**Martin Luther King’s death**

At 6:00 p.m. on April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was standing on the balcony of his hotel room in Memphis, Tennessee. One minute later he was shot. He was rushed to hospital and the doctors tried emergency surgery. The wound was too serious and Martin Luther King, Jr. was pronounced dead at 7:05 p.m. He was 39 years old.

Two months later, on June 10th, James Earl Ray was arrested and charged with murder. In March 1969, Ray pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 99 years in the Tennessee state penitentiary.

Martin Luther King arrived in Memphis the day before he was assassinated. His flight was delayed because of a bomb threat. That evening, King delivered his "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech to a small crowd that had braved the bad weather to hear him speak.

In the speech, King spoke about civil rights, nonviolent social action, and his own life and death. He discussed the earlier bomb threat, the time he had been stabbed, and concluded the speech with the words above that many feel "foreshadowed" his death the next day.

What do you think "foreshadow" means?

1. suggest in advance
2. come after
3. cause something bad to happen

 In what city did Martin Luther King Jr. die?

a) Memphis

b) Montgomery

c) Washington

What was MLK referring to when he said he's been to the mountaintop?

1. He's been praying.
2. He's been hiking.
3. He has been near death

When did MLK give his famous "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech?

1. August 28, 1964
2. B) April 3, 1968
3. April 4, 1968

How old was Martin Luther King Jr. when he died?

1. 39
2. 45
3. 50

 In what city did Martin Luther King Jr. die?

1. Memphis
2. Montgomery
3. Washington

Why was MLK delayed getting to Memphis?

1. The bad weather delayed the flight.
2. People were afraid there would be violence.
3. There was a bobm threat on his plane

22.  Why was the crowd small for his Memphis speech?

1. The weather in Memphis was bad
2. There was a bomb threat.
3. He made the crowd sleepy.

23.  When was MLK assassinated?

a) January 15, 1968

b) April 3, 1968

c) April 4,1968

**Black History Reading Comprehension**

**Motivate young readers with this free printable informational text for 3rd grade and up. Read and test reading comprehension online or print for offline use.**

**Rosa Parks**



Rosa Parks, now referred to as "the mother of the freedom movement," was an African American who worked as a seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama.

Rosa and her husband Ray worked for the local civil rights group to fight against the unfair laws and treatment of black people. At that time, in the 1950's, black people were not allowed to sit or even stand in the front section of any public bus.

On December 1, 1955, as Rosa was coming home from work, the bus driver asked her to give up her seat to a white man. She politely refused. The police were called and she was arrested. With this small act, Rosa Parks changed history.

The black people of Montgomery were very angry at Rosa's arrest. They decided to boycott the Montgomery bus system. For more than one year, Montgomery's black citizens walked, carpooled or cycled. They refused to ride the buses. The boycott lasted 381 days.

This boycott led to the 1956 Supreme Court ruling declaring that everyone, no matter what the color of their skin, had equal rights on public buses. It was a major victory.

Rosa Parks moved to Michigan in 1957 and continued to fight for equal rights for African Americans. She returned to Montgomery several times to support [Martin Luther King Jr.](https://worksheetsplus.com/mlk/ML6WhoIsMLK.html) in his efforts for civil rights.

Rosa Parks received many awards and honors. In 1996, the Medal of Freedom Award was presented to her by President Clinton who called her "the first lady of civil rights".

She died in 2005 at the age of 92.

**CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER**

What resulted from the Montgomery bus boycott?

1. The court passed a law to make public buses fair for all people.

b) Rosa Parks went to jail.

c) The buses were taken off the road.

When was Rosa Parks born?

a) 1915

b) 1923

c) 1913

What did Rosa Parks do that got her arrested in 1955?

1. She hit a man on the bus.
2. She refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man
3. She didn't pay the bus fare.

Which President called Rosa Parks "the first lady of civil rights"?

1. President Kennedy
2. President Clinton
3. President Obama

What do you think "boycott" means?

1. stop using
2. take over
3. ride

Where did Rosa Parks live in the 1950's

1. Detroit, Michigan
2. Mobile, Alabama
3. Montgomery, Alabama

What job did Rosa Parks have?

1. bus driver
2. seamstress
3. police officer

Where did Rosa Parks move to in 1957?

1. Michigan
2. Washington, D.C.
3. Alabama

How long was the Montgomery bus boycott?

1. 30 weeks
2. 1 year
3. More than a year

### Who is Martin Luther King Jr.?

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had a huge impact on civil rights in America. He was the force behind many of the important civil rights protests in the 20th century, including the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 and the March on Washington in 1963.

Martin Luther King was born in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. From an early age he was aware of how unfairly black people were treated. He did not understand why he was not allowed to play with white children, go to the same schools, eat in the same restaurants, or even sit at the front of a public bus.

Just as his father did, Martin Luther Jr. studied to become a minister. He moved to Alabama and spent the rest of his life trying to make the world a better and fairer place.

Dr. King led many marches in cities throughout the United States. Thousands joined him to protest unfair laws. Even though he believed in peaceful, nonviolent protest, he was arrested 29 times.

Martin Luther King Jr. was a powerful speaker. During the March on Washington in 1963 he gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech from the Lincoln Memorial. Here is a quote from it:  
"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."

In 1964, a year after that speech, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act. This law made it illegal for people to treat others unfairly because of their skin color. In that same year, Dr. King won the Nobel Peace Prize, one of the highest honors in the world.

Martin Luther King had many enemies. His life ended in 1968, when at the age of 39, he was killed by a gunman.

Dr. King’s impact on civil rights is so important that his birthday is now a national holiday. Americans honor him on Martin Luther King Day, the third Monday in January.

Nelson Mandela is a man who fought his entire life for equality and freedom. He has been a leader, an activist, and a president. He is a symbol for freedom and justice.

Nelson Mandela was born in 1918 in a very small town called Mvezo in South Africa. As a young man, he became very active politically.

He studied law and became a lawyer so that he could help people. He and his friend opened the first black law firm in South Africa in 1952.

In 1948, the ruling political party in South Africa passed a law called apartheid. “Apartheid” was a law that said that black people and white people were not equal. This new law made many black South Africans very angry. Mandela tried to get people to stand up for their rights and say out loud that this law was unfair. Over the next 20 years, he was arrested and put in jail many times.

In 1964, Mandela was arrested and put on trial for sabotage. While he was at that trial, he gave a famous speech explaining his beliefs.

He said, “I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal, which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

Mandela was imprisoned for 26 years until he was released in 1990. After he was released, Mandela worked with the white president of South Africa. Together they ended apartheid. Black South Africans were finally seen as equal to white South Africans.

In 1994, Mandela voted in an election for the first time in his life. He was 76 years old. He became president of South Africa and served as the first black president of that country.

**Answer the following questions**.

1. Where was Nelson Mandela born?

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1. What two things did Mandela fight for during his life?

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1. What law did Mandela help end?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Circle the correct word in the blank.**

1. Mandela fought his entire life \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ inequality and injustice.

a) to b) against c) for

2. Nelson Mandela is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ symbol for freedom and justice.

a) worldwide b) an c) the

3. Nelson Mandela was born \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 18th July, 1918.

a) in b) on c) about

4. In 1964, Mandela \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ put on trial.

a) is b) was c) would be

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that trial, he gave a famous speech explaining his beliefs.

a) However b) Though c) During

6. He stayed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ prison for 26 years.

a) in b) for c) on

7. Mandela worked \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with the white president of South Africa.

a) for b) together c) to

8. He was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ president of South Africa.

a) elects b) elected c) election