

The Civil Rights Movement Grows

The Montgomery bus boycott made King famous, and he became very busy. He helped form a new organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), dedicated to working for civil rights, and he became its leader. He wrote a book about the boycott. While he was signing copies of it in a New York City bookstore, a mentally ill woman stabbed him in the chest with a letter opener. His doctor told him that if he had sneezed, he could have died. The assault confirmed King's awareness that he faced enemies and possible death.

▼ **WHILE KING WAS IN THE HOSPITAL,** he received many letters. One he would never forget read:



Dear Dr. King:
I am a ninth-grade student at the White Plains High School. While it should not matter, I would like to mention that I am a white girl. I read in the paper of your misfortune, and of your suffering. And I read that if you had sneezed, you would have died. And I'm simply writing you to say that I'm so happy that you didn't sneeze.



Sit-ins

▲ **IN 1960, FOUR** black students sat at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, and asked for coffee and doughnuts. They were told to leave but stayed until closing. The next day, they returned with more students. Soon, black and white students all over the South were taking part in sit-ins. People jeered at them. Some poured drinks or dumped food on them. The students had been trained in nonviolent resistance and did not fight back. In Atlanta, King joined the sit-ins and was again arrested.



Freedom Riders

▲ **IN 1961, YOUNG** people tested the Supreme Court's ruling that blacks and whites share the same facilities at bus terminals, because in practice, in the South, the law was ignored. Blacks and whites boarded buses in Washington, D.C. As they traveled into the South, these

people, who became known as Freedom Riders, were beaten. One bus was bombed. In Montgomery, the Riders spent an anxious night in Ralph Abernathy's church while whites rioted outside. King spent the night with them. Above, National Guardsmen protect riders.

Birmingham, Alabama

▼ **In 1963**, Birmingham was one of the most segregated cities in the U.S. King

chose it for an important campaign. Although a terrible price was paid in human

life, the campaign was ultimately a success. In 1964, President Johnson signed into law a Civil Rights Bill that made segregation illegal

throughout the U.S. Below, King addresses a rally at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, headquarters for the campaign.



"The children understood the stakes they were fighting for."



▼ **On September 15, 1963**, Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church Sunday School

was bombed. Four children were killed. Sarah Jean Collins, one of the 20 injured children, was struck in the eyes by flying glass. Her sister was murdered. Rioting followed. Two blacks were killed, and many blacks and whites were injured.



► **BIRMINGHAM'S** police commissioner, Eugene "Bull" Connor, lost patience with the demonstrators. Policemen and firemen turned high-powered hoses on the marchers and set police dogs against them. Newspapers published pictures of the violence, and

people around the world were revolted. On a Sunday afternoon, Connor ordered his men to turn the hoses on a group of blacks kneeling in prayer. The police officers and fire fighters refused. The blacks stood up and bravely continued their march while Connor looked on.



▲ **In BIRMINGHAM**, blacks marched peacefully to protest segregation. Time and again, they were arrested. On Good Friday, April 12,



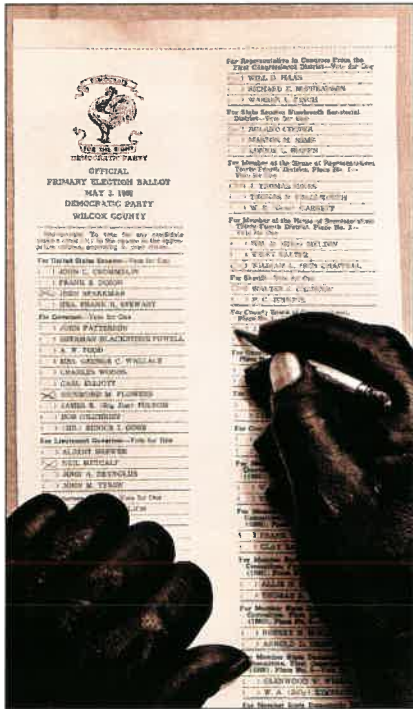
1963, King and Abernathy were arrested. King was thrown into solitary confinement. He was not even allowed to make a phone call.

▲ **When King was released** after eight days, he continued the marches. More and more people were arrested. High school stu-

dents joined in, and their younger siblings begged to become part of the campaign. Some who were arrested were only six years old.



The Mountaintop and the Valley



▲ THE FIFTEENTH Amendment to the Constitution, passed in 1870, guaranteed that United States citizens could not be denied the right to vote "on account of race, color, or previous conditions of servitude." However, it was very hard for black men to register to vote. Even after the Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote in 1920,

black men and women often waited all day in line to register, only to be turned away by rude officials. Blacks were required to pass complicated tests showing they could read. The tests were filled with questions that few whites could answer. Many blacks who tried to register were threatened. Some were beaten. Some were hanged.



