

**SUMMARY**

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech is one of the most famous in history. This play offers students the chance to live the history of the 1963 March on Washington and be present at the speech.

LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

- Identifying conflict and resolution
- Vocabulary
- Using prior knowledge
- Identifying main idea
- Identifying factual details

MAIN TEACHING OBJECTIVES

After reading this play, students should be able to:

- Recount historical facts about the 1963 March on Washington
- Define terms relevant to the civil rights movement
- Discuss the meaning of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech
- Explain the conflicts that arise in the play and how they are resolved

BEFORE READING

Background knowledge: Ask students to look at the photograph on page 25. Can they identify who is in it? Ask them to share what they know about him. What were his achievements? How did he accomplish them? Why is he so respected as a leader?

DURING READING

As your class reads the play aloud, they might need an explanation of some of the terms relating to civil rights and to the March on Washington:

segregation: separation; specifically, having separate facilities, such as schools, restaurants, parks, etc., for whites and non-whites. Much of the South and other places were segregated until the civil rights movement.

demonstrations: protests; public gatherings where people voice their opinion about an issue

Birmingham: A city in Alabama where Dr. King led attempts to achieve justice

for African-Americans, but police and authorities responded violently

nonviolence: Dr. King's philosophy of making social changes through peaceful means

Emancipation Proclamation: The document issued by Abraham Lincoln in 1863 that freed the slaves

Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial: Important monuments in Washington, D.C., at either end of a long, open area called the National Mall. The **Reflecting Pool** lies between them.

integrated: united; open to people of all races

"We hold these truths . . .": Dr. King quoted text from the Declaration of Independence, implying that it applied to all people.

Civil Rights Act: Law passed in 1964 that prohibited discrimination in public places and in employment, and integrated schools and other public facilities

Voting Rights Act: Law passed in 1965 that made it illegal to deny any citizen the right to vote

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS/
WRITING PROMPTS**

- Why is Dad upset at the beginning of the play? Why is James upset? (identifying problems) *Dad is upset because his salary is low, and he didn't get a raise. James is upset because his father accepts unfair treatment and won't come to the march.*

- James explains that Dr. King preaches nonviolence. What are some ways that people protest nonviolently? (using prior knowledge) *Nonviolent protest includes marches, letter writing, petitions, boycotts, peacefully breaking unfair laws, etc.*

- Why won't Grandma see a specialist at first? What changes her mind? (identifying problems and solutions) *A specialist costs too much. She decides to see one to convince her family to go to the march.*

- Why were organizers worried about the march at the beginning? What ended up happening? (identifying factual details) *They were worried at first because not that many people were there. Eventually, more than 200,000 showed up.*

- What do Clay's and Erik's journeys tell you about the march? (making inferences) *The march was so important that people of all colors went to extreme efforts to be there.*

- Based on the text of the speech, what was Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream? (identifying main idea) *His dream was that one day all people would be treated equally and be appreciated for who they are on the inside.*

Class Discussion: Show students King's speech, or parts of it, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEMXaTktUfA>. You can find this link on our Web site. Have them discuss their impressions of it. Why do they think it was so powerful? How do they think it would have felt to be in the crowd listening?

Identifying Conflict and Resolution:

Ask students to choose one character from the play and explain the conflict he or she faced about going to the march. How was it resolved? Then, ask them what they would have done if they were that character.

WRITING PROMPTS

Persuasive: Have students imagine they are going to a march about something that's important to them today (e.g., global warming, protecting endangered animals, etc.). How would they convince a reluctant friend that it's important to attend the march?

**Reproducibles**

Skills and Test-Prep Online

Go to www.scholastic.com/storyworks to print out the following activities that can be used with this play:

- Comprehension Quiz
- Critical Thinking Questions
- Civil Rights Vocabulary
- Conflict/Resolution