

Fact or Fiction?

Name: _____

Below is a biography on Martin Luther King, Jr. On the following page is a chart with ten statements. Indicate whether each statement is fact or fiction.

Introduction

The reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was one of the most influential and inspirational Civil Rights leaders in American history. Born in 1929, King graduated from Morehouse College in 1948 and then from the Crozer Theological Seminary with a Bachelor's in Divinity in 1951. He received a Ph.D in Systematic theology in 1955 from Boston University.

Standing with Rosa Parks

In 1954, King became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama where he led the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama after Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a public bus. The boycott lasted 381 days and resulted in King being arrested. Despite his arrest, the boycott ultimately resulted in the Supreme Court outlawing discrimination on intrastate buses.

Perfecting the Peaceful Protest

After the boycott, King helped in the founding of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) which advocated the peaceful protest of Black churches concerning Civil Rights (especially in the American south). Primarily inspired by the non-violent protests conducted by Mahatma Gandhi in India, King was instrumental in helping his cause gain national attention through the media. Because of his efforts, civil rights became the top political issue of the early 1960's.

He Had a Dream

In 1963, King delivered the immortal speech "I have a Dream" in front of the Lincoln Memorial during the March on Washington. Over 250,000 people gathered around the National Mall in support. King's speech electrified the crowd and is considered one of the greatest speeches in American history. King later led protests and gave speeches for the African American right to vote, desegregation, and fair hiring.

King is Instrumental in the Passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

In 1964, King's hopes were realized when congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and then, the Voting Rights Act of 1965. On October 14, 1964, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership in non-violent protest.

Anti-war Sentiments

King became a prominent political figure and expressed his opposition of American involvement in the Vietnam War. In 1967, King called America "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today." Although King was always hated by southern white segregationists, his speech against America turned many in mainstream media against him.

Assassination

In 1968, while he was organizing a march to protest the working conditions of black sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, he was assassinated by James Earl Ray at the Lorraine Hotel. Because he was under FBI surveillance at the time, many believe the agency was involved in the assassination (although there is no proof). Furthermore, some reports have suggested that the FBI, and its chief officer J. Edgar Hoover, threatened to reveal evidence of extra-marital affairs King engaged in if he refused to curtail his Civil Rights efforts.

Powerful Legacy

300,000 people attended King's funeral. President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a national day of mourning. Today, numerous schools, buildings, and highways are named for Martin Luther King Jr. In 1986, a U.S. national holiday was established in honor of Martin Luther King Jr., which is called Martin Luther King Day. It is observed on the third Monday of January each year, around the time of King's birthday. On January 18, 1993, for the first time, Martin Luther King Day was officially observed in all 50 U.S. states. Below is an excerpt from King's famous *I have a Dream* speech.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, a state sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor, having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful

symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

	FACT	FICTION
Martin Luther King was involved in the Montgomery Bus Boycott		
Martin Luther King won the Nobel Peace Prize		
Some believe the FBI was involved in King's assassination		
Martin Luther King graduated from Harvard University		
All 50 states began observing Martin Luther King Day in 1986		
King's I have a Dream Speech was given in front of the Lincoln Memorial		
Martin Luther King was rarely controversial		
King's non-violent protests were inspired by Mother Theresa's work in India		
King was opposed to American involvement in the Vietnam War		
Although few people attended the I have a Dream Speech, it became one of the most famous in American history		
King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee		

Answers:

	FACT	FICTION
Martin Luther King was involved in the Montgomery Bus Boycott	X	
Martin Luther King won the Nobel Peace Prize	X	
Some believe the FBI was involved in King's assassination	X	
Martin Luther King graduated from Harvard University		X
All 50 states began observing Martin Luther King Day in 1986		X
King's I have a Dream Speech was given in front of the Lincoln Memorial	X	
Martin Luther King was rarely controversial		X
King's non-violent protests were inspired by Mother Theresa's work in India		X
King was opposed to American involvement in the Vietnam War	X	
Although few people attended the I have a Dream Speech, it became one of the most famous in American history		X
King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee	X	