

## Martin Luther King's Speech

Have you ever felt that something is not fair? Did you try to change things?

In America, about fifty years ago, there lived a courageous and clever man called Martin Luther King Jr. He saw that things were very **unjust** for black Americans like himself. Often, they were treated unfairly. Sometimes they were made to use different toilets, theatres, restaurants, swimming pools, schools and even seats on buses!

Martin Luther King knew this was not fair. He decided to try to change things for the better. So, he stood up and spoke up for black American rights!

On August 28th 1963, about 250,000 people **gathered** to march together in Washington and listen to Martin Luther King speak. Martin Luther King was a gifted speaker. On that day, he made a **speech** which lots of people still remember today. It helped to change **attitudes** in America and it is now very famous!

### The Speech: 'I Have a Dream'

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest **demonstration** for freedom in the history of our **nation**. We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we shall make the **pledge** that we shall always march **ahead**. We cannot turn back. And so even though we face the **difficulties** of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. I have a dream that one day my four little children will live in a **nation** where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the **content** of their **characters**. I have a dream today! I have a dream that one day, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today! And if America is to become a great **nation** this must come true! From every mountainside let freedom ring! Free At last! Free At Last! Thank God **Almighty** we are free at last!

## Martin Luther King's Speech – Follow-Up Work

Were Black Americans treated fairly at the time? Why or why not?

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When did Martin Luther King give his speech 'I Have a Dream'?

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Why do you think lots of people came to listen to Martin Luther King's Speech?

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Why do you think people remember the speech today?

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What word or phrase in the speech tells you that Martin Luther King was not going to give up?

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How do you think Martin Luther King said "I have a dream"?

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Why do you think he repeated ‘I have a dream’?

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Do you think Martin Luther King thought that someone’s personality or someone’s looks were more important? Why?

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What phrase suggests Martin Luther King wants freedom all over the country?

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What does Martin Luther King say needs to happen for America to become a great nation?

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Is the text fiction or non-fiction? Why?

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Why do you think Martin Luther King wrote the speech?

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## Martin Luther King's Speech – Vocab 1

Write down the meanings of these words which were in purple in the text. Use a dictionary or thesaurus to help you.

unjust \_\_\_\_\_

gathered \_\_\_\_\_

speech \_\_\_\_\_

attitudes \_\_\_\_\_

demonstration \_\_\_\_\_

pledge \_\_\_\_\_

ahead \_\_\_\_\_

difficulties \_\_\_\_\_

nation \_\_\_\_\_

judged \_\_\_\_\_

content \_\_\_\_\_

characters \_\_\_\_\_

almighty \_\_\_\_\_

## Martin Luther King's Speech – Vocab 2

Choose six of the highlighted words in the text and write a sentence including each word so that its meaning is really clear.

E.g. It was *unjust* to treat the children differently.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Martin Luther King’s Speech – SPAG

This text contains lots of verbs. Verbs are doing words or action words. We have found some for you. Can you find the rest of the verbs?

Verbs

felt  
try  
change

## Martin Luther King's Speech – Oral Teacher Questions

Were Black Americans treated fairly at the time? Why or why not? **No, they were often treated unfairly and sometimes made to use different toilets, restaurants, theatres, swimming pools, schools and seats on buses.**

When did Martin Luther King give his speech 'I have a dream'? **Martin Luther King made his speech 'I Have a Dream' on August 28<sup>th</sup> 1963.**

Why do you think lots of people came to listen to Martin Luther King speak? **He was a gifted speaker and he led the demonstration. They felt strongly about Black American rights.**

Why do you think people remember the speech today? **People remember the speech because it helped to change America (or other suitable answer relating to the speech and its effect).**

What word or phrase in the speech tells you that Martin Luther King was not going to give up? **The phrases "we shall *always* march ahead" and "we *cannot* turn back" show that Martin Luther King was not going to give up.**

How do you think Martin Luther King said 'I have a dream'? **He shouted or said it loudly. We know this because there is an exclamation mark.**

Why do you think he repeated 'I have a dream'? **Any acceptable response, for example repetition for effect, to get the audience to listen, to tell them more about his dream.**

Do you think Martin Luther King thought that someone's personality or someone's looks were more important? Why? **He thought their personality was more important. He said that people should be judged on their characters and not how they look. (Children could quote from the text here).**

What phrase suggests Martin Luther King wants freedom all over the country? **From every mountainside is the phrase that suggests he wants freedom all over the country.**

What does Martin Luther King say needs to happen for America to become a great nation? **He says his dream must come true.**

Is the text fiction or non-fiction? Why? **The text is non-fiction because it is an information text and a speech. It is not a made up story.**

Why do you think Martin Luther King wrote the speech? **Martin Luther King wrote the speech to change things. He wanted people to start to treat the Black Americans fairly.**

## Martin Luther King's Speech – Vocab 1

Write down the meanings of these words which were in purple in the text. Use a dictionary or thesaurus to help you.

unjust – unfair, not deserved

gathered – to come together in a group

speech – ideas and opinions given in front of a group of people

attitudes – the way people think about a something or someone

demonstration – a group of people coming together to show that they agree or disagree with something

pledge – serious promise, agreement

ahead – forward, towards the front, towards the future

difficulties – trouble, disagreement, problems

nation – country, land, people

judged – to form an opinion, to decide if someone is good or bad

content – the things that are in something

characters – personality, the way someone thinks, feels and behaves

almighty – great, having complete power



Martin Luther King’s Speech – SPAG

This text contains lots of verbs. Verbs are doing words or action words. We have found some for you. Can you find the rest of the verbs?

Verbs

- felt
- try
- change
- lived
- called
- saw
- treated
- made
- use
- knew
- make
- decided
- stood
- spoke
- gathered
- march
- listen
- speak
- remember
- helped
- join
- go
- walk
- pledge
- march
- turn
- live
- dream
- face
- judged
- become
- ring