

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Changing America

CCSSR1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a great leader. He inspired many people. He brought about changes that are important to everyone in the United States. In fact, he is known around the world. He was the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize. That is a prize given to a person who is important to the world. It is a peace prize. He wanted people to change things peacefully. He thought that violence only led to more problems.

Dr. King used a way of changing things called non-violent protest. He saw that people were not treated fairly. He protested for civil rights. When he led marches, people were angry. But he was determined. Even though people shouted at him, he kept marching.

People who had been afraid to protest before were encouraged. They joined him. He was able to give them confidence. Together they would overcome. Soon thousands of people were with him. He was changing America.

He organized boycotts. A boycott means that people do not buy something or shop at a store or use a service. The boycott he led was the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Before that boycott in 1955, African Americans could not ride in the front of buses. They had to sit or stand in the back even if there were seats in the front. Only whites could have those front seats. It took months, but they won. They got the right to sit anywhere in the bus.

Dr. King influenced many people. He reached them with his books and speeches. He gave a very inspiring speech in Washington, D.C. People call it his "I Have a Dream" speech. In it he told about what he had seen, the changes that had happened, and what would happen in the future.

Today the United States celebrates his life with a special holiday every year. On that day, people remember what he accomplished. They think about how he has made a difference to everyone in America.

Answer these questions on another page.

What is the author's purpose for writing the passage?

Use information from the passage that the author included to explain why you think so.

Extended Response Why is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., an important leader? Use information from the passage and your own ideas.