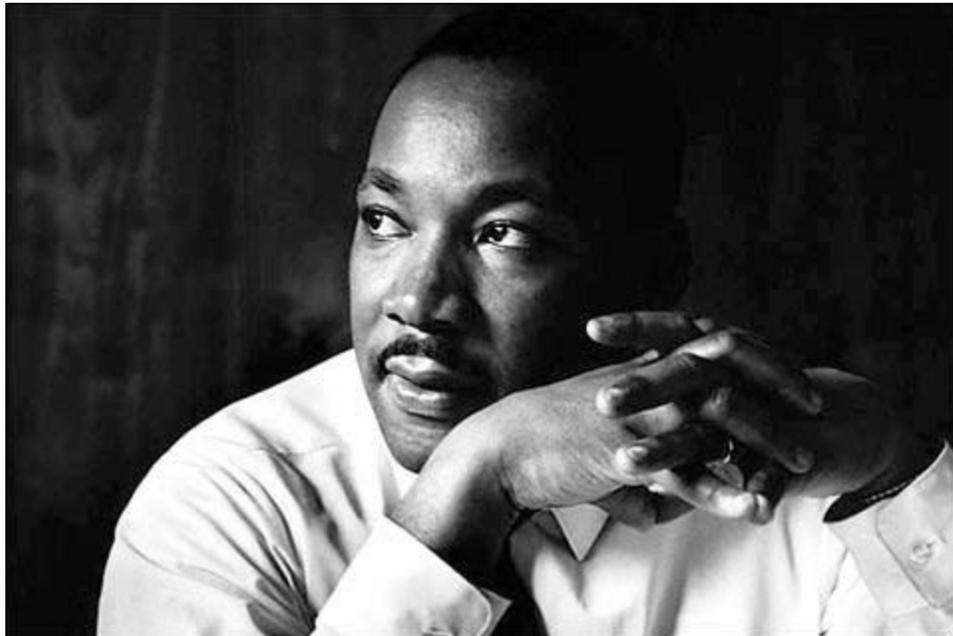


LEGACY OF A DREAM



36th ANNUAL
COMMEMORATIVE TRIBUTE
TO THE LIFE AND WORK OF
REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
A COLLECTION OF WINNING ESSAYS

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DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ESSAY CONTEST 2021
Essays Winners**

Student	Grade 3	School
Amira Barrer	1 st Place Winner	Grove Street School
Etochukwu Okpe	2nd Place Winner	Florence Avenue School
Raine Skinner	3rd Place Winner	University Elem. School
Grade 4		
Zamiyah Wilson	1st Place Winner	Grove Street School
Lalia Henry	2nd Place Winner	University Elem School
Andrea Reyes	3rd Place Winner	Madison Avenue School
Grade 5		
Amarii Watts	1st Place Winner	Madison Avenue School
Sanai Burrell	2nd Place Winner	Grove Street School
Wisgens Saint Juste	3rd Place Winner	Florence Avenue
Grade 6		
Krismalee Dosreis	1st Place Winner	Union Avenue Middle School
Wiyao Palanga	2nd Place Winner	University Middle School
Woodson Cosmeus	3rd Place Winner	University Middle School
Grade 7		
Shamirha Jean-Baptiste	1st Place Winner	University Middle School
Arianna DeJesus	2nd Place Winner	University Middle School
Aniyah Drakeford	3rd Place Winner	Union Avenue Middle School
Grade 8		
Eric Maurizaca Huerta	1st Place Winner	University Middle School
Jayden Michel	2nd Place Winner	University Middle School
Shirley Sanchez	3rd Place Winner	Union Avenue Middle School
Grade 9		
Gensis Nova	1st Place Winner	Irvington High School
Jailyn Agard	2nd Place Winner	Irvington High School
Christ Badeau	3rd Place Winner	Irvington High School
Grade 10		
Kassandra Gabriel	1st Place Winner	Irvington High School
Louvianov Paul	2nd Place Winner	Irvington High School
Trinniety Charlestin	3rd Place Winner	Irvington High School
Grade 11		
Confidence Nawali	1st Place Winner	Irvington High School
Eroll Mars	2nd Place Winner	Irvington High School
Shanelle Vilson	3rd Place Winner	Irvington High School
Grade 12		
Carl Edouard	1st Place Winner	Irvington High School
Marc Napoleon	2nd Place Winner	Irvington High School
Osarentin Aghahowa	3rd Place Winner	Irvington High School

