

# Martin luther king – “i have a dream” essay sample



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## **Martin Luther King – “ I Have a Dream” Essay Sample**

When thinking of the most effective and well known speeches in history, one of the first speeches that comes to mind is Martin Luther King Jr.'s “ I Have a Dream.” A large part of Martin Luther King Jr.'s success as an orator was due to his uses of rhetoric in his speeches. King also was able to judge the mood and tone of his audience, and was able to interact with his audience accordingly. The uses of metaphors, anaphora and his ability to interact with his audience made Martin Luther King Jr.'s “ I Have a Dream” speech incredibly successful.

The use of metaphors by Martin Luther King Jr. allowed him to state his point of view in a more understandable way. A metaphor is an implied comparison achieved through a figurative use of words. “ Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice.” In this statement King relates the current state of racial segregation to a “ desolate valley.” Then he describes the hopeful future of racial justice as a “ sunlit path.” A desolate valley, and a sunlit path, two opposites used to illustrate the difference between the current state of segregation in the United States and the more hopeful (less racist) future. “ 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 have come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.” These statements

help King illustrate the point that racial equality and justice is something that belongs to black Americans. It is something that they don't have that they should and need to get, similar to having an insufficient check. The money belongs to the recipient of the check just like the rights of racial equality belong to all citizens of the United States.

The most notable and famous use of rhetoric in the "I Have a Dream" speech is anaphora. Anaphora is the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses or lines. His use of anaphora with the words "I Have a Dream" is obviously the most notable and successful area of this speech because after all "I Have a Dream" is the title.

"I have a dream that one day ... will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day ... transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will ... by the content of their character. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day...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 ... all flesh shall see it together." The other notable use of anaphora in the speech is used when King is describing that he wants "freedom to ring" for Negroes all over the United States.

“ And so let freedom ring — from the prodigious 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 snow-capped 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!”

There is no denying that Martin Luther King's speech was written exceptionally well and it allowed him to deliver an excellent speech. However, the words that were written on paper could not have been successfully delivered and received by anyone just reading them. Martin Luther King Jr. was able to interact with his audience. He was for the most part very calm and composed but when necessary he was able to be very loud and even integrate some body movement. He paused for applause frequently, this allowed the audience to show their enthusiasm and make them feel involved instead of feeling like they were just sitting there listening to someone talk. With every “ I have a dream” statement King raised his voice towards the end and showed enthusiasm with body movement. Then after he got the crowd excited he paused for them to express their satisfaction by cheering.

When studying successful Orators Martin Luther King Jr.'s “ I have a dream” cannot be ignored. Martin Luther King was able to use forms of rhetoric such as metaphors and anaphora. This allowed for a very well written speech;

however that is only half the battle. The delivery and audience reception is a huge part to any successful presentation. King was able to master both of these fields and thusly was able to deliver one of the most inspirational, successful and memorable speeches in history.