

Unit 5 - It's Alright

5A Introduction

It is always difficult to realize a dream – to make a dream come true. But it is especially difficult when you are the first person to achieve your dream. Jackie Robinson, the first African-American to play major league baseball, was booed and heckled when he took the field. Because Galileo argued that the sun, not the Earth, was at the center of the solar system, the Catholic Church had him arrested. This is the story of Nydia Velázquez, the first Puerto Rican woman elected to Congress.

5B Song Lyrics

I was born in a small Puerto Rican town
Of no fame, and little **renown**.
House wasn't **capacious**, it was small,
About nine kids bouncing off the walls.
I **attribute** my spirit to my father,
He's the cause of it, working hard but
He never acted **servile**, he never said,
"Yes sir, whatever you say sir, right away."

Sometimes he launched into a **tirade**,
An angry speech against the way
Workers cutting down sugarcane
Were treated: It wasn't kind or **humane**.
They'd get hurt, but they didn't have
Access or **recourse** to the courts.
My dad said never **forfeit**, never give up,
And if they swing at you, throw your hands up.

It's alright. It's alright. It's alright.

Well, I grew up and flew up, up to New York,
And I moved up like rulers, up to the top.
The **ultimate**, greatest possible feat:
I ran for Congress, and won a seat.
Does that seem **plausible**, believable?
I'm a congresswoman, yes it's really true.
I'm **liberal**, I want things to change,
Conservative means you want things to stay the same.

I've **advocated** for raising pay,
I pleaded cases to increase the **wage**.
Plus I **waged** war against the guns,
'Cause guns in the streets make the blood run.
I want to **inaugurate** and begin,
A new policy for immigrants.
My lesson: Don't let people stop you,
And if you live in New York, I represent for you.

Hook



Name: _____ Date: _____

5C Words Defined

advocate / attribute / capacious / conservative / forfeit / humane / inaugurate / liberal / plausible / recourse / renown / servile / tirade / ultimate / wage

Below you'll find each vocabulary word that was used in the song. Each word is followed by the part of speech, a simple definition and a meaningful sentence. Some words will also have synonyms, antonyms and other forms of the word listed.

1. advocate (verb) to argue for, recommend or urge

Our student council representative is going to *advocate* for a longer lunch period on Fridays.
Other forms: My neighbor is a strong *advocate* (noun) of saving the rainforests.

2. attribute (verb) to consider as caused by something else

The firefighters *attributed* the forest fire to arson.
Other forms: *Attribute* can also be a noun meaning "a quality or characteristic," as in: Honesty is an *attribute* that many people look for in politicians.

3. capacious (adj) spacious, roomy

The Physical Education department needed a *capacious* bin in which to store all of the sporting equipment.
Synonyms: voluminous, ample, commodious

4. conservative (adj) favoring traditional views; against change

She is such a *conservative* dresser; she only wears full-length skirts and dresses.
Other forms: A *conservative* person (or especially someone who votes that way) is considered a *conservative* (noun).

5. forfeit (verb) to give up or surrender

My grandmother had to *forfeit* her purse to the mugger to avoid being pushed down and beaten up.
Synonyms: to give over, relinquish

6. humane (adj) marked by compassion or tenderness for humans or animals

People are not very *humane* to their pets if they leave them locked in a hot car while they dine or shop.
Synonyms: caring, compassionate, altruistic
Antonyms: cruel, mean, malicious

7. inaugurate (verb) 1. to begin 2. to officially bring into office

The end of the war will hopefully *inaugurate* a time of peace between the two countries. 2. The ninth President of the United States was *inaugurated* in March and was dead by April.
Synonyms: commence, initiate
Other forms: The *inaugural* (adj) ball took place after the *inauguration* (noun).

8. liberal (adj) 1. favoring progress and reform over tradition 2. generous

One of the most *liberal* people in Omaha, Karl wanted everyone to have healthcare.
Other forms: *Liberal* is also a noun meaning "a person who advocates open-mindedness and liberal views," as in: The politician labeled himself a *liberal*.

