

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Pre-reading

Questions:

- What do you know about this holiday?

Definitions:

- Strive – to try or work hard; to make a great effort to do something
- Demonstration – a public display of group opinion
- Gathering – a coming together of many people; a meeting



Reading

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrates the birth and life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

16 He was a young black minister from Georgia who worked for change. He gave of his time, energy,
34 and life striving to create equal rights for all.

43 For many years, black Americans did not have the same rights as white Americans.

57 Drinking fountains and rest rooms were labeled WHITE and COLORED. Black people had to sit
72 in the backs of buses. Many restaurants did not serve food to black people.

86 In some places, black children and white children did not go to the same schools. Many
102 black Americans could not vote. They also had a hard time getting good jobs.

116 Dr. King worked hard to make people's lives better. He talked with many community and
131 government leaders. He gave speeches about equal rights to huge gatherings of people. He also
146 led many peaceful demonstrations. He showed people how to be heard without being violent.
160 Change took place because of Dr. King's peaceful ways and words.

171 In 1964, Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize. This world-wide honor is given to only
188 a few people every year. People who work very hard for peace get this award.

203 In 1968, a white man killed Dr. King. Dr. King was only 39 years old when he died. He
222 was a husband and a father to three young children. He was a leader of peaceful change. He was a
242 **martyr**; he gave his life for his beliefs.

250 Dr. King's dream of peace and better lives for all Americans is still alive today. In 1983,
267 his birthday became a national holiday. On the third Monday in January, many Americans
281 remember Martin Luther King, Jr. Students study about him. People listen to speeches and think
296 about equal rights. Many ask the question, "What am I doing to keep Dr. King's dream alive?"
313

Understanding

1. How do people celebrate this holiday? _____

2. How were black people treated differently than white people? _____

3. What is a martyr? _____

4. Why did Dr. King receive the Nobel Peace Prize? _____

5. Why is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in January? _____

6. How did Dr. King try to create equal rights for everyone? _____

7. What was Dr. King's profession? _____

Writing

Option A: What did you learn about Martin Luther King, Jr. Day?

Option B: Who do think deserves a national holiday in his or her name? Why?