▲ WHY DID VOTING matter? Without the right to vote, blacks had no hope of changing their government.

There would be no black sheriffs, judges, or mayors. And elected white officials would be more

likely to respect the rights of blacks who were voters. After all, they would owe their jobs to the

people who elected them. King wanted to make the right to vote available to all blacks, and he chose Selma, Alabama, to begin his campaign, in January 1965. In Selma, he led hundreds to the courthouse to register. They were turned back. They were arrested. King was arrested again, too, for parading without a permit.

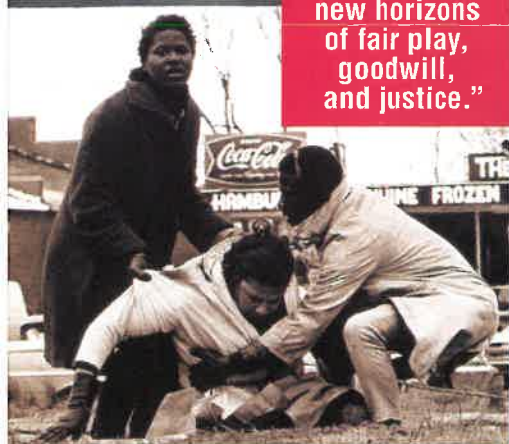


King with Nobel Peace Prize

In 1964, Martin Luther King, Jr., won the Nobel Peace Prize. This important award is given almost every year to the person, people, or organization most responsible for promoting peace. King, at age

thirty-five, was the youngest person ever to receive the prize. In December, he set off with family and friends to Oslo, Norway, where the award ceremony took place. On his return, King was showered with

"I believe firmly that love is a transforming power that can lift a whole community to new horizons of fair play, goodwill, and justice."



▲ On Sunday, March 7, 1965, blacks planned a march from Selma to the state capital in Mont-

gomery, where they wanted to present Governor George Wallace with their complaints. On their

first attempt, state troopers viciously attacked them. Scenes of the violence were televised to a horrified nation. The day became known as Bloody Sunday. President Lyndon Baines Johnson was horrified, too, and spoke out, saying, "It is not just Negroes, but really all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we shall overcome."



▲ The marchers tried a second time, then a third time, finally setting out on the historic 54-mile march on March 21, protected by Army troops and

the National Guard. It took five days. When the marchers arrived in Montgomery, they were buoyant. They proudly sang, "We have overcome today."



▲ In 1965, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law. It guaranteed that blacks could safely register. Even those who could not read could vote.



honors. The city of Atlanta, where he lived, gave him a dinner. Together, blacks and whites sang the civil rights movement's anthem, "We Shall Overcome." Only a few years before, King had been arrested in

Atlanta for trying to eat at an all-white lunch counter. At the dinner, King said, "I must confess that I have enjoyed being on this mountaintop and I am tempted to want to stay here and retreat to a more

quiet and serene life. But something within reminds me that the valley calls me in spite of all its agonies, dangers, and frustrating moments." The valley he was headed to, this time, was a place called Selma.



Striking Memphis sanitation workers, protected by the fixed bayonets of the National Guard

"If you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice; say that I was a drum major for peace; I was a drum major for righteousness."

The Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.



▲ On April 4, King worked with his aides at the Lorraine Motel. Late in the afternoon, he dressed for dinner, then stepped out onto the balcony and spoke with the people in the parking lot below. Suddenly a shot rang out, and

King slumped to the ground. His friend Ralph Abernathy rushed to his side and tried to comfort him. An ambulance took King to St. Joseph's Hospital, where he was declared dead at 7:05 p.m. He was thirty-nine years old.



▲ In Ebenezer Church, Ralph Abernathy played a recording of a famous speech King had delivered. In it, he explained what he would like men-

tioned at his funeral. He had said, "I don't want a long funeral. And if you get someone to deliver the eulogy, tell them not to talk too long.... Tell

them not to mention that I have a Nobel Peace Prize, that isn't important.... I'd like somebody to say that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to

love somebody ... that I did try to feed the hungry ... to clothe those who were naked ... that I tried to love and serve humanity."

Drum Major for Peace

In 1967, Martin Luther King was busy planning a new march on Washington, called the Poor People's Campaign, which would bring thousands of blacks and whites to the capital to demand jobs and fair pay. He had traveled north to Chicago, in a quest to end segregation in the schools and unfair housing practices there. And he had begun to actively oppose the war in Vietnam. His work on the Poor People's Campaign was interrupted when garbage workers in Memphis, Tennessee, went on strike. They needed someone prominent to take on their cause, and an old friend of King's asked him to be that person. In March of 1968, King led six thousand in a march through Memphis. Toward the rear, young blacks started to throw rocks and break windows. Looting began. King was rushed to safety, but he knew he had to return to Memphis and finish what he had begun.



