

## I Have a Dream

Speech by  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

## Glory and Hope

Speech by  
NELSON MANDELA

*"Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children."*

### Connect to Your Life

**Justice for All** Think about what the word *justice* means. With a partner, consider what justice might mean to a person who is on trial. To a woman who cannot earn enough money to feed her children. To a man who has been denied the right to vote. What does justice mean in your life? After discussing these things, work with your partner to write a definition of justice.

### Build Background

**Calls for Justice** A century after the Emancipation Proclamation had freed enslaved workers in the South, African Americans were still fighting for equality. Many were denied the right to vote, and all faced discrimination and segregation. In August 1963, thousands of Americans marched on Washington, D.C., to urge Congress to pass a bill to counteract those wrongs. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech to 200,000 of those marchers.

At the same time, in South Africa, Nelson Mandela had been imprisoned because of his fight for racial justice. South Africans lived under a system called apartheid, which means "separateness." Blacks, coloreds (mixed race), and Asians were forced to live apart from whites, mostly in poverty, and suffer discriminatory laws and government oppression. South Africans and others protested until the government finally ended apartheid. In 1994, South Africa held its first election in which all races could vote, and Mandela became president.

#### WORDS TO KNOW Vocabulary Preview

amnesty	intimately	pernicious
default	legitimate	reconciliation
discord	mobility	sustain
inextricably		

### Focus Your Reading

**LITERARY ANALYSIS SPEECH** A **speech** is the oral presentation of the ideas, beliefs, and proposals of a speaker. For example, Mandela expresses a deep emotional connection with his country when he says in his speech:

*Each time one of us touches the soil of this land, we feel a sense of personal renewal.*

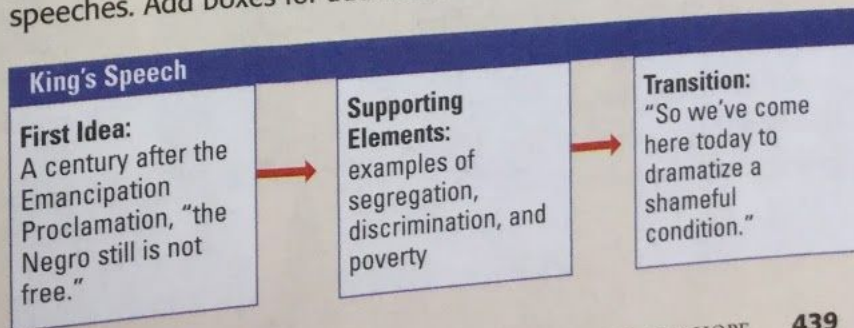
Speeches are usually prepared in a written form and are sometimes published. As a result, many memorable speeches have become an important part of our literature. As you read the following speeches, try to determine what has made them memorable.

**ACTIVE READING ANALYZING TEXT STRUCTURE** Good readers analyze **text structure** when they evaluate a selection based on the way it is put together. Structure includes the following elements:

- the **order** of the ideas in the text
- **supporting elements**, such as examples or repeated phrases, that draw attention to the main ideas
- **transitions**—the way ideas connect to or build on each other.

Analyze the text of each of the following speeches.

**READER'S NOTEBOOK** Record elements of text structure as you read. Copy a chart like the one shown for each of the following speeches. Add boxes for additional main ideas.



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<sup>1</sup> years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation.<sup>2</sup> 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 languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land.

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<sup>3</sup> to which every American was to fall heir. This note was the 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.

