHARED WORLD



On the World History Advanced Placement examination, there is an essay known as the Change over Time Essay. In the essay, students must identify and analyze the changes and continuities that occurred during a specific time period in a specific region of the world. Students generally find the changes easy to identify yet agonize over the continuities. I remind students that the ways of the past still exist in some form in the present; cultures never die rather they are transformed over time, retaining elements of their past incarnations in present realities. Of all of the free response essays on the examination, the Change over Time Essay is my favorite for it reminds us all that life is an interplay between change and continuity.

In the *Embodiment* issue of *Parabola* magazine, there is an article by Tracy Cochran titled “A Shared World.” In the article, Ms. Cochran shares her journey to India and participation in a retreat known as Gandhi 3.0. In a brilliant exposition of the author’s inner and outer journey of transformation, Ms. Cochran presents a powerful reflection of the interplay of change and continuity in India, in the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, and in her. In the lesson that follows, students will read Ms. Cochran’s article and answer questions to ensure comprehension, inspire analytical thinking, and encourage new ways of thinking about compassion and service in an increasingly “shared world”.

After reading and completing the questions, students will be able to identify and explain significant facts pertaining to the life of India’s nonviolent independence leader, Mohandas K. Gandhi, describe Ms. Cochran’s journey to and reflections of India, and analyze how Gandhi’s ideals and goals for India are experienced and practiced in an independent, modern India today.

As Gandhi said, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”



Pre-Reading Activity:

- **Identify three facts about Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.**

- **Define satyagraha.**

- **Identify two facts about Gandhi's boycott of British cloth.**

- **Identify two facts about the Dandi Salt March.**

- **Define nonviolence.**

- **Define civil disobedience.**

- **Identify the year in which India achieved independence from the British.**

- **Explain one reason for the partition of the Indian subcontinent.**

- **Identify one fact about Gandhi's assassination.**

Reading Questions:

1- What advice did the dying Buddha give to his beloved cousin and disciple Ananda?

2- What does the word *dipa* signify in Pali?

3- What is Pali?

4- Why was Ms. Cochran thinking about Pali in the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi?

5- What had Ms. Cochran been invited to attend?

6- Who is Nipun Mehta?

7- Why was Ms. Cochran's invitation to India particularly meaningful (Think of her youthful self dreaming)?

8- What had people warned Ms. Cochran about prior to her trip?

9- What had Ms. Cochran unexpectedly discovered at the start of her trip?

10- Who is Ishwar Patel?

11- Describe Ms. Cochran's greeting upon her arrival to the retreat center.

12- Why had the welcoming group toned down their greeting?

13- What was the aim of the retreat and of Moved by Love?

14- Define maitrī.

15- Describe Ms. Cochran's room at the retreat center.

16- Describe the feelings Ms. Cochran's room evoked in her.

17- What insight dawned on Ms. Cochran as she woke in the morning?

18- What advice did Guri Mehta give Ms. Cochran?

19- How did Ms. Cochran define satyagrahi?

20- What did the smiling man dressed in immaculate white who had been born and raised on the Gandhi Ashram tell Ms. Cochran through a translator?

21- What does *bhai* mean in Hindi and Gujarat?

22- Who is Jayesh Patel?

23- What did Ms. Cochran note about Jayesh Patel?

24- What quote by Vinoba Bhave did a young woman named Kushmita share in the opening circle?

25- Who was Vinoba Bhave?

26- What was the intention of the retreat?

27- What principle was the retreat rooted in?

28- What did the retreat seek to shift away from?

29- What did Ms. Cochran lack and what did Ms. Cochran receive without asking?

30- What was the retreat a teaching in?

31- What did Ms. Cochran learn about receiving?

32- What happened to the retreat on the anniversary of Gandhi's death?

33- What happened at the Sabarmati Ashram in the suburbs of Ahmedabad while Gandhi lived?

34- What few possessions were in Gandhi's room?

35- What is the *charkha*?

36- What did the retreat participants do after morning prayers?

37- What did Ms. Cochran notice about Jayeshbhai?

38- What did Ms. Cochran come to learn about what the Buddha meant by being an island?

39- What was one of the last things the great German mystic Meister Eckhart said to his students?

40- What did Ms. Cochran experience at the Vinoba Ashram?

41- What story did an elderly nun share with Ms. Cochran?

42- Why did Gandhi vow not return to Ahmedabad?

43- How was the Sevagram ashram strangely modern?

44- What is *swaraj*?

45- What was Gandhi's goal after *swaraj* was achieved?

46- What did Gandhi believe about peace?

47- What did Ms. Cochran realize in the midst of the traffic jam?

48- What did Jayeshbhai's father, Ishwar Patel tell him?

49- What was Ms. Cochran presented with when she left the ashram?

50- What did Jayeshbhai tell Ms. Cochran before she left the ashram?

ANALYTICAL REFLECTION

Write an essay identifying and analyzing changes and continuities regarding Gandhi's goals and values for the Indian subcontinent from 1920 to the present.

TAKE IT TO THE WEB

CREATE A VIDEO FOR A "SHARED WORLD." IDENTIFY AND EXPLAIN HOW PEOPLE TODAY CAN BE THE CHANGE THEY WISH TO SEE IN THE WORLD; HOW SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS COMMITTED DAILY CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.

"As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world – that is the myth of the atomic age – as in being able to remake ourselves."

