

Martin Luther King

Martin Luther King Junior was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1929. While a student at a seminary in Philadelphia, he became a great admirer of Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of passive resistance and the father of the independence of India. In 1954 he became the minister of a small Negro Church in Montgomery. Here he carried out¹ his first non-violent protest against racial discrimination. The protest originated from a serious episode of intolerance: on December 1, 1955 a black women, Rose Parks, was arrested because she had taken a seat reserved for white people on a bus. She had just left work and boarded a bus for home. She was tired; her feet ached². King wanted to assert black rights with peaceful means. In his short lifetime, Martin Luther King was arrested many times and his house was destroyed by a bomb. Despite all these difficulties, in 1964 Congress passed the Civil Right Act and in the same year King was awarded³ the Noble Peace Prize. In 1968 King started another battle - he wanted to secure better jobs and better living conditions, especially for the Blacks who lived in ghettos.

On April 3, 1968, King delivered a speech in which he said he had "*been to the mountain top and seen the Promised Land*". It was seen as the final allusion to his belief that his death was near. The following day, King was shot dead⁴ in Memphis, Tennessee.



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Comprehension

Answer the following questions:

1. Why was Rosa Parks arrested? When was she arrested?
2. Where is the State of Georgia? Is it in the northern part of the US?
3. What happened in 1964? When did King receive the Noble Peace Prize?
4. When did Martin L. King die? How did he die?



1. effettuò, compl.
2. aveva dolore ai piedi.
3. gli venne assegnato.
4. fu ucciso (con sparo).

class

I HAVE A DREAM

"We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence [...] We cannot be satisfied as long as¹ the Negro's basic nobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood² and robbed of their dignity by signs starting "For Whites only". We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote [...]"

I say to you today, my friends, even though we face³ the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream [...] I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves⁴ and the sons of former slaveowners⁵ will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood⁶.

I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today! I have a dream that one day down in Alabama little black boys and little black girls will join hands⁷ with little white boys and little white girls as sisters and brothers... I have a dream today! We will work together, pray together, go to jail⁸ together knowing that we will be free one day...

That day all of God's children... will sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: "Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty", we are free at last".

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True/False

Decide if these sentences are true (T) or false (F).

If false, correct them.

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1. When Rosa Parks got on the bus that evening in December 1955 she was going home.
2. The accident took place in New York City where she lived with her family.
3. Rose Parks was ordered to give up her seat to a white passenger who had just boarded the bus.
4. She stood up and gave her seat to the white passenger who thanked her warmly.