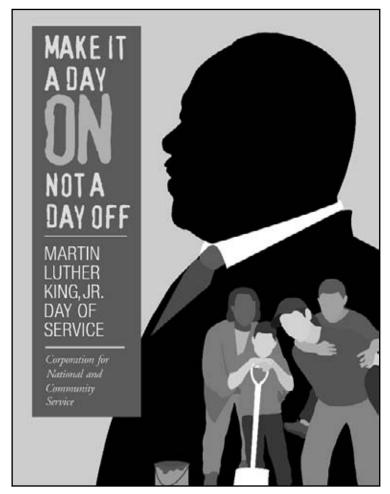
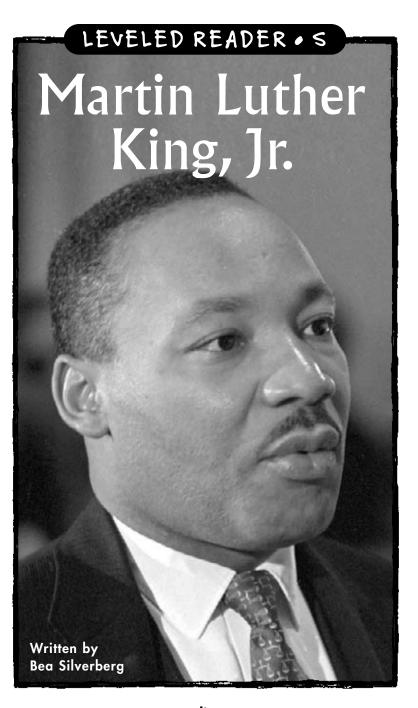
Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Glossary

boycott a way of protesting when people stop

buying things or using services from a company in order to force a change in

policies (p. 13)

civil rights legal, social, and economic rights that

guarantee freedom and equality for all

citizens (p. 8)

Freedom groups of African Americans and white

Americans who rode buses together through the South to protest against

segregation (p. 16)

integration the policy of members of different groups

and races sharing together in a free and equal way (for example, students of all

races attending a school) (p. 12)

nonviolent a way of protesting to win certain goals

without using physical force (p. 9)

segregation the policy of members of different groups

or races being kept separate by law (for example, African American students

attending one school, and white

American students attending a separate

school) (p. 6)

sit-in when people sit somewhere and refuse

to move as a form of peaceful protest

(p. 15)

Martin Luther King, Jr.



Written by Bea Silverberg

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Riders

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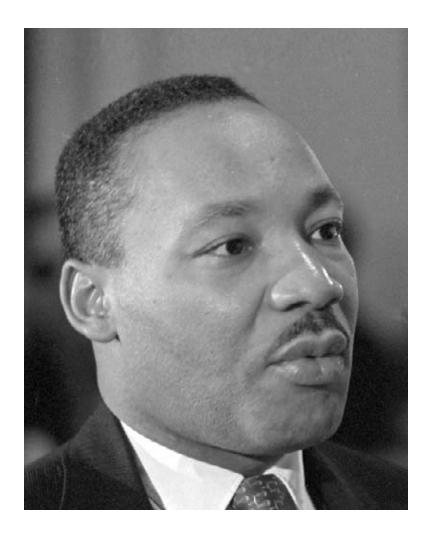
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Correlation

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DRA	34

The whole world mourned the death of this great man of peace. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is remembered for making real the dream of equality. And he is remembered for being a man of peace and a champion of rights and freedom for people of every color.





Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., participates in a civil rights march in Memphis days before his assassination.

One Last March

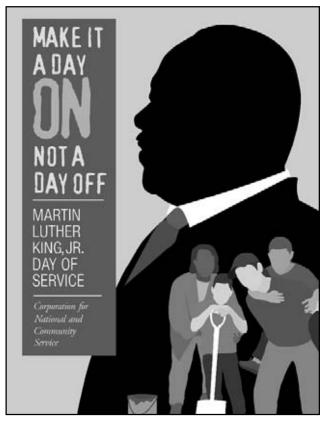
Martin later called for the Poor People's Campaign. The goal was to get better homes, schools, and jobs for African Americans. In the spring of 1968, he went to help out on a strike held by the garbage collectors in Memphis, Tennessee. (A strike is when workers refuse to work until they win better wages or working conditions.) While in Memphis, Martin was killed by an assassin's bullet. He died on April 4, 1968 at the age of 39.