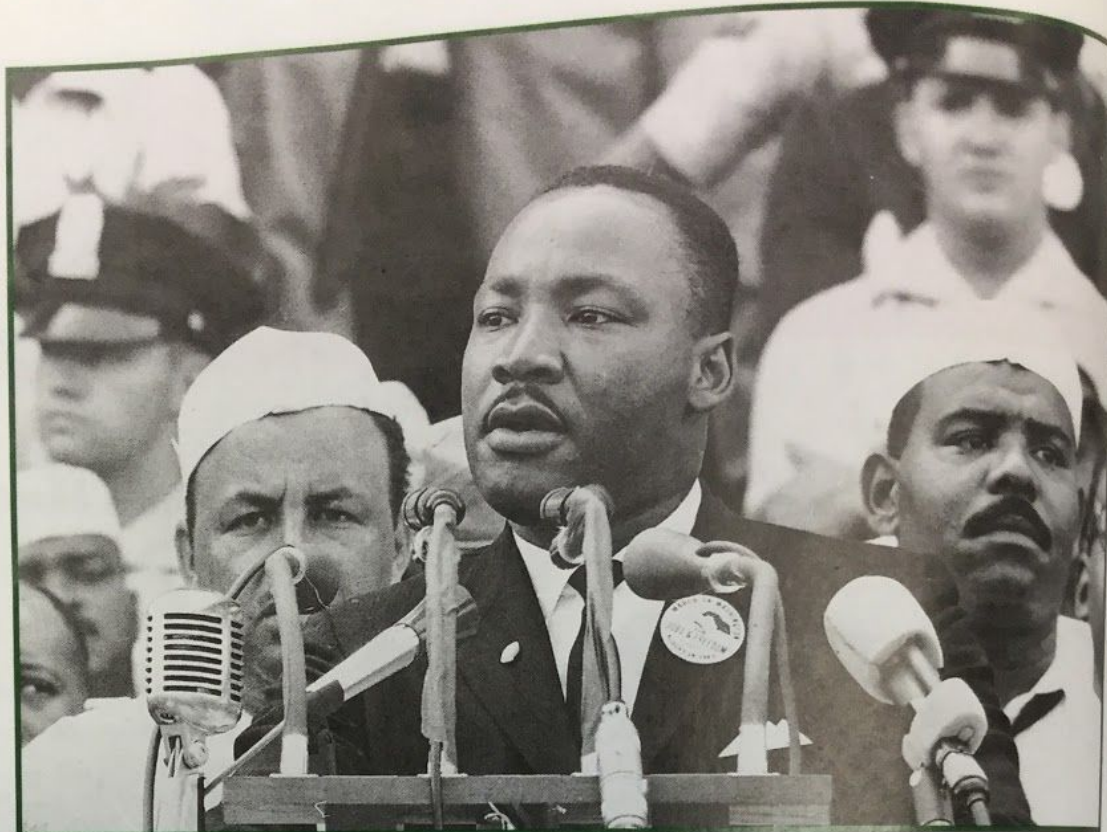
We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism.<sup>4</sup> Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy; now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit

1. **five score:** 100. (The phrasing recalls the beginning of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: "Four score and seven years ago . . .")

2. **Emancipation Proclamation** (ĭ-măn'sə-pā'shən prŏk'lā-mā'shən): a document issued by President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, declaring that all slaves in states still at war with the Union were free.

3. **promissory** (prŏm'ĭ-sŏr'ē) **note:** a written promise to repay a loan.

4. **gradualism:** a policy of seeking to reach a goal slowly, in gradual stages.



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.

Nineteen sixty-three 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 day of justice emerges.

But there 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 plain of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative

protests to degenerate<sup>5</sup> into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy,<sup>6</sup> which has engulfed the Negro community, must not lead us to a distrust of 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. And 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<sup>7</sup> 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

5. **degenerate** (dĭ-jĕn'ə-rāt'): descend; decline.

