

Martin Luther King Jr

Martin Luther King Jr worked to make life fairer for black people in the United States. He was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1929. As an adult, he became a church minister and helped lead the civil rights movement. Civil rights are the rights people should have to be treated equally.

When Martin was growing up, unfair laws separated black and white people in many places. This was called racial segregation. Children attended separate schools, and people could not always use the same restaurants or sit together on buses. Black people often received poorer services.

In 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested after refusing to give up her bus seat to a white passenger in Montgomery, Alabama. Martin helped organise a boycott: people refused to use the buses to protest against unfair treatment. For over a year, many black residents walked or shared car journeys. Their protest helped end segregation on Montgomery's buses.

Martin encouraged peaceful protest. People marched, gave speeches and challenged unfair rules without hurting others. This took courage because protesters sometimes faced violence or arrest. Martin was sent to prison, but he continued his work.

In 1963, he gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, DC. He hoped people would be judged by their character—their actions and how they treated others—rather than their skin colour.

Martin worked alongside many other campaigners. Together, their efforts helped bring new laws that challenged segregation and protected black people's right to vote.

In 1964, Martin received the Nobel Peace Prize. He was shot and killed in 1968, aged 39. Today, people remember his courage and his belief that peaceful action could change unfair laws.



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Questions

1. Where and in which year was Martin Luther King Jnr born?
2. What are civil rights?
3. What did racial segregation mean?
4. Why was Rosa Parks arrested?
5. What is a boycott?
6. How did people travel during the Montgomery Bus Boycott?
7. Why did peaceful protest require courage?
8. What did Martin hope people would be judged by?
9. What changes did Martin and other campaigners help bring?
10. Which prize did Martin receive in 1964?



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Answers

1. He was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1929.
2. They are the rights people should have to be treated equally.
3. It meant separating black and white people in places such as schools and buses.
4. She refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger.
5. It is refusing to use a service or buy something as a protest.
6. Many people walked or shared car journeys.
7. Protesters sometimes faced violence or arrest.
8. He hoped they would be judged by their actions and how they treated others.
9. They helped bring laws challenging segregation and protecting black people's right to vote.
10. He received the Nobel Peace Prize.



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Vocabulary Vultures

arrest	boycott	campaign	character	civil rights	courage	equality
justice	minister	peaceful	protest	racism	segregation	vote

1. The rights people should have to be treated equally under the law.
2. The unfair separation of people into different groups because of their race.
3. Refusing to buy something or use a service to show disagreement and ask for change.
4. An action that shows disagreement with something, such as an unfair rule.
5. Acting without violence or trying to hurt others.
6. The idea that everyone should have the same rights and opportunities.
7. Unfair treatment of people because of their skin colour or ethnic background.

8. Being brave when facing danger, fear or difficulties.
9. A church leader who leads services and helps people in the community.
10. An organised effort to achieve a goal or make a change.
11. A choice made to help decide something, such as who should lead a country.
12. The qualities shown by someone's actions and how they treat others.
13. Fair treatment of people, including protecting their rights.
14. When the police take someone into custody because they suspect that person has broken a law.



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Timeline Challenge

Martin Luther King Jr. was important because he worked for equal rights for Black people in the USA. He believed people should protest peacefully against unfair laws and racism. His speeches and marches helped change laws and encouraged people to work towards a fairer society.



Can you put these key events from Martin's life into chronological order?

Martin gives his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, D.C. He speaks about his hope for a future where people are treated equally.	Martin is born in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. His father is a church minister, and Martin grows up to become a minister too.	Martin receives the Nobel Peace Prize for his peaceful work against racism and unfair treatment.	Martin helps lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott after Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white passenger.
Martin is killed in Memphis, Tennessee, at the age of 39. People around the world remember his work for equality and peace.	Martin becomes a church minister in Montgomery, Alabama. He begins to become an important leader in the fight for civil rights.	Martin leads a peaceful march from Selma to Montgomery. The march helps bring attention to unfair rules that stop many Black people from voting.	Martin helps organise peaceful protests in Birmingham, Alabama. He is arrested and writes about why people must stand up against unfair laws.

Link each event with one of the dates below. Use the information to make a timeline.

1929	1954	1955	1963	1963	1964	1965	1968
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