

Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement

[Politics](#), [Civil Rights](#)



Since the late 1600's, African Americans have been fighting for equality. In 1865, during the presidency of Andrew Jackson, laws were imposed to segregate severely against blacks. During this time public schools were segregated, prohibiting their right to vote, and forbid them to sit on juries. At this point, African Americans became embittered and wanted to make a change in the way they were being treated. Heroes such as Rosa Parks, Jackie Robinson and Martin Luther King were role models who strived for true freedom for African Americans.

Martin Luther King, Jr., was well known for his peaceful protesting and inspirational speeches. King's work throughout the 1960's led to great improvements of equality among the blacks and whites. Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. He was raised by both parents, which were both reverends. King's house that he lived with his parents in was named after his grandfather being named the Williams House. King's family called him Michael because his father's name was also Martin.

Martin's name was originally just Martin King Jr. until his father added Luther after Martin Luther, a Protestant leader in Germany. Being raised with three children in the household, King was the second child of his family. His older sister, Willie Christine King, and his younger brother, Alfred Daniel Williams King, all lived in the same household as him. The parents of Martin gave him a happy upbringing and tried to give him everything they possibly could. During his early childhood he always played the piano, which he taught himself how to do. King's grandfather and father also provided him with spiritual teachings throughout his young life.

The immediate family of Martin was a financially secure middle-class family. Therefore he received a better education than most young children of his race. Although King was raised with excellent morals, he encountered several racial discriminations as a child. One day he and his older sister went to buy him school shoes. As they entered, they were ushered to the back of the store to an exit because there was a policy stating, "no blacks are allowed." This racial encounter was one of the many events that drove King into becoming an activist for equal rights between whites and blacks. (King, Martin Luther Jr.)

After attending college and becoming involved with the Christian society King decided that it was time to make a change. After many years King was able to achieve his lifetime goal, which was to abolish segregation. His changes in society were a long winding road that gave him troubles, but in the end he realized that it was all worth it. Civil Rights have been violated way before Martin Luther King became a well-known face in the fight for equality. Since the Civil War there has been a struggle for African Americans and whites to be treated the same.

In the 1950s, there have been more movements for the same rights. In 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education*, helped create the 14th amendment, which gave everyone equal protection under the law. This helped desegregate schools and merged African Americans and whites into the same school. Rosa Parks sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott because she refused to give up her seat to a white man in 1955. Other peaceful protests and acts helped in the fight for equality. Martin Luther King also started protesting and fighting for African Americans freedom in the late 1950s.

Martin Luther King Jr. was the leader of the peaceful Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. Martin Luther King Jr. made his I Have a Dream Speech on August 28th, 1963 in order to end racism in the United States. This speech was an eye opener and turn around for the United States. This famous speech was presented to over 250,000 Americans. The Great March on Washington was presented in front of the Lincoln Memorial for jobs and freedom. The purpose of the speech was to achieve racial justice and equality for everyone especially African Americans.

The goal was to terminate racial segregation and allow the unemployed black African Americans to get employed. It was the speech that changed America. This was the first time that the blacks and whites worked together and fought for something they wanted to change. It unified the blacks and whites. This empowering speech by Martin Luther King Jr. made everyone equal and allowed the unemployed black African Americans to have an opportunity to be employed. King's speech focused on both "the American dream" and religious themes.

He spoke about a country where his children "will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." (King, Martin Luther)

Martin Luther King had a huge impact on the 1960s. He was able to get the country, and the world, to notice discrimination of African Americans was having through his organization of peaceful protests and marches. His marches and peaceful protests were often recorded and put on TV or radio so the world could see what he was accomplishing. King's march on Washington helped influence congress in passing a bill that John F. Kennedy created.

His impact was greatly influenced in the South, where whites were still not letting African Americans vote, even though they were free. King had a very influential way in government affairs that were dealt with segregation and equality. The struggles that were overcome in the 1960s couldn't have been helped, without the impact that Martin Luther King had. King's speech remains one of the most famous speeches in American history. Martin Luther King had a vision where race was not an issue and everyone was equal. In today's society, blacks and whites are equal. Blacks and Whites use the same water fountain and attend the same schools.

When King gave the I Have a Dream speech, the meaning of the speech extended throughout time and it made people think of what is "right". It became more than just skin color but helped us understand not to discriminate against people. We can clearly see the positive impact that King has had on this nation. He has helped change this nation for the better, and it is because of his sacrifice that equality is as accepted and taught as it is today. Although King was arrested multiple times for "demonstrating without a permit", he still insisted on making the speeches that changed the world today.

After he proclaimed his I have a dream speech he then decided that he wanted to change the way poor people were treated and the employment issues. In 1968, King announced that the Poor People's Campaign will culminate in a March on Washington demanding a \$12 billion Economic Bill of Rights guaranteeing employment to the ones able, incomes to those unable to work, and an end to housing discrimination. On March 28, 1968, MLK delivered his I've been to the Mountaintop speech. This was another

very moving speech. King told the world about what he envisioned the results of the Civil Rights struggle to be.