

Name: _____ Class: _____

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Changing America

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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) was a Baptist minister and a leader of the African American Civil Rights Movement. This article shares key details about Dr. King's life and accomplishments, including his belief in equality and non-violence. As you read, take notes on the problems that African-Americans faced during the 1950s and 60s, and the strategies that Dr. King used to create social change.

[1] Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a great leader. He inspired many people. He brought about changes that are important to everyone in the United States. In fact, he is known around the world. He was the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize. That is a prize given to a person who is important to the world. It is a peace prize. He wanted people to change things peacefully. He thought that violence only led to more problems.

Dr. King used a way of changing things called non-violent protest. He saw that people were not treated fairly. He protested for civil rights. When he led marches, people were angry. But he was determined. Even though people shouted at him, he kept marching.

People who had been afraid to protest before were encouraged. They joined him. He was able to give them confidence. Together they would overcome. Soon thousands of people were with him. He was changing America.

He organized boycotts. A boycott means that people do not buy something or shop at a store or use a service. The boycott he led was the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Before that boycott in 1955, African Americans could not ride in the front of buses. They had to sit or stand in the back even if there were seats in the front. Only whites could have those front seats. It took months, but they won. They got the right to sit anywhere in the bus.



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[5] Dr. King influenced many people. He reached them with his books and speeches. He gave a very inspiring speech in Washington, D.C. People call it his "I Have a Dream" speech. In it he told about what he had seen, the changes that had happened, and what would happen in the future.

Today the United States celebrates his life with a special holiday every year. On that day, people remember what he accomplished. They think about how he has made a difference to everyone in America.

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Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which of the following best identifies a central idea of this text? [RI.2]
 - A. Americans celebrate Dr. King because he led people to create equality.
 - B. Dr. King is important because he won many awards.
 - C. All social change is made through non-violent protests like boycotts.
 - D. In his "I Have a Dream Speech" Dr. King predicted the future.

2. PART B: Which phrase from the text best supports the answer to Part A? [RI.1]
 - A. "He was the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize." (Paragraph 1)
 - B. "He thought that violence only led to more problems." (Paragraph 1)
 - C. "They got the right to sit anywhere in the bus." (Paragraph 4)
 - D. "In it he told about what he had seen, the changes that had happened, and what would happen in the future." (Paragraph 5)

3. Which of the following statements best summarizes the way Dr. King created change? [RI.3]
 - A. Dr. King created change through his strong leadership, moving speeches, and his support of continued non-violent protest, such as boycotts and marching.
 - B. Dr. King created change mainly by writing to important politicians and appealing directly to lawmakers about the state of inequality in America.
 - C. Dr. King created change through his strong leadership and his call for protest, organizing marches that would spin out of control into riots.
 - D. Dr. King created change through protests such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott, in which protesters took over the buses so white people could not use them.

4. Which of the following best describes how Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy is remembered in America today? [RI.2]
 - A. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is remembered namely as the youngest person to win a Nobel Peace Prize.
 - B. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is remembered through a national holiday and little else in terms of celebration.
 - C. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. legacy serves as an inspiration for change, though only in the African American community.
 - D. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has become a figure of peace and equality, not just in America but all over the world.

5. "When he led marches, people were angry... Even though people shouted at him, he kept marching." What does this quote from paragraph 2 reveal about Dr. King's character or point of view, especially as a leader? [RI.6] [RI.5]
