

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. Answers

"I HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH AND "MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE" SONG

Directions: Read the passage below, then complete the graphic organizer on the following page with information about Martin Luther King, Jr.

"My Country 'Tis of Thee" is an American patriotic song. It was the unofficial national anthem of the United States until "The Star-Spangled Banner" became the national anthem in 1931. The song talks a lot about the freedom the United States gained after the Revolutionary War. It also talks about how that freedom makes the country a "sweet land of liberty." Martin Luther King, Jr. refers to the song in his famous



"I Have a Dream" speech. He gave that speech during a freedom march in Washington, D.C.

The march was about African Americans asking for the same freedoms that white Americans enjoyed in the United States. Martin Luther King, Jr. uses the word "Negro" to describe African Americans. The word describes people from Africa.

"I HAVE A DREAM"

An excerpt from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech at the March for Jobs and Freedom in 1963.

“ With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, 'My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrims' pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.'

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that; let freedom ring from the Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!' ”

Name _____

Date _____

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. Answers (Student answers will vary.)

"I HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH AND "MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE" SONG

Directions: Use the text and the speech to help you make inferences and answer these questions. Quote or refer to the texts in your answers.

1. What states does Martin Luther King, Jr. mention in the speech?

Martin Luther King, Jr. mentions New Hampshire, California, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Georgia.

2. Why is it important that the author mentions different states around the United States?

The author wants there to be freedom in all the states, not just certain ones. That is why he mentions states in the North and states in the South. Typically, African Americans in the North had more freedom, even though it was not perfect. Martin Luther King, Jr. wants freedom in all the states.

3. What are some of the things Martin Luther King, Jr. asks listeners to do together in his speech?

In the first paragraph, he says 'we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, (and) to stand up for freedom together.'

4. According to the author, what must be true for America to be a great nation?

The author says, '...knowing that we will be free one day' in the paragraph before he mentions America being a great nation. When African Americans are free like white Americans, the country would be a great nation.

5. Why does the author repeat the phrase "let freedom ring" multiple times?

The author is using the words from the song 'My Country 'Tis of Thee' to talk about African American freedoms. The song says, 'from every mountainside, let freedom ring.' This is an old song and many African Americans were still enslaved when it was written (1831). Martin Luther King, Jr. may be saying that when true freedom for all people is a reality, not just for white people, then we can sing about our American freedom from mountaintop to mountaintop.

FURTHER RESEARCH: Martin Luther King Jr. mentions spirituals in the last paragraph of the speech. What do you know about them? Do some research online to find out why they are important in African-American history.

Answers will vary, but may include: A spiritual is a song that has a religious tone and can talk about overcoming hardships or hope for the future. They can sometimes blend European and West African music styles together. Slaves sang spirituals while working, or during their religious ceremonies. During the Civil Rights Movement, peaceful protesters would sing spirituals and pray throughout the protest. The spiritual Martin Luther King, Jr. quotes here, called 'Free At Last!' has different versions.