



SKILLBUILDER

Understanding Point of View

►► Defining the Skill

The phrase *point of view* refers to the particular opinions or beliefs that a person holds. Education, religious beliefs, and life experiences all contribute to a person's point of view. Understanding point of view makes it possible to understand and explain a historical figure's opinions and actions.

►► Applying the Skill

The passage to the right explains the differences and similarities between Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, who was the prime minister of India from 1947 until 1964. Use the strategies listed below to help you analyze their points of view.

How to Understand Point of View

Strategy 1 Look for statements that reveal a person's point of view on a particular subject. Gandhi believed that government could not guarantee a person's rights. Nehru, on the other hand, had faith in the power of government.

Strategy 2 Look for clues about why people hold the opinions they do. In these paragraphs you learn about Gandhi's and Nehru's childhoods, their educations, and their experiences as young men. How do these things influence their opinions?

Strategy 3 Summarize the information given for each person that explains their opposing opinions.

Write a Summary

Writing a summary will help you understand differing points of view. The paragraph below and to the right summarizes the passage about Gandhi and Nehru.

►► Practicing the Skill

Turn to page 419 in Section 3. Read "The Green Revolution." Then write a summary like the one on the right to understand the farmers' opposing points of view.

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

Two of the men who led India in its struggle for independence from Great Britain, Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, had different ideas about how a fair and just society should be achieved.

2 Gandhi grew up in a rural area of India, where he saw how difficult life was for many Indians. Through hard work and study he became a lawyer. Gandhi then lived in South Africa, a country that discriminated against people because of race. For 20 years he worked for the rights of Indian workers there. **1** He saw how important it was for everyone in a country to have equal rights. At the same time, he did not trust that a government could provide people with those rights. He felt that each person individually

had to seek ways to live in a fair and honorable manner.

2 Nehru's father was a respected and wealthy lawyer, and Nehru had many privileges while growing up. Like Gandhi, Nehru went to England to study law. But when he finished his studies, he traveled around Europe, seeing other societies and learning about other governments. **1** He came to believe that a government could be successful in granting its people equal rights and that it could do so by dividing up the land among all the people.

3

Gandhi believed that government could not grant equal rights. He felt that each person, individually, could work for the good of the whole. Nehru, on the other hand, felt that government could grant equality by making sure that everyone had land.