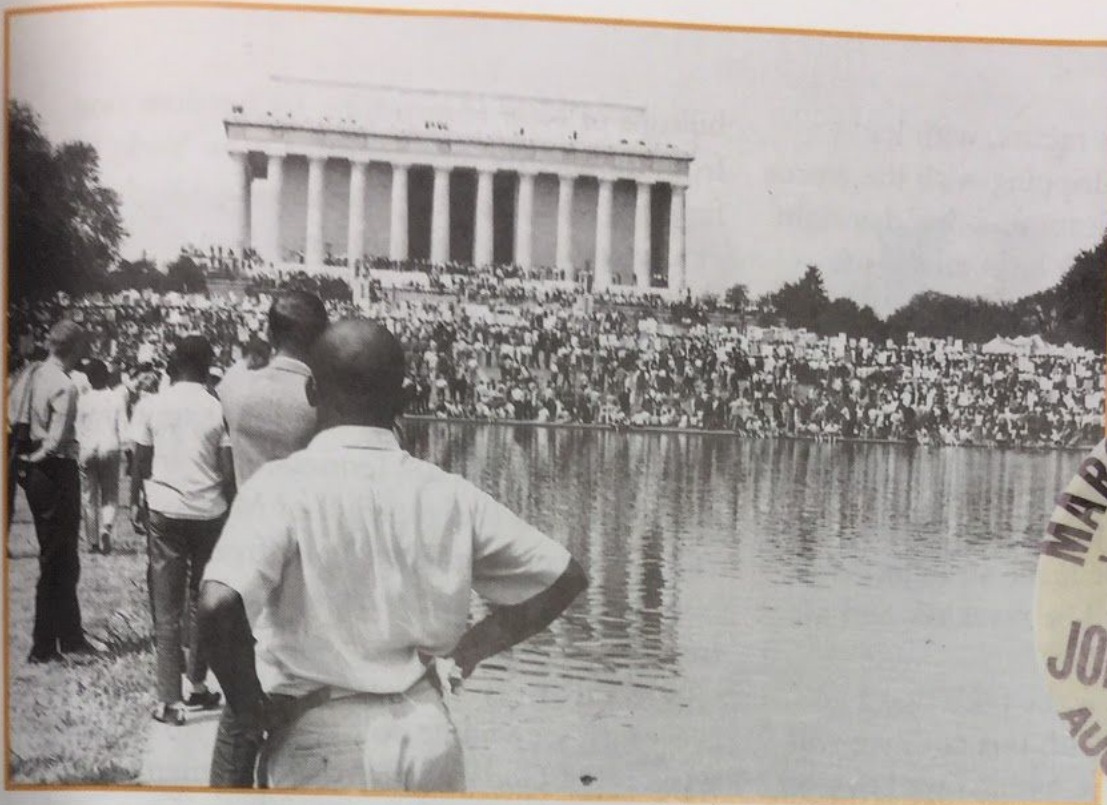
6. **militancy**: aggressiveness in pursuing a goal.

7. **devotees**: people devoted to something.

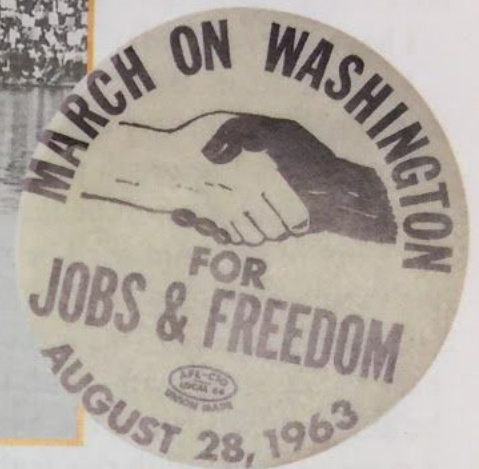
WORDS  
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**legitimate** (lə-jĭt'ə-mĭt) *adj.* justifiable; reasonable

**inextricably** (ĭn-ĕk'strĭ-kə-blē) *adv.* in a way impossible to untangle



National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution Washington, D.C.



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 selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating For Whites Only; we cannot be satisfied as long as the 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.<sup>8</sup> 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, 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 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 today!

I have a dream that one day down in

8. is redemptive: is a way of earning freedom or salvation.

WORDS  
TO  
KNOW

**mobility** (mō-bīl'ī-tē) *n.* an ability to move (as from one social class to another)

Alabama—with its vicious racists, with its Governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification<sup>9</sup>—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,<sup>10</sup> and every hill and mountain shall be made low. The rough places will be 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<sup>11</sup> 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. And this will be the 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 pilgrims’ 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<sup>12</sup>

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 mountainside, let freedom ring.”

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village 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. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last.” ❖

9. **Governor . . . interposition** (ɪn'tər-pə-zɪʃ'n) and **nullification**: When ordered by the federal government to allow the integration of the University of Alabama, Governor George Wallace claimed that the principle of nullification (a state's alleged right to refuse to accept a federal law) allowed him to resist the federal government's "interposition," or interference in state affairs.

10. **exalted**: raised up.

11. **hew**: hack.

12. **prodigious** (prə-dɪʒ'əs): magnificent.

