



# “I HAVE A DREAM”

## MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

On Aug. 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a Baptist minister from Alabama, gave a speech to more than 250,000 people who had peacefully organized on the Mall in Washington, D.C., for a “March on Washington for Freedom and Jobs” to protest racial inequality.

King was the last in a line of speakers that included Civil Rights, religious and labor leaders, actors and musicians.

“I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I **STILL HAVE A DREAM**. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.”

**“I HAVE A DREAM** that one day this nation will rise up, live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.’”



Major television networks carried his speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial where he reminded listeners that the American dream is one of freedom for all, referring to the Declaration of Independence and President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation.

King’s “I have a dream” speech is credited with mobilizing supporters of desegregation and leading to the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

**“I HAVE A DREAM** that my four little 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.”

### INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT DR. KING AND HIS SPEECH

- > The original title of King’s speech was “Normalcy — Never again.” He had worked with others on the speech and stayed up until 4 a.m. preparing it.
- > King had given “I have a dream” speeches before and was counseled by advisors not to use the theme, so it was not included in his prepared remarks.
- > After a friend, gospel singer Mahalia Jackson, called out to him, “Tell ‘em about the dream, Martin,” King extemporaneously began the “dream” section of his speech.
- > King’s “I have a dream” speech lasted 17-minutes.
- > Following the March, King was named Time magazine’s Man of the Year in 1963.
- > King, age 35, was the youngest man ever to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, awarded to him in 1964.
- > Between 1957 and 1968, King traveled more than 6 million miles and gave 2,500 speeches.
- > On the evening of April 4, 1968, King was assassinated while standing on the balcony of his motel room in Memphis, Tenn.

### LEARN MORE

❶ Find the script or a video of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech online. Pretend you are a newspaper reporter covering the speech. Write a news story about what you just witnessed.

❷ King referenced the Emancipation Proclamation, Declaration of Independence and Constitution in his speech and said America had given a bad check. What did he mean by that? What kind of figure of speech is this?

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