Entry Event

The Power of Dr. King's Words

Discussion prior to listening to the speech

* What do we mean by the term "civil rights?
* Who was Martin Luther King, Jr., and how did he fight for civil rights?
* How many of you have heard Dr. King’s "I Have a Dream" speech?
* What can we learn from the words of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech?

Activity

Read aloud to them from the final section of Dr. King's speech, the full text of which is available through the EDSITEment-reviewed [Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project](http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/) website. After accessing the speech from the opening page of the website, scroll down to the final section of the speech, beginning with the words, "I say to you today, my friends [applause], so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream…"

For a picture of King delivering his speech, visit [We Shall Overcome: Historic Places of the Civil Rights Movement](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/sitelist1.htm). Under "Washington, DC" click on "Lincoln Memorial." If you wish to share the speech with your students in picture book form, a beautifully illustrated edition is available (King, M.L. [1997], I Have a Dream, New York: Scholastic Press).

After students have listened to the speech, ask them which of Dr. King's words or phrases especially stood out to them, and why. Write these phrases on the board and discuss their meanings.

Discussion after listening to the speech

Talk with students about some of the inequities that persist in American society today. Do they think all Americans are truly free? Why or why not? (Students might reflect on the plights of homeless people, for example, or speak up about ways in which they or people they know feel unfree due to skin color, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status or gender.) Of what types of freedom would Dr. King dream if he were alive today? List students' ideas in a "bubble map" on the board.

"I have a dream of freedom for…" Students who are stuck for ideas may refer to the back to the list on the board.