◀ On April 3, 1968, King was in Memphis, where he delivered one of his most moving speeches to a crowd of two thousand people. He said, "Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. But I'm not concerned about that now." He went on, "I've been to the mountaintop. I've seen the Promised Land. And I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the Promised Land. And I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."



▲ **THE SEARCH FOR** King's assassin led to an escaped convict, James Earl Ray. He was found in London, sent to Memphis, and tried for the murder. Found guilty, he was sentenced to 99 years. Ray escaped from jail in 1977 and a manhunt began. He was found in just a few days and returned to prison. He died on April 23, 1998.



▲ **KING'S COFFIN** was put on a wagon and two mules pulled it across Atlanta to Morehouse College, where he

was buried. Fifty thousand mourners marched behind it. The mules and the wagon were a symbol of King's

Poor People's Campaign. So were the work clothes that many of King's aides wore.

THINK PIECE!



Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to end racism through desegregation and by assuring blacks the right to vote. What do you think is needed to end racism today?

MORE ON MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

- ☛ Rosemary Bray, *Martin Luther King*, Mulberry Books, 1997.
- ☛ Jan Colbert (editor), *Dear Dr. King: Letters from Today's Children to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Hyperion Books for Children, 2000.
- ☛ Margaret Davidson, *I Have a Dream: The Story of Martin Luther King*, Scholastic, 1986.
- ☛ James Haskins, *The Day Martin Luther King, Jr., Was Shot: A Photo History of the Civil Rights Movement*, Scholastic, 1992.
- ☛ Ellen Levine, *If You Lived at the Time of Martin Luther King*, Scholastic, 1994.
- ☛ Ira Peck, *The Life and Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Scholastic, 2000.
- ☛ Faith Ringgold, *My Dream of Martin Luther King*, Dragonfly, 1998.

BOOKS FOR ADULTS

- ☛ Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-63*, Touchstone Books, 1989.
- ☛ _____, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years 1963-65*, Touchstone Books, 1999.
- ☛ Clayborne Carson (editor), *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Warner Books, 1998.
- ☛ David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*, Quill, 1999.
- ☛ Charles Johnson and Bob Adelman, *King: The Photobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Viking Studio, 2000.
- ☛ Coretta Scott King, *My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969.
- ☛ Stephen B. Oates, *Let the Trumpet Sound: A Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, HarperPerennial, 1994.
- ☛ Flip Schulke and Penelope McPhee, *King Remembered*, Pocket Books, 1986.
- ☛ James Melvin Washington (editor), *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, HarperCollins, 1991.

OTHER RESOURCES

- ☛ The King Center: <http://www.thekingcenter.org>.

DESIGN A MONUMENT

George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Thomas Jefferson all have memorials in our nation's capital. Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt are carved into Mount Rushmore. How would you honor Martin Luther King, Jr.—with a monument, a statue, a poem? In this space, design a memorial for Martin Luther King, Jr.



WRITE THE LETTER OF EACH OF THESE EVENTS NEXT TO THE CORRECT YEAR:

- A. Bus boycott begins
- B. 15th Amendment gives vote to black men
- C. "I Have a Dream" speech
- D. Supreme Court rules "separate but equal"
- E. King is assassinated
- F. King receives Nobel Peace Prize
- G. Emancipation Proclamation
- H. Voting Rights Bill is passed
- I. Supreme Court rules "separate but equal" schools are unconstitutional
- J. King is born

HE HAD A DREAM

Fill in the blank spaces with the correct words.

1. Symbol of racism

____ 10 29 ____ 40 ____ 28 3

2. Protesters on buses

35 ____ 12 ____ 36 ____ 15 ____ 19 4 ____ 25 ____ 31

3. Alabama city where a church was bombed

____ 30 27 11 ____ 7

4. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, hometown

21 9 22 ____ 1 23 ____

5. King's school

38 14 ____ 8 ____ 2 ____ 18 ____ 43 39 ____ 20

6. King's philosophy: nonviolent

41 ____ 33 ____ 6 42 ____ 37

7. King's close colleague in the civil rights movement

____ ____ 26 24 ____ 32 ____ 13 ____ 44

8. Woman who refused to give up her seat on a bus

____ 34 5 16 ____ 17

Numbers are underneath some of the letters. Put each numbered letter in the blank with the same number. You will have a quotation from King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25
 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35
 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44

Who Are These People?

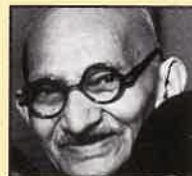
Write the correct name above or below each photograph: Coretta Scott King, Mohandas Gandhi, President Lyndon B. Johnson, Rosa Parks, Ralph Abernathy.











