

Martin Luther King

Martin Luther King was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, in the USA. Both his father and grandfather were ministers. His mother was a schoolteacher who taught him how to read before he went to school. Martin had a brother, Alfred, and a sister, Christine.



Martin was an excellent student in school; he skipped grades in both primary and high school. He enjoyed reading books, singing, riding a bicycle, and playing football and baseball. Martin entered Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, when he was only 15 years old.

Martin experienced racism early in life. He decided to do something to make the world a better and fairer place.

After graduating from college and getting married, Dr. King became a minister and moved to Alabama.

During the 1950's, Martin Luther King became active in the movement for civil rights and racial equality. He participated in the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott. This boycott was organised after Rosa Parks, a black woman, refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man. In the southern areas of America, black people could only sit at the back of the bus. The boycott lasted 382 days and it led the bus company to change its regulations. The Supreme Court declared such segregation unconstitutional. He participated in many other peaceful demonstrations that protested against the unfair treatment of African-Americans. He also travelled to India to learn about the non-violent methods of protest followed by Gandhi. In August 1963, King participated in the enormous civil rights march in Washington. There he delivered his famous "I have a dream" speech. In his speech he predicted a day when the promise of freedom and equality for all would become a reality in America. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

Martin Luther King was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee.

Martin Luther King was a great man who worked for racial equality and civil rights in the United States of America. To commemorate his life and leadership, Martin Luther King Day is celebrated each year in January, the month in which he was born.

Answer the following questions:

1. True or False: (Write T or F)
 - a. Martin Luther King could was an only child. _____
 - b. Martin Luther King was a minister like his father. _____
 - c. Gandhi encouraged violent protest to ensure that one's demands are met. _____

Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

2. List 3 things that Martin Luther King enjoyed doing in his spare time when he was young.

3. In the 1950's, in southern America, where did black people have to sit on a bus?

4. Do you think Rosa Parks was corrected in refusing to give up her seat on the bus? Give a reason for your answer.

5. Why did King travel to India?

6. In which year did King win the Nobel Peace Prize? _____

7. His famous speech is often referred to as the "I have a _____" speech.

8. What was this famous speech about? _____

9. Why do you think Martin Luther King was assassinated? _____

10. Can you think of a South African icon who has also protested against racial segregation and fought for equal human rights, like Martin Luther King?
