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SEMESTER 1

**AEC
(ABILITY ENHANCEMENT COURSE)**

COMPULSORY ENGLISH

UNIT 1: PROSE

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. – “I HAVE A DREAM”

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I Have a Dream ...

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Speech by the Rev. Martin Luther King at the “March on Washington”

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity. But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men – yes, black men as well as white men – would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked “insufficient funds.”

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now.

This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.

Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children. It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality – 1963 is not an end but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual.

There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright days of justice emerge. And that is something that I must say to my people who stand on the worn threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protests to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to distrust all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny.

They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone. And as we walk we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality.

We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities.

We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their adulthood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "For Whites Only."

We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote.

No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering.

Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our Northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, though, 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."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners 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

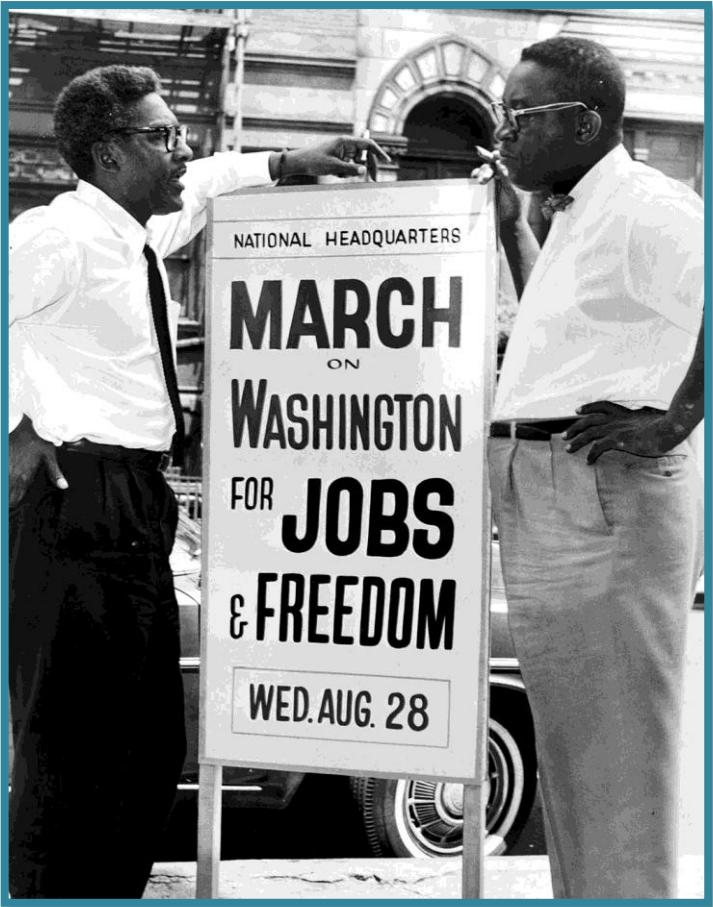
be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream ... I have a dream that one day in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today ... I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low. The rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning. "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring." And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

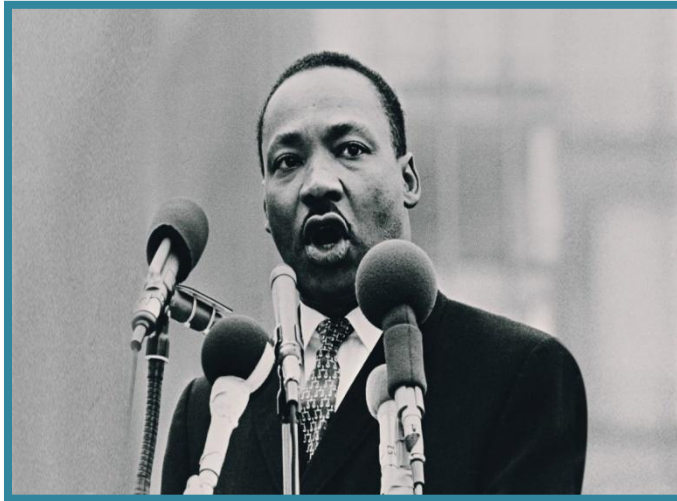
But not only that. Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi, from every mountain side. Let freedom ring ...