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9. plausible (adj) believable

Some of the first graders' stories did not have *plausible* plots, but they were still very cute to read.
Antonyms: unlikely, implausible, doubtful

10. recourse (noun) the option of having someone or something for help

Chaz felt he had no *recourse*; he had to take matters into his own hands.
Synonym: alternative

11. renown (noun) widespread fame

The audience was in awe of the celebrity's *renown* when he entered the room.
Antonyms: anonymity, obscurity, oblivion
Other forms: If you are famous, you are *renowned* (adj).

12. servile (adj) groveling or extremely submissive

The new recruits expressed *servile* obedience to their superiors.

13. tirade (noun) a long, violent speech

My dad went on a *tirade* about my messy room and yelled my ear off.
Synonyms: outburst, rant, diatribe

14. ultimate (adj) last, final or greatest

It was Serena's *ultimate* goal in life to get straight A's on all of her essays.
Synonyms: final, paramount, greatest

15. wage (verb) to carry on a battle or conflict

The students wanted to *wage* a war against hunger in their community and have a yearlong food drive.
Other forms: *Wage* is also a noun meaning "payment for labor or services," as in: As a busboy, I did not earn a very high *wage*.

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5D Fix the Mistake

advocate / attribute / capacious / conservative / forfeit / humane / inaugurate / liberal / plausible / recourse / renown / servile / tirade / ultimate / wage

Each of the sentences below has a mistake. The wrong vocabulary words have been used, so the sentences don't make sense. Rewrite each sentence using the correct vocabulary word from this unit.

1. Martha Stewart **advocates** her success to hard work and wise money management.

2. The photography club is going to **forfeit** me as their president next week at the first meeting of the year.

3. Since it wasn't **conservative** for Stanley to clean the entire garage by himself, my brother and I decided to help him.

4. As a fast food worker, my **tirades** were not enough for me to move out of my parents' house.

5. The locker room was not **liberal** enough for the entire football team and their equipment.

6. Sarah was such a(n) **renowned** cat owner that all ninety-eight cats had their own food and water dish.

7. After seeing how Tim bossed Pam around, I definitely knew that she acted **ultimate** to him in their relationship.

8. His only **wage** was to go to the police.

9. The eighth graders are **inaugurating** for a graduation dance that lasts all night.

10. Our coach completely lost his temper whenever we had to **attribute** a soccer game due to limited players.

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11. I don't know if he's going to dress up like a woman for the play; he's pretty **capacious**.

12. Jane was **humane** with her ice cream servings, so everyone had more than enough.

13. Hercules was **servile** for his size and strength.

14. No one ever cheated in Mr. Tong's class because they would have to endure one of his horrendous **recourses**.

15. **Plausibly**, I'd like to end up living in a foreign country, but it might not happen for a while.

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5E Pick the Winner

advocate / attribute / capacious / conservative / forfeit / humane / inaugurate / liberal / plausible / recourse / renown / servile / tirade / ultimate / wage

Circle the word that best fits into the sentence. Then write a sentence below that uses the word you didn't pick in a meaningful way.

1. Slaves had to be **(servile OR liberal)** to their masters or suffer the consequences.

2. In our school, Lilly has more **(tirades OR renown)** than even the star athletes, because of her amazing mohawk.

3. Painting houses for a living, I was paid a good **(recourse OR wage)**.

4. Clara **(attributed OR forfeited)** her intelligence to her parents, who were both famous inventors.

5. The more **(conservative OR capacious)** the house was, the more likely the Brady Bunch could fit in it.

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5F Draw the Relationships

advocate / attribute / capacious / conservative / forfeit / humane / inaugurate / liberal / plausible / recourse / renown / servile / tirade / ultimate / wage

In each grouping of eight words below, draw straight lines between the synonyms (words that mean similar things) and squiggly lines between any antonyms (words that mean nearly opposite things). Every word should have at least one line connected to it. Some may have more.

1

attribute	a quality	wage	promote
advocate	fight	ultimate	final

.....

2

surrender	roomy	forfeit	liberal
capacious	conservative	humane	mean

.....

