



Mountaintop Moments

MLK's Vision for the Future



"We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience."

– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (March 25, 1965. Montgomery, Ala.)

On April 3, 1968, the night before he was tragically assassinated in Memphis, Revered Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave a prophetic speech. In this speech, Dr. King evoked the Biblical parable of Moses who was leading his people to the Promised Land, but was stopped short to view the future from a mountaintop. Dr. King powerfully spoke about having “been to the mountaintop” – a vantage point from which he could envision an enlightened future of unity, freedom, equality and the “beloved community.” 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of Dr. King’s assassination and presents an opportunity to show how his words and vision are still relevant today.

HISTORY® is proud to join with The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change (The King Center), led by CEO Rev. Dr. Bernice A. King, to share “mountaintop moments” of prominent people and to encourage people from across the globe to share their inspirational vision for the future from their own “mountaintops.”

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Using #mountaintopmoments share your vision for the future. Students can also write essays or letters about their mountaintop visions. Think about Dr. King’s legacy and his impact in our world today. What do you see from your mountaintop?

EXPLORE

View the Mountaintop Moments series and read more:

<https://www.history.com/mountaintopmoments>

Read an article about Dr. King’s “Mountaintop” speech by Dr. Daina Ramey Berry:

<https://www.history.com/news/martin-luther-king-jr-mountaintop-moments>

Find more resources from the King Center:

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/>

Learn more about the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr:

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/martin-luther-king-jr>

READ AND DISCUSS:

Read Dr. King's "mountaintop speech" online here:

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/ive-been-mountaintop#>

http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documentsentry/ive_been_to_the_mountaintop/

1. What does Dr. King say in his speech about the importance of unity? Why do you think unity was so important during the civil rights movement?
2. What do you think Dr. King meant when he said "anchor our external direct action with the power of economic withdrawal?"
3. Why do you think the principle of nonviolence was so important during the civil rights movement?
4. What portions of this speech do you find most powerful or surprising?
5. Why do you think imagining the future was so important to Dr. King and his followers?
6. If you had to describe the legacy of Dr. King, what would you say? What do you think is the most important legacy he left behind?

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.: REVIEW CHART FOR STUDENTS

<p>Early Years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born: January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia • Family roots in the Baptist church • King graduated from Morehouse College at the age of 19 • Married Coretta Scott King in 1953 • Studied theology at Crozer Theological Seminary and received his PhD from Boston University in 1955 	<p>Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Martin Luther King grew up in what neighborhood in Atlanta 2. Who influenced King to become a minister 3. Dr. King moved to _____ to start his career as a minister and political activist.
<p>The Civil Rights Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Became Pastor at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church • Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus, 1955; King elected President of the Montgomery Improvement Assoc. • King co-founds the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957 • Civil rights campaign in Birmingham, 1963 • March on Washington, summer 1963 • Civil Rights Act, 1964; Voting Rights Act, 1965 • March from Selma to Montgomery, 1965 • King travels north, starts the Poor People's Campaign in 1967 • Assassinated April 4, 1968 in Memphis, TN 	<p>Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1956, the _____ Court declared that the segregated buses in Montgomery were illegal 2. Martin Luther King learned about non-violence from Mahatma Gandhi, a leader in what country? 3. When Martin Luther King was 35, he was awarded the _____ Peace Prize

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.: REVIEW CHART FOR STUDENTS

The Making of a Holiday

- In the wake of Dr. King's death, the debate about civil rights continued
- After much debate, the House and Senate both passed a bill making Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a national holiday; signed into law on Nov. 2, 1983
- Martin Luther King Day was celebrated for the first time on Jan. 20th, 1986 and is observed every year on the third Monday in January

Questions

1. _____ was president when Dr. King's birthday was declared a holiday.
2. Write down a short quote from Dr. King that you have heard before or you find through research

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

1. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was known for his famous oratory style and gift with words. Many of his speeches have been published and are available at libraries, on the Internet and in bookstores. Research his speeches and pick a paragraph that you find interesting. In a short essay, describe what you like about this paragraph and what it teaches about Dr. King's philosophies.
2. The Supreme Court determined that school segregation was illegal with the Brown v. Board of Education decision, prompting the leaders of the civil rights movement to fight against segregation in schools, in transportation, and in public places such as restaurants. In small groups, investigate the efforts of civil rights movement participants to eliminate segregation in these different arenas. Each group should research one topic, such as city buses, lunch counters, etc. Present your findings to the class through oral presentations, PowerPoint presentations, or on a poster board.
3. In addition to Dr. King, there were many people throughout the country who contributed to the civil rights movement and helped bring about change. Research another participant or leader in the Civil rights movement using books or the Internet. Using PowerPoint or poster boards, create a visual biography of this person. You can include relevant dates, images, quotes and publications. Share your discovery with your classmates or group.
4. One of the most powerful ways to learn more about history is to talk to those who have lived through events from the past. Students can join efforts to collect and archive the personal stories of people who lived during the civil rights era. Ask students to locate someone in their family, neighborhood, or school who lived through this era and interview them about their memories of Dr. King and this time period in U.S. history. For instructions on conducting and transcribing an interview, consult oral history guidelines online at: <https://cdn.watch.aetnd.com/prod.cdn.watch.aetnd.com.s3.amazonaws.com/sites/2/2017/03/OralHistoryGuidelines.pdf>