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR WINNERS FOR A JOB WELL DONE

Amira Barrer – 1st Place
Grade 3
Ms. Lubin/Mr. Douglass
Grove Street School

Every individual has a dream, whether your dream is to go to college, be successful, or to just be treated fairly. Many Americans celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King each year because he had a dream to unite people of all different races. Dr. Martin Luther King was a minister and a civil rights leader who is best known for his “I Have a Dream Speech.” Dr. Martin Luther King sacrificed everything he had to lead many non-violent protests and peaceful boycotts. His goal was to end racial inequality. He spoke of his dream of a United States that is void of segregation and racism. He organized and staged countless marches and boycotts during the Civil Rights Movement. Through peaceful protests, he especially fought for equality and human rights for African-Americans who are economically disadvantaged and victims of injustice.

I will use Dr. Martin Luther King’s vision of how we should treat others in my daily life by treating everyone with love, respect, and equality. To be a leader that possesses traits of intelligence, self-confidence, compassion and determination is very important. I will learn from others, educate myself, and be the very best that I can be. I will use my education and service to my community to become the president of the United States. Dr. Martin Luther King reminds us of the power we have as leaders to listen deeply and bring people together during times of unrest.

First, treating people with love and respect will help make the world a better place. It is time to end racial inequality in the world. We must continue to follow Dr. Martin Luther King’s message of love. It is time to end violence in the world and engage in acts of intelligence, honesty, and humility. Many Americans value what Dr. Martin Luther King has taught us but sadly there are still many who do not. This must change! We all must treat everyone kindly so that we can live in peace and harmony. To many, Dr. Martin Luther King is a hero because what he taught us was powerful. Hating someone because of how they look, speak, or their financial situation is not right. Dr. Martin Luther King taught us to learn about people's character, be kind, and love one another. Although Dr. Martin Luther King is no longer alive, I believe his dream can live on through everyone. This proves that if we use his message of love and equality, we can make the world a better place to be for everyone.

If we fight instead of coming together we will lose. United we stand, divided we fall. Dr. Martin Luther King said in one of his speeches that we stand united together in this land. A great leader possesses a Clear Vision. Dr. Martin Luther King left us with many great ideas. “If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.”

I choose to be a leader in my community. Through my education and respect for all people, I chose to love everyone and also to be a change for the benefit of myself and all mankind. Like Dr. Martin Luther King, I will be a brave and influential civil rights leader who is determined to stop segregation, hate, and violence against people of color.

Etochukwu Okpe – 2nd Place
Grade 3
Ms. Perkins
Florence Avenue School

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Dr. King felt that so on this day let freedom ring. Dr. King knew that injustice for one person meant injustice for all. Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream that one day, one's race would not matter and we would all be treated as equals. Unfortunately, almost 50 years later, that dream still hasn't come true. Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream that one day, one's race would not matter and we would all be treated as equals. Dr. King felt that people should be treated with equality, kindness and fairness. This was clear based on his message of unity and his actions.

Dr. King felt people should be treated kindly, peacefully and “He had a dream that we would stand United together in this land, That we would strive to find a way To live as friends in peace today,” wrote the author of the poem “Dr. Martin Luther King” This supports the idea that we should act kindly towards each other because injustice for one person meant injustice for all. I act kindly when I do what is fair, work for all people, show that I care and change what is wrong. If we stop acting kind we will not be able to work as a team to remember the man who said ‘I have a dream’.

Another way Dr. King felt people should be treated is equally. The author of the poem “MLK” clearly felt that equal treatment was important to Dr. King because they wrote “I have a dream”. Dr. King did not want people to fight because we have to work as a team. I show love instead of hate in my life when I treat people fairly and kindly. If we all lived by Dr. King’s values then we would make our country truly great.

Dr. King also felt that we should be working for all people. In the poem “MLK” is states "treat people kindly, do what is fair, work for all people, show that you care, change what is wrong, but please do not fight", this is an important way to treat people that way because these are the ways to remember the man who said ‘I have a dream’. I act in kindness when I treat people fairly. In conclusion, I would like to live by Dr. King’s values so as to make this country truly great.

