

SELECTION 5

I Have a Dream

Vocabulary Review

five score years ago
languished in the corners of American society
neither rest nor tranquility
their freedom is *inextricably* bound to ours
wallow in the valley of despair
prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire

1 Five score years ago, a great American, in whose sym-
2 bolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation
3 Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great
4 beacon of light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had
5 been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as
6 a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

7 But one hundred years later, the Negro is still not free.
8 One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly
9 crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of
10 discrimination.

11 One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely
12 island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material
13 prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still
14 languished in the corners of American society and finds
15 himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here
16 today to dramatize a shameful condition.

17 In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a
18 check. When the architects of our republic wrote the mag-
19 nificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of
20 Independence, they were signing a promissory note to
21 which every American was to fall heir. This note was a
22 promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men,
23 would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty,
24 and the pursuit of happiness.

25 It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this
26 promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are con-
27 cerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation,
28 America has given the Negro people a bad check, which
29 has come back marked "insufficient funds."

30 But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bank-
31 rupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds
32 in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we
33 have come to cash this check—a check that will give us
34 upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of
35 justice.

36 We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind
37 America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to
38 engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquiliz-
39 ing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the
40 promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the
41 dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path
42 of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the
43 quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brother-
44 hood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of
45 God's children.

46 It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency
47 of the movement and to underestimate the determination
48 of the Negro. This sweltering summer of the Negro's
49 legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an in-
50 vigorating autumn of freedom and equality. 1963 is not an
51 end but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro
52 needed to blow off steam and will now be content will
53 have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as
54 usual.

55 There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America
56 until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The
57 whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the founda-
58 tions of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

59 But there is something that I must say to my people who
60 stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace
61 of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we
62 must not be guilty of wrongful deeds.

63 Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drink-
64 ing from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever
65 conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and
66 discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to de-
67 generate into physical violence. Again and again we must
68 rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with
69 soul force.

70 The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the
71 Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all
72 white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced
73 by their presence here today, have come to realize that
74 their destiny is tied up with our destiny and they have
75 come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to
76 our freedom. This offense we share mounted to storm the
77 battlements of injustice must be carried forth by a bi-
78 racial army. We cannot walk alone.

79 And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall
80 always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are
81 those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When
82 will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as
83 the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of
84 police brutality.

85 We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy
86 with fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of
87 the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be
88 satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a
89 smaller ghetto to a larger one.

90 We can never be satisfied as long as our children are
91 stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by
92 signs stating "for whites only." We cannot be satisfied as
93 long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in
94 New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, we
95 are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice
96 rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty
97 stream.

98 I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out
99 of excessive trials and tribulation. Some of you have come
100 fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from

101 areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by
102 the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of
103 police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative
104 suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned
105 suffering is redemptive.

106 Go back to Mississippi; go back to Alabama; go back to
107 South Carolina; go back to Georgia; go back to Louisiana;
108 go back to the slums and ghettos of the Northern cities,
109 knowing that somehow this situation can, and will be
110 changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

111 So I say to you, my friends, that even though we must
112 face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a
113 dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream
114 that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true
115 meaning of its creed—we hold these truths to be self-
116 evident, that all men are created equal.

117 I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia,
118 sons of former slaves and sons of former slave-owners will
119 be able to sit together at the table of brotherhood.

120 I have a dream that one day, even the state of Missis-
121 sippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, swelter-
122 ing with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into
123 an oasis of freedom and justice.

124 I have a dream my four little children will one day live in
125 a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their
126 skin but by content of their character. I have a dream
127 today!

128 I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its
129 vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping
130 with the words of interposition and nullification, that one
131 day, right there in Alabama, little black boys and black
132 girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and
133 white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today!

134 I have a dream that one day every valley shall be
135 exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the
136 rough places shall be made plain, and the crooked places
137 shall be made straight and the glory of the Lord will be
138 revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

139 This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the
140 South with.

141 With this faith we will be able to hew out of the moun-
142 tain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be

143 able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a
144 beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

145 With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray
146 together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to
147 stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be
148 free one day. This will be the day when all of God's chil-
149 dren will be able to sing with new meaning—"my country
150 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing; land where
151 my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride; from every
152 mountain side, let freedom ring"—and if American is to be
153 a great nation, this must become true.

154 And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of
155 New Hampshire.

156 Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New
157 York.

158 Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of
159 Pennsylvania.

160 Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Col-
161 orado.

162 Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of Califor-
163 nia.

164 But not only that.

165 Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

166 Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

167 Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Missis-
168 sippi, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.

169 And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to
170 ring, when we let it ring from every village and hamlet,
171 from every state and city, we will be able to speed up that
172 day when all of God's children—black men and white
173 men, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants—will
174 be able to join hands and to sing in the words of the old
175 Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last; thank God Al-
176 mighty, we are free at last."

Selection 5 Comprehension Questions

Decide whether each of the following statements is true or false according to the selection. Then mark T or F in the appropriate place.

- ___ 1. The dream of the author is that all people in this country will be treated equally and fairly.
- ___ 2. The speaker was talking to an assembled crowd of both blacks and whites.
- ___ 3. Dr. King warns his people not to trust white people and not to work with them.
- ___ 4. Dr. King was in no way critical of Northern cities.
- ___ 5. Dr. King was also critical of countries other than the United States.

Choose the correct answer for each of the following questions and circle the letter before it.

6. When does Dr. King say there will be an end to unrest in America?
- a. When blacks are granted their citizenship rights and justice is done.
 - b. Never. There will always be unrest.
 - c. When blacks have had a chance to blow off steam.
 - d. When job and housing discrimination stops.
7. Which type of discrimination or injustice is *not* mentioned in this selection?
- a. Police brutality.
 - b. "For whites only" signs.
 - c. Job discrimination.
 - d. Discrimination in lodging.

8. Which type of discrimination or injustice is mentioned in this selection?
- a. Unequal education.
 - b. Discrimination in medical care.
 - c. Voting discrimination.
 - d. Help for the elderly.
9. Which of the following is *not* part of Dr. King's dream?
- a. Sons of former slaves and sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together as brothers.
 - b. Black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with white boys and white girls.
 - c. Dr. King's children will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.
 - d. Blacks everywhere will unite and help each other in developing their own businesses and in getting each other jobs.
10. Which of the following statements is true according to the selection?
- a. In his speech Dr. King feels that faith in his dream will give blacks everywhere the strength to make the dream a reality.
 - b. Dr. King feels that blacks should run for political office in order to achieve needed gains.
 - c. Blacks should develop their own businesses and patronize them exclusively.
 - d. Blacks should seek to educate themselves to the fullest extent possible.