

# Dalai Lama's Nobel Prize Speech and Vocabulary

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## Section Objectives:

- Summarize a story
- Analyze primary and secondary sources and make inferences
- Analyze a literary work using philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of a historical period
- Complete word analogies
- Create semantic maps
- Understand jargon or technical language and synonyms

Mahatma Gandhi was one of many people who were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize but were not awarded it. When the Dalai Lama was awarded the Prize in 1989, the chairman of the Nobel Committee said that this was “in part a tribute to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi.”

## *The Essay*

### *Three Nobel Peace Prize Addresses*

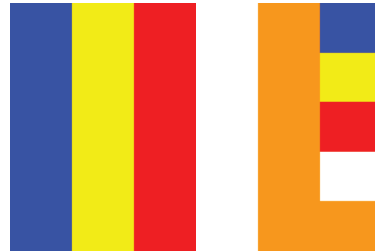
We turn our attention now to some writers of Nobel Peace Prize addresses. This award is given every December in Oslo, Norway to the person who has done the most to promote peace and diplomacy between nations or, in the words of Alfred Nobel, the Swedish inventor who conceived the award, “the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses.”

All three of the recipients whose acceptance speeches you will be reading have dedicated their lives to improving life for others in both the nations they are from and throughout the world. They also serve as symbols of their respective causes.

All three of these speeches not only exemplify the spirit of humanitarianism, they are also all examples of **primary sources**. A primary source is an original or first-hand account of information. Since all three of these people wrote and delivered these speeches, they are primary sources of information about their lives. In contrast, a **secondary source** is a second-hand account of information; information found in secondary sources is information synthesized from primary sources or even from other secondary sources. For example, the brief biographies of these three leaders in this unit are secondary sources of information because they do not come from these Nobel Peace Prize winners themselves or someone who witnessed the events of their lives first hand.

## *Dalai Lama*

Dalai Lamas are the names and titles bestowed on the governmental and spiritual leaders of the Buddhist country Tibet. They are believed to be the reincarnation of the Buddhist Lord of Compassion. The current and present fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet was chosen to fill this position when he was only two years old. He began preparing for this role when he was four by being taken away from his family to live in the Tibetan ruler's palace and being educated by Buddhist monks. His rule of Tibet commenced at the age of 18.



The International Flag of Buddhism

Just before this in 1950, the newly turned Communist, neighboring country of China invaded and took over Tibet. Conflicts continued between the two nations as China wanted to modernize Tibet, but Tibetans wanted to preserve their ancient culture. Despite numerous attempts by the Dalai Lama to hold peace talks with Chinese leaders, he had to go into exile for his own safety to northern India in 1959.

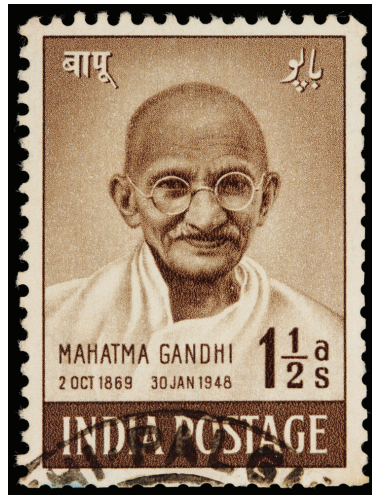
Thousands of Tibetans followed him and he continued to serve as their leader in their government-in-exile in this Indian mountain village. He insisted on the use of non-violence to establish peace with China even though his people endured years of violent Chinese attacks against Buddhist monks and monasteries. Such peaceful measures have included drafting a democratic constitution for Tibet in 1963 and a Five Point Peace Plan between China and Tibet in 1987. Then the following year, he made concessions to China that even though Tibet would be a self-governing democracy, China could still have jurisdiction over Tibet's foreign policy and defense. He also established an understanding that when Tibet becomes free he would relinquish all political authority to an elected President in 1992. During these years, he also met with the leaders of over 62 countries to promote his cause of freeing Tibet and establishing peace. For all of these efforts, he was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.

## *Reading Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize Address*

The Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize address is a **primary source** of information because it was written by and given by him; therefore, it provides a first-hand or original information about him. Through his speech, we learn about his philosophical, political, and spiritual beliefs.

Although this speech is his response to receiving one of the most prestigious awards in the world, he deflects the credit for his work and conveys an attitude of humility in the beginning by saying in the first paragraph: "I feel honored, humbled and deeply moved that you should give this important prize to a simple monk from Tibet. I am no one special."

Then in the second paragraph, he asserts that he accepts the award for “the oppressed everywhere and for all those who struggle for freedom and work for world peace” and “the six million Tibetan people, my brave countrymen and women inside Tibet, who have suffered and continue to suffer so much.” He also claims that he accepts it “as a tribute to ...Mahatma Gandhi.” This is because **Gandhi’s** life inspired the Dalai Lama’s since he “founded the modern tradition of non-violent action for change.” At this point of the speech, he wants to connect his life and values to Gandhi and pay tribute to him for his inspiration.



In the third paragraph, the Dalai Lama uses the word “weapon” metaphorically. The Dalai Lama promoted non-violence; for example, he says, “...with truth, courage, and determination as our weapons, Tibet will be liberated.” This statement also conveys one of his “Three Main Commitments in Life.”

*To focus your reading of this address, look for the answers to the following questions:*

1. Why is this speech considered a **primary source** of information?
2. Research or use information from the text to identify the people or events that he mentions in this address. Then infer what his purpose is in mentioning them.
3. Mahatma Gandhi
4. The 823 A.D. treaty
5. What language does he use to deflect the credit for his work and convey an attitude of humility?
6. On whose behalf does he accept this award?
7. The Dalai Lama believes that problems can only be solved without violence. With what weapons does he say Tibet will be liberated?

### *Vocabulary terms*

1. altruism
2. sages
3. profound
4. gratitude
5. liberated
6. restoration

### *Synonyms for Vocabulary terms*

A synonym is a word that means the same or about the same as another word. Identify which vocabulary term is a synonym for each word listed below.

1. appreciation
2. renewal
3. freed
4. unselfish
5. meaningful
6. soothsayers