Raine Skinner – 3rd Place
Grade 3
Ms. Trainor
University Elementary School

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Who was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.? Martin Luther King Jr. was a civil rights activist in the 1950s and 1960s. Isn't that cool? He stood for civil rights; he wanted everyone to be treated equally. He wanted to change what wasn't right or fair. Dr. King wanted to change these things in a nonviolent way.

One way we should treat people is by treating them the way you want to be treated. For example, Dr. King wanted civil rights. In the poem MLK, the author stated "Change what is wrong but please do not fight". This means Dr. King wanted us to change what was wrong but not to fight. Martin Luther King Jr. believed in nonviolence, this is how he wanted people treated.

A second way Dr. King thought we should treat one another is by showing them kindness. In the poem, MLK, The author stated "show that you care " There are many ways to show that you care. We can help each other, not argue and show each other love and respect. These are examples of how we can show kindness towards each other.

In conclusion, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had many great accomplishments of how people should be treated during his life. He has made a difference in the world by showing the beauty of equality, getting rid of segregation and fighting for equal rights. This is the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and this is how I will live each day.

Zamiyah Wilson - 1st Place
Grade 4
Ms. Bowman/Ms. Laryea
Grove Street School

Dreams Deferred

“Get up! Get up! Get up!” That is the sound of a white lady telling a black man to get up out of the front seat of the bus. During the Civil Rights Movement, black people were not allowed to sit in the front of the bus because of their skin color. Blacks were not treated fairly during this time. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Langston Hughes were both authors who dreamt of a better America. Their dreams are still relevant today.

First, in 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. He expressed his dream of a better America to over 250,000 attendees. In his speech, he spoke about the injustices that black people faced. According to the text, Dr. King was holding America accountable to live up to the words in the Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal.” Furthermore, he went on to express his dream of Georgia and Mississippi becoming states where people are free to express love and respect towards each other. These two states were considered to be in the Deep South where racism was prominent. To make matters worse, he spoke of his dream to see his children grow up in “a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” Dr. King never saw his dream come into existence for he was assassinated in 1968. However, his “I Have a Dream” speech is read every year across the nation.

Second, Langston Hughes was a famous poet and author of “I Dream A World” which was written in 1941. He dreamt of a world where everyone, whether white or black would be treated equally with love and respect. In his poem, he wrote, “I dream a world where “no other man will scorn” This shows that he dreamt of a world where no other person would look down on the next because during this time some whites still saw themselves as superior to blacks. It was because of this belief of superiority that blacks were mistreated. He also dreamt about how the earth would be so much more beautiful because it was “adorned” with love and peace. Greed was not ruling the hearts of men. Instead, every person was treated with love and respect. Langston Hughes’ poem is still a dream of many Americans today.

Just consider that slavery was abolished 157 years ago and The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed 56 years ago. Still, a black president and vice-president later, racism still is at the very heart of America. This proves that Langston Hughes and Dr. King’s dreams are still relevant today. You may not hear the demands of racist white people screaming, “Get up! Get up!” However, you do hear the hatred in some white police officers’ tones when they demand, “Hands up!” while guns ricochet through glass windows and innocent bodies. Bang! Bang! Bang! You hear the sound of Eric Garner and George Floyd’s fainting voices, “I Can’t Breathe!” Not to mention Rayshard Brooks and Breonna Taylor, whose sleep turned into a nightmare of death followed by anger and protest; “Black Lives Matter!” I am sure if Hughes and King were alive today, they would restate their dreams to the front post of American podiums and news channels. Their main point would be what happens to a dream deferred!

Zamiyah Wilson - 1st Place
Grade 4
Ms. Bowman/Ms. Laryea
Grove Street School

In conclusion, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Langston Hughes both had attainable dreams. They hoped for a world full of love, compassion and equality for all mankind. Today, blacks are allowed to sit anywhere on city buses. Laws have been created to protect black people from injustices. Regardless of how some people may feel, the dreams of Dr. Martin Luther King and Langston Hughes are relevant and they still do matter however, there is still a lot of work to be done in order to accomplish them.