## Thinking Through the Literature

1. What words or phrases from King’s speech stand out in your mind?
2. Do you think that King’s dream at the end of this speech offers a solution for the problems outlined at the beginning of the speech? Explain why or why not.
3. Why do you think King quotes from the Declaration of Independence and the patriotic song “My Country ‘Tis of Thee” in his speech?

# Glory & Hope

BY NELSON MANDELA

**Y**our majesties, your royal highnesses, distinguished guests, comrades and friends: Today, all of us do, by our presence here, and by our celebrations in other parts of our country and the world, confer glory and hope to newborn liberty.

Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster<sup>1</sup> that lasted too long must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud.

Our daily deeds as ordinary South Africans must produce an actual South African reality that will reinforce humanity's belief in justice, strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul and sustain all our hopes for a glorious life for all.

All this we owe both to ourselves and to the peoples of the world who are so well represented here today.

To my compatriots, I have no hesitation in saying that each one of us is as intimately attached to the soil of this beautiful country as are the famous jacaranda trees of Pretoria<sup>2</sup> and the mimosa trees of the bushveld.<sup>3</sup>

Each time one of us touches the soil of this land, we feel a sense of personal renewal. The national mood changes as the seasons change.

We are moved by a sense of joy and

exhilaration when the grass turns green and the flowers bloom.

That spiritual and physical oneness we all share with this common homeland explains the depth of the pain we all carried in our hearts as we saw our country tear itself apart in terrible conflict, and as we saw it spurned, outlawed and isolated by the peoples of the world, precisely because it has become the universal base of the pernicious ideology and practice of racism and racial oppression.

We, the people of South Africa, feel fulfilled that humanity has taken us back into its bosom, that we, who were outlaws not so long ago, have today been given the rare privilege to be host to the nations of the world on our own soil.

We thank all our distinguished international guests for having come to take possession with the people of our country of what is, after all, a common victory for justice, for peace, for human dignity.

1. **an extraordinary human disaster:** apartheid—the official policy of racial segregation formerly practiced in South Africa.

2. **Pretoria:** the capital of South Africa.

3. **bushveld:** a region of grassland in northern South Africa.



We trust that you will continue to stand by us as we tackle the challenges of building peace, prosperity, nonsexism, nonracialism and democracy.

We deeply appreciate the role that the masses of our people and their democratic, religious, women, youth, business, traditional and other leaders have played to bring about this conclusion. Not least among them is my Second Deputy President, the Honorable F. W. de Klerk.<sup>4</sup>

We would also like to pay tribute to our security forces, in all their ranks, for the distinguished role they have played in securing our first democratic elections and the transition to democracy, from bloodthirsty forces which still refuse to see the light.

The time for the healing of the wounds has come.

The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come.

The time to build is upon us.

We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation,<sup>5</sup> suffering, gender and other discrimination.

We succeeded to take our last steps to freedom in conditions of relative peace. We commit ourselves to the construction of a complete, just and lasting peace.

We have triumphed in the effort to implant hope in the breasts of the millions of our people. We enter into a covenant<sup>6</sup> that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity—a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world.

As a token of its commitment to the renewal of our country, the new Interim<sup>7</sup> Government of National Unity will, as a matter of urgency, address the issue of amnesty for various

categories of our people who are currently serving terms of imprisonment.

We dedicate this day to all the heroes and heroines in this country and the rest of the world who sacrificed in many ways and surrendered their lives so that we could be free.

Their dreams have become reality. Freedom is their reward.

We are both humbled and elevated by the honor and privilege that you, the people of South Africa, have bestowed on us, as the first President of a united, democratic, nonracial and nonsexist South Africa, to lead our country out of the valley of darkness.

We understand it still that there is no easy road to freedom.

We know it well that none of us acting alone can achieve success.

We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world.

Let there be justice for all.

Let there be peace for all.

Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all.

Let each know that for each the body, the mind and the soul have been freed to fulfill themselves.

Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world.

The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement!

Let freedom reign. God bless Africa! ❖

4. F. W. de Klerk: the president of South Africa who preceded Mandela, holding office from 1989 to 1994.

5. deprivation (dēp'rə-vā'shən): a lack of the necessities or comforts of life.

6. covenant (kūv'ə-nənt): solemn agreement.

7. interim: temporary.