

**Assignments on
“I Have a Dream”
by Martin Luther King, Jr.**

On August 28, 1963, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. led the famous March on Washington to push for the passing of a civil rights bill. This bill (passed as the Civil Rights Act in 1964) made discrimination on the basis of race illegal, and pushed for equal opportunities for people of all races. Reverend King was killed in 1968.¹

Martin Luther King, Jr. achieved great things for America in his lifetime and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. His legacy lives on in many ways, yet he is probably most famous for the speech he delivered at the March on Washington.

Turn to the speech entitled, “I Have a Dream,” in the *Readings* section of this workbook, and read it carefully, looking up unfamiliar words in your dictionary. You may want to read the speech aloud to get a sense of how King used repetition and rhythm to build momentum and move a large group of people.

Your LIA may ask you to choose from one of the essay assignments below, or he/she may assign both essays, one as a shorter assignment to warm you up for the other.

Essay A: Analysis

In his speech, King’s vision sweeps across the nation, imagining racial equality and justice in every region of America. Think about America today, more than 40 years after King delivered this speech. **Has his dream come true?** Write about the state of equality in America, focusing on one or two aspects or areas (education, employment, entertainment, immigration, to name a few). Explain to your reader why you think King’s dream has, or has not, been realized.

Essay B: Personal Vision

Using King’s speech as an example, **write an essay in which you explain your dream for this country or for the world.** What kind of world (or country) would you like to live in? What kind of world (or country) would you like to create for your children, and your children’s children? What changes would you like to see? What traditions or values would you like to see upheld? Although King’s vision is delivered as a speech, your vision should be written as an essay with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

Try to write a minimum of two pages, typed, double-spaced.

¹ Paraphrased from Viewpoints. Ed. Cathy Niemet. Chicago: NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group, Inc., 1992.