Lalia Henry – 2nd Place
Grade 4
Ms. Williams
University Elementary School

MLK Essay Contest

Do you think Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's "I Have a Dream" speech and Langston Hughes poem "I Dream a World" are still relevant today? Yes they are! Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was an American civil rights activist who fought peacefully for justice for all people. Langston Hughes was an author and a poet who also fought for equal rights. Both MLK and Langston Hughes's dreams are still relevant today.

To begin with, Dr. King's Dream was for each and everyone of us to be able to eat at the same restaurants, drink at the same water fountain, go to the same schools, and play at the same parks. In the speech "I Have a Dream" Dr. King's dream was for justice for all people. Dr. King's dream is still relevant today because there is still racism and segregation between people of color and those who are not of color. This proves his dream is still relevant and we as people need to keep pushing his dream forward to create a better world.

In addition, Langston Hughes' dream was for everybody to be treated equally no matter the color of their skin or the texture of their hair. Equal treatment means all people, no matter their skin color, religion, ethnicity and anything else that makes them different will still be treated in the same manner, an equal fair way. In the poem "I Dream a World" Langston Hughes' dream was for equality between everybody. His dream is still relevant today because people of color are still being treated unfairly. There are many examples of this problem right now on the news. Many black men and boys are being treated differently by police across our country. As people we need to do better, this dream is relevant to me and my family everyday.

Furthermore, the theme of source #1 and source #2 is all people should be treated equally. In MLK's "I Have a Dream" speech he says, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.'" In the poem "I Dream a World" Langston Hughes wrote "A world I dream where black or white, whatever race you be, Will share the bounties of the earth And every man is free. They mean that everybody should be treated with respect and have equality. This is proof that both men had the dream of all people being treated fairly.

In conclusion, MLK and Langston Hughes' dreams are still relevant today. Things need to change and they need to change FAST! If we all work together we can make that change and create a better world for me and future generations to come.

Andrea Reyes – 3rd Place
Grade 4
Dr. Beck
Madison Avenue

Two black men in our nation's history had a dream. If they were alive today, I think they Dr. Martin Luther King and Langston Hughes would smile at some of the advancements we've made but cry at the struggles that remain.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. believed in justice and in the human rights for all people no matter what nationality, race or social status you have in society. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. believed in a dream for America that one day everyone would be treated equally, fairly, and not be judged by the color of their skin. Langston Hughes believed that we will all know one that one day we will see freedom's way. They also believe that people should not be treated differently based on the type of education or the type of job they have.

In the article, I have a dream speech Martin Luther King, Jr states that one day people will be treated equally and not judged by the color of their skin. In today's society and looking back at what Dr. King wrote years ago, people are still not treated equally. For example, black people are still not being treated fairly. In our society too many people feel that black people will not amount to anything. They are judged by the color of their skin and by the status they carry. They are also treated differently based on the job position they have. They are accused of crimes they haven't committed.

In the I Dream a World, Langston Hughes stated that every man will share the bounties of the earth and every man will be set free. In today's society not every man shares the bounties of the earth. Not every man is set free. Black people are still treated poorly. Black people for example are looked down upon as not being good enough to achieve or do anything productive. Black people are still judged by the color of their skin. They are not able to share the bounties of the earth by obtaining a good paying job nor getting a good education. They are given the worst jobs (McDonalds, Burger King) making minimum wage. They end up having to work two and three jobs just to make ends meet. They are having to live paycheck to paycheck to support their families. They are not able to enjoy nice vacations and nice houses like everyone else in society. They are not able to get a good education because they are stereotyped as being less worthy or not smart enough to succeed in life as everyone else has Both Martin Luther King and Langston Hughes spoke of their dreams for black people are racial equality. While some things have changed for the better, we still have a long way to go. Black people have never been given the chance to prove to the nation/society that they are not what people think they are. Justice for them has never been served.

Amarii Watts 1st Place
Grade 5
Ms. Pierre
Madison Avenue School

Do you believe two people can share the same dream? An author named Jason Miller believes Langston Hughes inspired Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. If you read both of their "dreams", it is very noticeable that they have the same dream. A dream where everyone in the world would live peacefully together with no racism. So, personally, I believe Langston Hughes inspired Dr. King's greatest writing.

To start, in Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech of 1963, he is talking about the world living together in peace and harmony and where everyone is free regardless of the color of their skin. Dr. King says he dreams of a world where "...all men are created equal." Dr. King goes on to say, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." This is more evident now more than any time as we see so many black men and women treated unjustly and are being harmed or killed by those of another race. It has been 57 years since he gave his speech and look at our world today!

