

## Civil Rights – Lesson 4

### What was Martin Luther King's Dream?

#### Subject Knowledge Notes

The "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered by Martin Luther King, Jr. before a crowd of some 250,000 people at the 1963 March on Washington, remains one of the most famous speeches in history. Weaving in references to the country's Founding Fathers and the Bible, King used universal themes to depict the struggles of African Americans, before closing with an improvised riff on his dreams of equality. The eloquent speech was immediately recognized as a highlight of the successful protest, and has endured as one of the signature moments of the civil rights movement.

#### Civil Rights Momentum

A young Baptist minister, Martin Luther King, Jr. rose to prominence in the 1950s as a spiritual leader of the burgeoning civil rights movement and president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). By the early 1960s, African Americans had seen gains made through organized campaigns that placed its participants in harm's way but also garnered attention for their plight. One such campaign, the 1961 Freedom Rides, resulted in vicious beatings for many participants, but resulted in the Interstate Commerce Commission ruling that ended the practice of segregation on buses and in stations. Similarly, the Birmingham Campaign of 1963, designed to challenge the Alabama city's segregationist policies, produced the searing images of demonstrators being beaten, attacked by dogs and blasted with high-powered water hoses.

Around the time he wrote his famed "Letter from Birmingham Jail," King decided to move forward with the idea for another event that coordinated with Negro American Labor Council (NALC) founder A. Philip Randolph's plans for a job rights march.

#### March on Washington

Thanks to the efforts of veteran organizer Bayard Rustin, the logistics of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom came together by the summer of 1963.

Joining Randolph and King were the fellow heads of the "Big Six" civil rights organizations: Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Whitney Young of the National Urban League (NUL), James Farmer of the Congress On Racial Equality (CORE) and John Lewis of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Other influential leaders also came aboard, including Walter Reuther of the United Auto Workers (UAW) and Joachim Prinz of the American Jewish Congress (AJC).

Scheduled for August 28, the event was to consist of a mile-long march from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial, in honor of the president who had signed the Emancipation Proclamation a century earlier, and would feature a series of prominent speakers.

Its stated goals included demands for desegregated public accommodations and public schools, redress of violations of constitutional rights and an expansive federal works program to train employees.

*Taken from <https://www.history.com/topics/civil-rights-movement/i-have-a-dream-speech>*

### Lesson Three: What was Martin Luther King's dream?



5 mins

- Display the key question for the lesson (Slide 2)?
- Display the retrieval quiz and give pupils five minutes to complete it independently (Slide 3).
- Circulate to gather information about common misconceptions or mistakes.
- Display the correct answers and allow pupils to self-mark (Slide 4).










10 mins

- Play the video, which places the speech in context, as well as gives pupils the chance to see King deliver key parts of the speech (Slide 5).
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IB0i6bJljw>
- Pause the video to draw attention to key points.
- Move to the next slide and explicitly teach the key vocabulary.
- Explain that pupils should use this glossary as they read the speech.
- They may like to annotate their speech for ease.

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### What was Martin Luther King's Dream?

 5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read the first section about King's life.</li><li>• Draw attention to the resistance from the FBI.</li><li>• Discuss how King was ultimately assassinated. (You may like to explore the difference between murder and assassination.)</li></ul>
 5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain that during this lesson, pupils will be reading the I Have a Dream speech in pairs.</li><li>• Explain that this is a speech that really needs to be read aloud to be understood.</li><li>• They should think hard about the words that King is saying.</li><li>• You may like to compile a list of how pupils should speak the speech (loud, emotive voice, pauses, body language, facial expressions, etc)</li><li>• Model Reading the first few paragraphs. Stress 'freedom'. Draw attention to this process of selecting the key word and emphasising it.</li></ul>
 15 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pupils should work with their partners to take it in turns performing the speech (Slide 7).</li><li>• Circulate and give feedback to pupils.</li><li>• Ensure pupils are checking the glossary at the start of the lesson to check the meaning of words.</li><li>• Encourage pupils to annotate the speech with performance notes.</li><li>• Stop the class and have pupils perform sections to the rest of the class to note strengths.</li></ul>
 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Select one or two pupils to perform the speech.</li><li>• Alternatively, you could have the whole class perform the speech chorally.</li><li>• Or, you could 'control the game' and have the whole class read together, with different pupils reading aloud as you call their name.</li></ul>
 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Display the questions on the next slide (Slide 8).</li><li>• Ask pupils to answer independently.</li><li>• Circulate and share common misconceptions.</li><li>• Display or read out some good examples, or your own model answer.</li><li>• Ask pupils to redraft their work following this.</li></ul>
 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask pupils to articulate what Martin Luther King's dream was.</li><li>• Ask for a vote on whether pupils think that his dream has come true (slide 9).</li><li>• Ask a few pupils to share their opinions.</li></ul>
 5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask pupils to return to page 3, and answer the question: What was Martin Luther King's Dream'?</li></ul>