

1 Facts about the author

Martin Luther King Jr. was an American Baptist minister, civil rights leader, and activist.

He was born on 1 Facts about the author

January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee.

He became the most prominent leader of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

He believed in nonviolent protest inspired by the teachings of Jesus and Mahatma Gandhi.

He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964

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2. When and where did MLK, Jr. deliver this speech?

He delivered the speech on August 28, 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

3. What was the occasion that motivated this speech?

The speech was part of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, a massive demonstration demanding civil rights, racial equality, and economic justice for African Americans.

4. How many years is “a score” equivalent to?

How many years is “five score years ago”?

A score means 20 years.

Five score years ago means 100 years.

This refers to President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

5. What is the main concern of MLK in this speech?

His main concern is that African Americans are still not free from racial discrimination, injustice, and inequality, even 100 years after slavery was abolished. He calls for freedom, equality, and justice for all people.

6. What does he mean when he says, “We have come to Washington to cash a check”?

King uses a metaphor. He means that African Americans have come to claim the rights and promises of equality and freedom that were guaranteed to all citizens in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence but have not been fulfilled for Black Americans.

7. Why isn't MLK satisfied?

He is not satisfied because racial segregation, police brutality, poverty, and injustice still exist.

African Americans continue to suffer from discrimination and inequality despite legal promises of freedom.

8. Who is MLK addressing when he uses the pronoun 'you' and the phrase 'my friends'?

When he says "you," he is addressing white Americans and others who have not yet supported racial equality.

When he says, "my friends," he is speaking to his fellow civil rights supporters and African

Americans who are participating in the struggle for justice.

9. Read the last paragraph and write in one sentence what is the most important idea.

The most important idea is that King dreams of a future where all people—Black and white—will live together in freedom, justice, and brotherhood, judged by their character and not by the color of their skin.