

Martin Luther King Teacher's Notes B1

Martin Luther King, Jr stands out as one of the prominent figures in US history. Leading campaigner in the fight over desegregation and against poverty, he promoted non-violent means of action such as boycotts and marches. "I Have a Dream", his speech delivered at the Lincoln Memorial on 28 August, 1963 after the March on Washington, is famous worldwide and remains an inspiring piece of writing illustrating humanist and pacifist values. Awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 (aged 35, he was its youngest ever recipient), he is celebrated with a federal holiday every third Monday in January in the U.S.A.

In this B1 sequence, after briefly sharing what they already know about this inspiring figure, students will watch a video and learn more about MLK's final days and his assassination in Memphis, Tennessee on 4 April, 1968. In groups, they will then collect more information from an animated slideshow about his life and achievements in order to write MLK's obituary.

Culture, language and structures

- Martin Luther King, Jr
- the Civil Rights movement
- expressing the past
- time markers
- *be allowed to / be able to / be forbidden to / have to*
- making and discussing hypotheses

Introducing the topic and brainstorming – Speaking

- Project a photograph of Martin Luther King on the board, and let students react. Get them to progressively develop what they know, pretending you don't understand or asking for further precisions and developments. Note down the various elements they give you on the board and elicit discussion whenever possible.
- Make sure students are familiar with the notion of segregation (and don't mistake it for the Apartheid). Have them work on a definition and give concrete examples.

During segregation, black people had to sit at the back of buses. They were not allowed to attend certain places or events...

Watching a Video and Exchanging

"Moments in Civil Rights History - April 4th, 1968"

- Tell students they are about to watch a video about MLK's last days and assassination. See if they know something about it. If so, note down the facts and hypotheses they give you. They will check them with the video.
- Project the video "Moments in Civil Rights History – April 4th, 1968" (www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRINqQcIZsI).
- **Activity A** offers some guidance to help students take their notes and guides them towards reconstructing the meaning. However, we suggest showing the video twice before proposing the worksheet. They should be encouraged to gain in confidence and try their best not to resort to such aids.

Encourage them to use it only if they are really struggling, or as a way to check their notes and verify what they have already understood.

- As a class, discuss the video and gradually reconstruct meaning.

Watching the “Fast Facts” slideshow – Reading and Taking Notes

- Tell students they will eventually write MLK’s obituary. Therefore, in small groups, they will first check and complete what they know about MLK thanks to a slideshow. Make it clear it is not an oral comprehension and explain the slideshow is mainly visual, composed of pictures and key words or dates.

- Play and project the “Fast Facts” animation once. **Activity B** helps them collect and organize information. At this stage, depending on the class, you may want to introduce some **differentiation** and ask more confident students to take and organize their notes without any help. You may also allow less confident students to work in small groups and share work: each student in the group focusing on some specific aspects of MLK’s biography.

- Then, allow a few minutes for each group to get ready to expand from their notes and orally recap what they’ve learnt about MLK. Have groups recap information and elicit discussion whenever they disagree. Groups also complete their notes.

Writing MLK’s obituary – Writing

- In pairs, students write Martin Luther King’s Jr obituary. See **Activity C** for further guidance.

Transcripts

“Moments in Civil Rights History - April 4th, 1968”

Voiceover: On April 4th 1968 an assassin took the life but not the dream of Dr Martin Luther King, Jr.

Reverend King was the most prominent civil rights leader of the 20th century fighting hard for African-American equality. King had traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, on prior occasions to support the 1,300 striking black sanitation workers. Their walkout began on February 12th 1968 to protest low pay and poor treatment. City leaders largely ignored the strike and refused to negotiate so the workers sought help from civil rights leaders, including Dr King.

On March 18th King called for a protest march to take place ten days later. Against his wishes, that march turned violent. Dr King was disappointed and determined to hold a peaceful march, which was scheduled for April 8th.

After braving a bomb threat on his scheduled flight King returned to Memphis on April 3rd that night at Mason Temple, he delivered his famous “Mountaintop” speech, reflecting on his own mortality. After that speech, he returned to the Lorraine Motel.

The next night, around 6 p.m., while standing on the second-floor balcony of the motel, King was struck by a single thirty-aught-six bullet that had been fired from a rooming house across the street. He was pronounced dead an hour later, leaving our nation in shock and sparking riots across the country.

Two months later, a white fugitive, James Earl Ray was arrested, and later convicted

Fast Facts Martin Luther King

Martin Luther King, a civil-rights hero 1929-1968.

Martin Luther King, Jr, was born on 15 January, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia.

Georgia is in the American South and King grew up in a segregated state: as an African-American there were many things he couldn't do.

King's father and grandfather were Baptist pastors. King also became a pastor.

In 1953, at the age of 24, he married Coretta Scott. They had four children.

In 1954, Martin Luther King accepted a job as pastor in Montgomery, Alabama.

On 1 December, 1956, in Montgomery, Rosa Parks was arrested when she refused to leave her seat on a bus so a white man could sit down. Martin Luther King became the leader of the bus boycott: African Americans refused to use the buses for 382 days. Finally segregation on Montgomery buses was abolished.

Martin Luther King believed that the only way to get respect and success in the battle for civil rights was non-violent protest.

Martin Luther King was famous for his inspiring speeches. The most famous was given on 28 August, 1963 in Washington, D.C. 200,000 people had joined the March to Washington for Civil Rights. Dr King told them, "I have a dream."

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

In 1964, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, which made racial segregation illegal. In 1965, the Voting Rights Act gave all African Americans the

right to vote.

Dr King continued to campaign for all Americans in poverty.

On 3 April, 1968, he went to Memphis to lead workers in a march the next day.

That night, he gave his final speech.

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!

On 4 April, 1968, Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, was assassinated by a white man, James Earl Ray.

Today, the hotel where Martin Luther King was assassinated is the National Civil Rights Museum.

The third Monday in January is a U.S. holiday, Martin Luther King Day, when Americans are encouraged to do something to help their community.

In October, 2011, the United States' first black President, Barack Obama, opened the Martin Luther King, Jr Memorial in Washington, near where King gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

Solutions

A.1.a. (In the order they are mentioned):

4 April 1968, 6pm: MLK shot dead in Memphis, Tennessee.

12 February: Memphis black sanitation workers start a strike.

18 March: MLK calls for a non-violent protest march ten days later.

Ten days later / 28 March: the march turned violent against King's wishes.

8 April: new march scheduled.

3 April: despite a bomb threat on his

scheduled flight, MLK returned to Memphis. Gave the “Mountain top” speech in which he reflected on his own mortality.

2 months later: James Earl Ray, white fugitive, arrested and convicted.

b. Black sanitation workers on strike, they were protesting about low pay and poor treatment – they asked Civil Rights leaders for help and support.

1,300 people involved.

The city authorities ignored the claims.

Disappointed – called for a new, non-violent demonstration on 8 April.

c. 2nd floor balcony of the Lorraine Motel.

6 p.m., 4 April

Shot from across the street.

Riots across the country.

B.1.a. Born on 15th January, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia.

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