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Introduction

On the third Monday in January, Americans celebrate Martin Luther King Day. We honor a great African American leader who worked for freedom for all people. Who is this man who has a national holiday in his name?



Dr. King once said, "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve." To learn how you can serve in your community, visit www.mlkday.org.



Alabama Governor George Wallace ordered state troopers to use tear gas on peaceful demonstrators.

In Selma, Alabama, Martin led long lines of African Americans to the registration offices. He was arrested for his action and later released. Then the marchers started marching on the road from Selma to Montgomery. They wanted to present a complaint to the governor of Alabama, George C. Wallace. But he ordered the march stopped. The marchers continued and were stopped by state troopers who used unnecessary force to stop the marchers. The day is remembered as Bloody Sunday. Later, on August 6, 1965, with the support of President Johnson, the Voting Rights Act was passed in Washington, D.C. It was a great victory for all people.

The next struggle for African Americans was for voting rights. In the South, many African Americans had been prevented from registering to vote. Registering meant that people had to prove they were entitled to vote. Registration was made difficult. It became nearly impossible for many African Americans to register to vote. In some places an unfair poll tax was charged for voting. It was a tax many poor people could not afford.



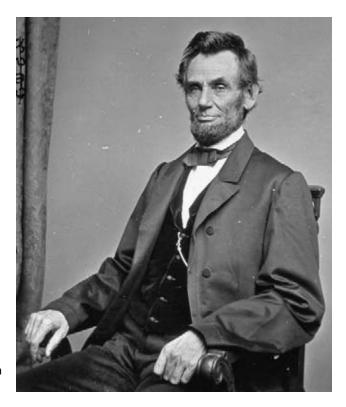
Civil rights supporters stage a peaceful demonstration for voter rights in Mississippi in 1964.



The childhood home of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Growing Up in the South

Martin Luther King, Jr., was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929. His father was a Baptist minister, and his mother was a teacher. Martin grew up in a busy and loving family. He and his sister and brother studied, took music lessons, and played sports.



Abraham Lincoln

In the South, African Americans had always lived under laws that were unfair to them. Before the Civil War, most African Americans had been slaves to white owners. During this war, President Abraham Lincoln granted freedom to slaves by passing a special law. But even though the slaves were free from slavery, Southern lawmakers passed new laws to keep them separated, or **segregated**, from white people.

Sadly, three months later, President Kennedy was assassinated. But the Civil Rights Act, which he supported and which ended segregation in all public buildings, became law in 1964.



President Lyndon Johnson signs into law the Civil Rights Act.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., giving his famous "I Have a Dream" speech

"I Have a Dream"

President Kennedy spoke out in support of civil rights. He said it was time for all citizens to have freedom. Much encouraged, Martin called for a march on Washington for August 28, 1963. African Americans and many white Americans, numbering over 250,000, walked from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial. They were marching for freedom, rights, and dignity for all people. The cheering crowd heard Martin give his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. His dream was that one day all people of all colors would live together peacefully and be "free at last" from judgment or mistreatment because of skin color.

These laws were called Jim Crow laws, and they deprived African Americans of many rights. African American children went to separate, poorer schools than white children. On buses, African Americans had to sit in the back seats. African Americans were forced to use public drinking fountains and restrooms marked "For Colored Only." In earlier days, African Americans were called "Colored." White people used drinking fountains and restrooms that were marked "For Whites Only."



As Martin grew up, he learned from his parents and his teachers that the laws calling for segregation were unfair. African Americans were suffering from not having equal rights. Many of them were poor and could not find jobs. Martin wanted to help the African American people gain full freedom. He wanted to work for civil rights —for full legal, social, and economic equality.



Poverty-stricken African Americans



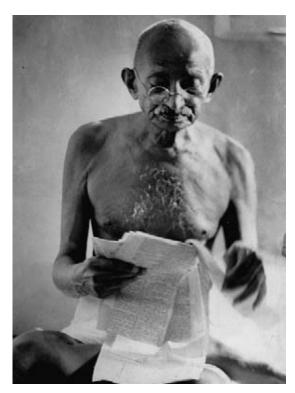
Policemen with vicious dogs attack nonviolent African American demonstrators.