3

inaugurate	celebrity	servile	begin
tirade	bossy	renown	whisper

.....

4

progressive	plausible	recourse	conservative
unbelievable	traditional	liberal	alternative

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5G Understanding What You Read

advocate / attribute / capacious / conservative / forfeit / humane / inaugurate / liberal / plausible / recourse / renown / servile / tirade / ultimate / wage

Read the passage below. Then answer the questions.

It was the ultimate insult to Nydia Velázquez. Someone had released her medical records to the opposing campaign, and they had used the sensitive information against her in the 1992 race for the House of Representatives. It was neither a kind nor humane way to run a campaign, but it was a reality nevertheless.

Her opponent had suggested that among her attributes were both mental instability and depression. The newspaper reported that, according to her medical records, she had once attempted suicide. Obviously, it was a way to suggest that Velázquez was not fit to hold office. The goal was obviously to get her to forfeit her campaign. However, Velázquez knew that if she quit at this point, she would never forgive herself. From her childhood, she had dreamed of one day being in a position to help out others around her. She decided not to drop out of the race.

Instead, Velázquez quickly called a press conference. She decided to fight her opponents' charges head on. She didn't deny anything. She told the reporters that yes, she had suffered from depression, but so had millions of other Americans. In fact, 15% of Americans battle major depression at some point in their lives. Velázquez reported that she had undergone counseling, and that her mental health was now very good. She said she was saddened by the tactics her conservative opponents were using in order to win the race, but that she wouldn't stoop to their level. She also went on to say what she would do as a Representative - that she would continue to advocate for better wages and a better way of life for the people of New York City.

Nydia Velázquez beat her opponents in the race for Representative, and became the first Puerto Rican woman to serve in Congress. Since then, she has gone on to a career of great renown as a ranking member of Congress.

1. What could be considered the main theme of the passage?

- (A) depression
- (B) overcoming difficulties
- (C) winning
- (D) being Puerto Rican

2. According to the text, the main strategy of Velázquez's opponents was to argue that

- (A) Velasquez lacked experience, since she had never held office before
- (B) a Latin woman isn't fit for office
- (C) Velasquez shouldn't hold office because of her problems with depression
- (D) she was too liberal to represent New Yorkers

3. To "advocate for better wages" means to

- (A) talk about better conditions
- (B) help employees join unions
- (C) argue for higher pay
- (D) strike for improved managers

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4. Why did Velázquez note that 15% of Americans will suffer from major depression at some point in their lives?

- (A) to show that America has a major health care issue that must be addressed
- (B) to encourage depressed individuals to seek help
- (C) to show that she was strong and would fight her mental illness
- (D) to demonstrate that she was not alone and shouldn't be considered an outcast

5. Nydia Velázquez is employed by

- (A) a school district
- (B) the government
- (C) the press
- (D) a hospital

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5H Thinking Creatively

advocate / attribute / capacious / conservative / forfeit / humane / inaugurate / liberal / plausible / recourse / renown / servile / tirade / ultimate / wage

Answer each question below. Don't be afraid to think creatively.

1. What would it mean if you **advocated** for **conservatives**?

2. Explain how zoos could be more **humane**.

3. If you could design the ceremony, how would you **inaugurate** the next president of the United States?

4. As a student, what the least **plausible** excuse you have ever heard for a peer not doing their homework?

5. What might a shop called *Tirades 'R' Us* sell?

Word Breakdown

The word *conservative* is derived from “someone who likes to conserve.” To *conserve* is to protect or use sparingly. You can help conserve the environment by conserving energy and turning off your lights when you leave the house. *Conserve* comes from the Latin *com*, which is an intensifier, and *servare*, which means “to maintain or keep.” Someone who is conservative wants to conserve tradition. It's often liberals, however, who are more interested in conserving the environment.

Liberal has the same root as *liberty* and so is related to freedom. A liberal person was free in how they spoke or acted, not bound by tradition. It was originally used as an insult, but took on a positive connotation later on. Nowadays it can be used in ways that are both positive and negative. Today, in American politics, Democrats are more liberal, while Republicans are more conservative, though that wasn't always the case.