

Analyzing Primary Sources: The Text of “I Have a Dream”

A **primary source** is a document or object written or created during the time under study. Primary sources offer an inside view from the context of a particular time in history. Primary sources can be documents such as diaries, speeches, letters, or interviews. They can be photographs, or music. They can also be artifacts such as pottery, clothing, or paintings.

During the August 28, 1963 March on Washington, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered a speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial that became known as the “I Have a Dream” speech. Studying the text of the speech, a primary source document, provides us insight into the goals of the marchers, the emotions of that day, and into the social climate that precipitated Dr. King's ideas as expressed in the speech.



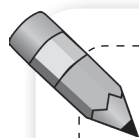
Leaders of the march posing in front of the statue of Abraham Lincoln, Lincoln Memorial, Washington DC, 08/28/1963. National Archives and Records Administration.

On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following:

1. Dr. King says that his dream “is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.” What is the “American dream,” and what do you think Dr. King means by this statement?
2. Dr. King uses Mississippi as an example of “a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression...” What injustices and oppression were occurring in Mississippi (and other places) at this time in history?
3. In your opinion, has Dr. King's dream come true? Why or why not?
4. Read Dr. King's full speech at <http://teachin-gamericanhistory.org/library/document/i-have-a-dream-speech/>. What do you think he means when he says, in paragraph 7, “We cannot walk alone.”?

Excerpt from “I Have a Dream”

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 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, sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. 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.



Extension - Primary Sources Pinned

Take the virtual **History Pin** tour entitled “The March on Washington” to see powerful images from the march pinned to a map and displayed upon the backdrop of those historic places today.

Access the tour. (<https://www.historypin.org/attach/uid23019/tours/view/540/title/The%2520March%2520on%2520Washington/>)

Social Change through Nonviolence

“Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals.”

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. King and his followers used several methods to bring about social change, including those found below. The underpinnings of all these methods was a philosophy of nonviolence. Draw lines to match each method below with its definition. Then using social studies resources and the internet, find an example of each nonviolent method, and record it. This can be done individually, in small groups, or as a whole class.

civil disobedience	boycott	demonstration	negotiation	sit-in
<p>Process of discussing, compromising, and bargaining in good faith to secure a resolution to a conflict.</p>	<p>The act of openly disobeying an unjust law, and accepting the consequences, to protest an injustice.</p>	<p>Tactic in which protesters sit down at the site of an injustice and refuse to move for a specified period of time or until goals are achieved.</p>	<p>Withdrawal of support from a company, government or institution committing an injustice, such as racial discrimination.</p>	<p>Gatherings and protest activities organized to build support for peace, justice or social reform.</p>
<p>Example:</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>

Extension: Mahatma Gandhi served as an inspiration to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As a pioneer of resistance through mass nonviolent civil disobedience, Gandhi became one of the major political and spiritual leaders of his time. Dr. King said “Gandhi was the guiding light of our technique for nonviolent social change.” Research three ways that Gandhi enacted social change in India.

Timeline of the Civil Rights Movement

The following events were pivotal in the Civil Rights Movement in America. Use research tools to put them in order on the timeline below:

Martin Luther King, Jr. Assassinated
Brown vs. Board of Education
Voting Rights Act
Montgomery Bus Boycott
"I Have a Dream" Speech

Integration of the US Military
Birmingham Church Bombing
Era of Massive Resistance
Civil Rights Act
March on Washington



Martin Luther King, Jr. was influenced by the teachings of several other prominent men. Read the quotes below, and match the quote with the appropriate name.

Frederick Douglass

"Live your beliefs and you can turn the world around."

W.E.B. DuBois

"You are not judged by the height you have risen, but from the depth you have climbed."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

"There is in this world no such force as the force of a person determined to rise."

Mahatma Gandhi

"When it (violence) appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent."

Henry David Thoreau

"We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline."

Did you know? The name on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birth certificate is Michael Luther King. Martin's father wanted to name his son after himself, but Martin's father went by the nickname of "Mike" (even though his name was Martin). So Martin Luther King, Jr. ended up with "Michael" on his birth certificate by mistake! It was later changed to Martin.

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Virginia Repertory Theatre
Presents...

I Have a Dream

by Bruce Miller

Virginia Repertory Theatre
Bruce C. Miller, Artistic Director
Phil Whiteway, Managing Director

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Theater Etiquette



Clap, but know when to do so.

You should clap after a play, act, or song, or right before intermission. If you loved the show, you can give a "standing ovation" at the end. That's when you stand up while applauding.

It's quiet time (sort of).

If the play makes you laugh or cry, that is fine, but you can chat with your friends afterwards. Be respectful and quiet so the actors can focus on their roles. Being quiet allows the rest of the audience to concentrate on the play.

Behind the Curtains

Many people with different skills and talents work together to make a production such as *I Have a Dream* come to life. Can you match these theater jobs with their descriptions?

set designer

a person who plays a role or character in stage plays, motion pictures, television broadcasts, etc.

playwright

a person who creates the look of each character by designing clothes and accessories the actors will wear in performance.

stage manager

this person's job is to pull together all the pieces and parts of a play – the script, actors, set, costumes, lighting and sound, and music to create a production.

actor

this job focuses on using light to create effects that match the mood of various scenes in a performance.

costume designer

this person is a writer of scripts for plays. The script tells a story through the actions and words of the characters.

lighting designer

this person creates the physical surroundings of a play, including any scenery, furniture, or props used throughout the play.

director

this person helps the director and helps organize the actors, designers, stage crew, and technicians throughout the production of a play.