In April of 1963, Martin led the famous Birmingham March to stop segregation in the city. The marchers were met by the Police Chief "Bull" Connor and his men. Attack dogs were set loose on the marchers, even on children. The marchers were sprayed with high-pressure fire hoses. Many were seriously injured. More than 3,000 African Americans were arrested and jailed. President Kennedy sent U.S. troops to Birmingham to stop the violence. Finally, the city ended its segregation laws. The media coverage of the violence in Birmingham made more and more people aware of the unfair and harsh treatment of African Americans. It brought more support to the need for equal rights for all people.

The next year a group of African Americans and white Americans, called the **Freedom Riders**, rode together on buses through the Southern states. They wanted to put the new law banning segregation to a test. When they got to Alabama, violent gangs of Southerners, including members of the KKK, burned the buses and attacked the riders. The local police offered little protection, and many people were hurt. Finally, the federal government in Washington, D.C., sent in 500 U.S. troops to put a stop to the violence.



This Freedom Riders bus was firebombed in Alabama in 1961. Passengers escaped without serious injury.



Mohandas Gandhi

Martin was a bright student who went to college near home in Atlanta at age 15. He then went north to continue his religious education. He decided when he was 19 that he would be a Baptist minister like his father. He had read about Mohandas Gandhi, the great leader from India. Gandhi believed in using love, not hate, to stop injustice. Martin decided he wanted to use peaceful, nonviolent ways to help his people.



Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his wife, Coretta. This photo was taken three years after they married.

While he was up north, Martin met his future wife, Coretta Scott. She was studying to become a singer. On their first date, Martin told Coretta he wanted to marry her. He liked her for her beliefs and her commitment to equality, as well as her beauty. In the summer of 1953, they got married. A year later, Martin took his first preaching job at a Baptist church in Montgomery, Alabama.



A 1960 demonstration for lunch counter integration

Marches and Struggles

Violent acts continued against African Americans in the South. Several churches were firebombed in Montgomery. Martin spoke out, "We will not hate you, but we will not obey your evil laws."

Courageous African Americans started to test the unfair laws of segregation. In 1960, small groups, often students, began sit-ins at lunch counters where only white people could be served. (A sit-in is when people sit somewhere and refuse to move as a form of peaceful protest.) While the African Americans sat in their seats, they were pushed and often beaten by angry white people. But in time the sit-ins were successful. By the end of the year, over 126 Southern towns had integrated their lunch counters.

Martin became the leader of the Montgomery bus boycott. People supported the boycott by walking or carpooling, but they would not ride the buses. For over a year, the boycott went on. The city would not change the segregation law. Many angry threats were made to Martin and his family. Once, their house was bombed. No one was hurt, but Martin now realized that he and his family were in danger. In November, 1956, the boycott ended in victory for the African American community. Soon after that victory, the Supreme Court ruled that Alabama could not segregate riders on buses.



A church-operated station wagon provided transportation to African Americans during the Montgomery bus boycott.

Starting His Work

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled that schools could not be segregated, or divided, by race. The Court ordered that schools should be integrated. This meant that all races should be able to attend the school of their choice. With this important ruling, African Americans became very hopeful that they could change society. Martin and other leaders encouraged people to work together peacefully to win civil rights for everyone, regardless of their race or religion.



Children at an integrated school in Washington, D.C., in 1954

But some white people were not happy with the Supreme Court ruling. They organized to fight integrated schools. A small secret group of white people, called the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), tried to prevent African Americans from having equal rights. Often their actions were violent. Many other Southern white people, while not violent, were not in favor of **integration**. And many white people from the South and the North supported integration and full equality for African Americans.



Hooded and robed KKK members burn a cross at a meeting.



Rosa Parks being fingerprinted in Montgomery, Alabama

In December 1955, something important happened in Montgomery, where Martin and his family were living. An African American woman named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man. She was arrested. The African American citizens of the city were outraged, and they decided to protest. They refused to ride city buses because they wanted an end to segregation on the buses. This kind of protest, where people refuse to participate in something in order to force a change, is called a **boycott**. It is a peaceful means of protest.