

# Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass was born a slave in Maryland. Unlike most 10  
slaves, he was taught to read and write. Douglass worked 20  
in shipyards in Maryland. He was later able to escape from 31  
slavery through the Underground Railroad. Douglass worked 38  
for the Anti-Slavery Society for many years. He traveled to 49  
many states, giving lectures and speaking firsthand about 57  
slavery. Douglass became a speaker, telling others about his 66  
life as a slave. He later began his own newspaper called the 77  
North Star. Douglass published his life story, Narrative of 86  
the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave. He was 95  
an advisor to President Lincoln and later named marshal for 105  
Washington, D.C. His actions showed that he believed in the 115  
freedom of expression, which is the right to share one's 125  
beliefs. Douglass died in 1882 after a long illness. His voice 136  
continued to be heard long after his death. 144

Number of Words Read	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
1 <sup>st</sup> Attempt	No School!			
2 <sup>nd</sup> Attempt	No School!			
3 <sup>rd</sup> Attempt	No School!			

# Essay: Martin Luther King Jr., a timely leader

By Jim Haskins, adapted by Newsela staff on 01.12.18

Word Count **628**

Level **510L**



Image 1: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speaking before crowd of 25,000 civil rights marchers in front of the Montgomery, Alabama, state capitol building, March 25, 1965. Photo by: Stephen F. Somerstein/Getty Images

The 1950s and 1960s were years of great change in America. The civil rights movement took place during these years. This movement was a fight for fair treatment for African-Americans. They did not have the same rights as white people at the time. Civil rights are rights that protect people. Having these rights would make life more fair for African-Americans.

The most important leader in the movement was Martin Luther King Jr. He is very important to me, too. I am an African-American and I was born in the south. I grew up in the time of segregation.

Segregation was the separation of white people and black people in public places. These included schools, restaurants and more. African-Americans were just not allowed in some places. I could not go to the town park. I could not enter the public library. I was not allowed because of the color of my skin.

I knew this was unfair. And I hated the unfairness.

## A Brilliant Public Speaker

King was the right man at the right time. During the 1950s and 1960s, American society was finally open to change. King had the skills to make that change happen. He was a brilliant public speaker. He knew how to inspire people. They listened and they wanted to follow him.



King was also lucky. He came along at just the right time. Things had already started to change in the 1940s. That was when President Harry S. Truman ended segregation in the Army. Then, in the 1950s, there was an important Supreme Court case. The Supreme Court is the country's

highest court. In 1954, it made a very important decision. The judges said separating black and white children in school was unfair. It went against U.S. law, they said. Segregated schools would not be allowed anymore.

## Civil Rights Protests On TV News

There were also important changes in technology. For the first time, many Americans had televisions. People saw civil rights protests on the news. The protests were peaceful. But some whites responded with anger and violence. These ugly acts were shown on TV. No one could ignore what was going on.

As time went on, more and more people answered the call of Martin Luther King Jr. They demanded civil rights for African-Americans.



In 1964, U.S. lawmakers passed the Civil Rights Act. This law says that everyone has the same civil rights. The color of their skin does not matter. Lawmakers passed the Voting Rights Act in 1965. This law says people of all races have the right to vote. The government cannot try to stop them.

These were major civil rights laws. They made sure that African-Americans got equal treatment.

## King Honored By U.S. Government

King wanted to fight for other causes, too. Unfortunately, he was killed in 1968. It was a loss for the country.

Today, King is remembered as the most important figure of the civil rights movement. In his honor, the U.S. government made King's birthday a holiday. King is the only nonpresident in U.S. history to be given that honor.

*Editor's Note: This essay was written by Jim Haskins. He was born in Alabama in 1941. Haskins grew up to become a writer. He wrote more than 100 books for children and adults. Many are about successful African-Americans and the important things they did. Haskins died in 2005 at the age of 63.*



**Quiz**

- 1 If you are looking for information on what segregation was like for the author, which section should you read?
- (A) Introduction [paragraphs 1-4]
  - (B) “A Brilliant Public Speaker”
  - (C) “Civil Rights Protests On TV News”
  - (D) “King Honored By U.S. Government”

- 2 Read the paragraph from the section “A Brilliant Public Speaker.”

*King was the right man at the right time. During the 1950s and 1960s, American society was finally open to change. King had the skills to make that change happen. He was a brilliant public speaker. He knew how to inspire people. They listened and they wanted to follow him.*

What information can the reader get by reading this paragraph?

- (A) a description of the civil rights laws that Dr. King wanted
- (B) an explanation of why Dr. King was an important leader
- (C) a description of what Dr. King thought about segregation
- (D) an explanation of what the civil rights movement was

- 3 Read the paragraph from the section "Civil Rights Protests On TV News."

*There were also important changes in technology. For the first time, many Americans had televisions. People saw civil rights protests on the news. The protests were peaceful. But some whites responded with anger and violence. These ugly acts were shown on TV. No one could ignore what was going on.*

What is the author's point of view about televisions?

- (A) Televisions hurt the civil rights movement because they showed violence.
- (B) Televisions were the only reason laws were passed against segregation.
- (C) Televisions were not as useful as civil rights leaders hoped they would be.
- (D) Televisions helped people see what was really happening with the protests.

- 4 The author thinks the 1954 Supreme Court decision was important.

Why does he think this?

- (A) It let black and white children become friends.
- (B) It finally gave people of all races equal rights.
- (C) It stopped the separation of people everywhere.
- (D) It made segregating schools against the law.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \quad 278 \\ - 207 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 3 \quad 551 \\ - 415 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 4 \quad 385 \\ - 264 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 5 \quad 965 \\ - 461 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

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