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EDITOR: Stella Sands
ART DIRECTION: Hopkins/Baumann
DESIGNERS: Will Hopkins, Mary K. Baumann, Joseba Gastesi, Nadira Vlaun
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Jennifer Dixon
PHOTO RESEARCH: Carousel Research Inc.: Laurie Platt Winfrey, Matthew Connors, Van Bucher
ACTIVITIES WRITER: Lois Markham
PROOFREADER: Paula Glatzer
FACT CHECKER: Nayda Rondon
AUTHOR: Mary Beth Brewer

PUBLISHER: Mark Levine
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER: Robert Elder
FINANCIAL CONSULTANT: Jerry Mintzer
SUBSCRIBER/EDUCATOR SERVICES: Sonia Rivera, Danny Collins
CONSULTANT: Pace Development Group

MARTIN L. KING, JR., CONSULTANT: Tonya Bolden, Author and Educator, New York, NY

EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT: Janet C. Rotter, Head, Studio Elementary School, New York, NY

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Highest Achievement Category



Winner of a 1996 and 1997 Parents' Choice GOLD Award

ON THE COVER: Portrait of Martin Luther King, Jr. Woodfin Camp; Dan Budnik.

PICTURE CREDITS: Bob Adelman: p.4 center right (rest room), p.5 upper left (boy jumping), p.5 lower left ("Colored Only" sign), p.5 lower left ("Colored Balcony" sign), pp.10-11 (King giving speech), p.13 center right (march), p.14 top left (voting card), p.16 lower right (King funeral), p.17 lower right (King funeral procession). AP Wide World: p.7 lower right (King cleaning slum), p.8 upper right (Rosa Parks), p.9 upper right (King with Coretta Scott King), p.13 center left (King in jail), p.14 bottom left (King with Nobel Peace Prize), p.14 top center (King and policeman), p.15 top right (King and President Johnson); Fred Blackwell, pp.12-13 top center (sit-in). Archive Photos: p.19 lower left (Lyndon B. Johnson). Black Star: Roger Malloch, p.19 top (King speaking); Charles Moore, p.13 bottom right (firemen with high-powered hose aimed at demonstrators), p.15 upper left (woman on ground); Flip Schulke, p.3 bottom left (King giving sermon). Corbis Images: p.17 upper right (King at microphone), p.17 lower right (James Earl Ray); Bettman/CORBIS, p.9 lower left (King with hat), p.9 lower right (King in jail cell), p.12 lower left (King in hospital), p.16 top ("I Am a Man" march), p.19 bottom left (Ralph Abernathy); Flip Schulke, p.3 bottom right (street sign). Culver Pictures: p.4 center left (slave's back), p.5 center right ("Amos 'n' Andy"). Benedict J. Fernandez: p.6 center (King family albums). James Karales: p.7 lower left (King family and swing set), p.13 top right (King speaking in church), pp.14-15 (marchers on hill), p.19 bottom center (Coretta Scott King). Life Magazine: p.8 lower right (police officer and black driver), p.19 lower right (Rosa Parks); Don Cravens, p.9 top right (woman with box on head); Frank Dandridge, p.13 lower left (girl with bandaged eyes); Carl Iwasaki, p.5 bottom right (girls); Joseph Louw, p.16 lower left (King's assassination); Paul Schutzer, p.12 lower right (Freedom Riders), p.2-3 top (King greeting people). LPW Inc.: Richard Griffith, p.2 bottom center (Gandhi), p.19 bottom right (Gandhi). Photo Researchers: Kenneth Murray, p.4 lower left (Ku Klux Klan). Dan Weiner: p.6 top left (King's birth house), p.7 top (King family on church steps), p.8 center (King's house at night), p.9 center right (buses). Woodfin Camp: Dan Budnik, p.15 top center (King and others marching).

ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS:

Acme Design Company: Map of Deep South, p.3; Timeline, p.18.
 Michael Kline Illustration: Design a Monument, p.18.

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ANSWERS:

PAGES 18-19:

TIMELINE:

- 1863: Emancipation Proclamation
- 1870: 15th Amendment gives vote to black men
- 1896: Supreme Court rules "separate but equal"
- 1929: King is born
- 1954: Supreme Court rules "separate but equal" schools are unconstitutional
- 1955: Bus boycott begins
- 1963: "I Have a Dream" speech
- 1964: King receives Nobel Peace Prize
- 1965: Voting Rights Bill is passed
- 1968: King is assassinated

HE HAD A DREAM:

- 1. Jim Crow; 2. Freedom Riders; 3. Birmingham;
- 4. Atlanta; 5. Morehouse College; 6. resistance;
- 7. Ralph Abernathy; 8. Rosa Parks. "Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy."

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE? Top row, left to right: President Lyndon B. Johnson, Coretta Scott King, Rosa Parks; bottom row, left to right: Ralph Abernathy, Mohandas Gandhi.

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