When we allow freedom to ring – when we let it ring from every city and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, Free at last, Great God a-mighty, We are free at last."



The Author:

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-68) was an American Christian minister, activist and political philosopher who was a prominent leader in the civil rights movement for black people in America from 1955 until his assassination in 1968.



Martin Luther King, Jr. was one of the leaders of the '**March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom**', also known as simply the **March on Washington** or the Great March on Washington, which was held in Washington, D.C., on August 28, 1963. He delivered his "*I Have a Dream*" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

The purpose of the march was to advocate for the civil and economic rights of African Americans. The civil rights movement achieved gains like, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.



Short Questions:

1. Who delivered the speech *I have a dream*?

Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered the speech *I have a dream*.

2. When was the speech *I have a dream* delivered?

The speech *I have a dream* was delivered on 28 August, 1963.

3. Where was the speech *I have a dream* delivered?

The speech *I have a dream* was delivered in Washington D.C. (USA) during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

4. What was the dream of Martin Luther King, Jr.?

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream was one day all people (black or white) would be treated as equals in America.

5. When was the March on Washington movement organized?

The March on Washington movement organized in 1963, one hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

6. What is the capital of USA?

The capital of USA is Washington D.C.

7. Where was Martin Luther King, Jr. born?

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born in Georgia, USA.

8. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a famous _____?

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a famous American orator and civil right activist.

9. Who signed the Emancipation Proclamation?

President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863.

10. What is the importance of the Emancipation Proclamation?

The Emancipation Proclamation abolished slavery in the rebel states in the American Civil War.

11. What did America give to the Negro people by the Emancipation Proclamation?

America gave a bad check to the Negro people by the Emancipation Proclamation.

12. What had happened to the 'bank of justice' in America?

The 'bank of justice' in America was bankrupt.

13. What happened to the bad check given by America to the Negroes?
The bad check given by America to the Negroes came back marked insufficient fund.
14. Why did the Negroes organize March on Washington movement?
The Negroes organize March on Washington movement for Jobs and Freedom.
15. Who were the Negroes in USA?
The Negroes were black people brought from Africa to work as slaves.
16. How did Negroes suffer in America?
Negroes suffered from poverty and racial discrimination in America.
17. Why did Negroes suffer in America?
Negroes suffered in America because they were black and were slaves in the past.
18. What happened to the dreams of the Negroes after the Emancipation Proclamation?
The dreams of the Negro people were not fulfilled even one hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation.
19. What would happen if the Negroes suffered racial injustice in America?
Racial injustice against Negroes would be fatal for America.
20. What pledge did the Negroes make during the March on Washington movement?
The Negroes pledged to march ahead during the March on Washington movement.
21. How many times did Martin Luther, Jr. say 'we cannot be satisfied' in his speech?
Martin Luther said 'we cannot be satisfied' six times in his speech.
22. How many children did Martin Luther, Jr. have?
Martin Luther, Jr. had four children.
23. What kind of protest did Martin Luther King Jr. propose?
Martin Luther King Jr. proposed peaceful creative protests without any physical violence (non-violent protests).
24. Who must not be distrusted by the Negro people?
The Negro people must not distrust all white people in America.
25. What sign is hated by all Negro people?
The sign "For Whites Only" is hated by all Negro people.

26. Where was a Negro not allowed to vote?

The Negro was not allowed to vote in Mississippi, USA.

27. Where did a Negro find nothing to vote for?

A Negro found nothing to vote for in New York, USA.

28. How did the police treat Negroes?

The USA white police treated black Negroes with brutality (cruelty/ violence).

29. In which states did Negroes come to join 'March on Washington' movement?

Negroes came from Mississippi, South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and northern cities for the 'March on Washington' movement.

30. Which American state is a state sweltering with the heat of injustice?

Mississippi is a state sweltering with the heat of injustice against black people.

31. How can America become truly free?

America can be truly free only when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be united.

32. What is the old Negro spiritual?

The old Negro spiritual are folk songs composed by the African slaves in America.

33. Which Negro folk song (spiritual) is mentioned by Martin Luther King, Jr.?

Martin Luther King, Jr. mentions the Negro folk song (spiritual) "Free at last, Free at last, Great God a-mighty, We are free at last."