Now let's discuss Langston Hughes' "I Dream A World" speech. Hughes states, "I dream a world where all will know sweet freedom's way," "...A world I dream where black or white/whatever race you be/Will share the bounties of the earth/and every man is free". He, too, has the same dream of living in a world of peace and harmony where everyone is free no matter the color of your skin. Is it possible that both Langston Hughes and Dr. Martin Luther King felt the same? This issue is still very relevant today because we still see that racism exists.

Now the question is: did Hughes inspire Dr. King's dream? As I said previously, I believe he did and the author Jason Miller seems to think so, too. Here is some evidence. I believe Langston Hughes had influence on Dr. King because in Jason Miller's research he indicates, "My research has found traces of Hughes' poetry in King's speeches and sermons." The famous stage play "A Raisin in the Sun" premiered in 1959 and the title was influenced by one of Hughes' poems. The play's focus was on the American Dream. Then three weeks later Dr. King gave a sermon titled "Shattered Dreams". And you can see hints of Hughes' poems in many other sermons given by Dr. King. It is also known that Martin Luther King Jr. and poet Langston Hughes shared a friendship and even traveled together. So, again, I believe Langston Hughes inspired Dr. King in his sermons and speeches and their beliefs are still relevant today. We all want to live the "American Dream" and we still need to rally together to live in peace and harmony more than ever.

To conclude, after looking at text evidence and other facts, I truly believe Hughes inspired Dr. King. While Dr. King may have changed words around and added his own flavor, it still all sounds the same and have the same meaning. The beliefs of both men are very relevant today. In a time where we are rallying, calling for justice and saying Black Lives Matter. Today, many Black men and women are being killed at the hands of those in the justice system. I again say their beliefs mattered back then and they matter now.

Sanai Burrell – 2nd Place
Grade 5
Ms. Tillman/Ms. Lewis
Grove Street Elementary School

Imagine you are watching television and hear: “Breaking News: thirteen people fatally shot. Five black men shot dead and seven children are being rushed to the hospital at Crystal Baptist Church in the Bronx. Police are investigating suspects and interviewing eye witnesses. Elena Blackwell KRWY News.” You stare at the television and can’t believe what has happened because you reside a few houses from Crystal Baptist Church. You are wondering, what if you or your children had been one of those thirteen victims. This was one of the many common practices of injustice African-Americans faced during the Civil Rights Movement.

To begin with, in 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave a famous speech we all know today as “I Have a Dream”. Dr. Martin Luther King believed in justice, equality, and human rights for all people. In his speech he says “I have a dream that on the red hills of Georgia one day the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will sit down together at a table of brotherhood.” He also mentions the 1776 Declaration of Independence stating, “This nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.” He says this to remind America that blacks were included because they are also Americans.

Langston Hughes wrote a poem called, “I Dream a World”. Hughes wrote about how he envisioned a world where the color of your skin means nothing. He states “A world I dream where black or white, whatever race you be, will share the bounties of the earth and every man is free.” He writes this to show America that black and white people can share the earth free of hatred or injustice. Langston Hughes had dreamt of a better world for America so we can live in harmony. According to the text, it states, “I dream a world where man, No other man will scorn, where love will bless the earth and peace its paths adorn.” Langston Hughes also expresses a point that nothing good comes from being greedy and selfish.

Furthermore, I agree that Dr. King was inspired by Langston Hughes poem, because Langston Hughes' poem was written before Dr. King's speech. Dr. King described his ideas in a different way. According to the text “I Dream a World,” it states “A world I dream where black or white, whatever race you be, Will share the bounties of the earth, and every man is free.” In the excerpt of “I Have a Dream” Dr. King states, “I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.” The authors of the poem and speech are saying that they both want equality for all regardless of the color of your skin. This proves that Langston Hughes had an influence on Dr. Martin Luther King.

To conclude, Dr. King and Mr. Hughes envisioned a better tomorrow for all Americans. They both wanted blacks to be included in the American Dream of peace and equality for all. So let's come together as one to live up to their dreams.

Wisgens Saint Juste – 3rd Place
Grade 5
Mrs. Colon
Florence Avenue School

“When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, say something, do something!” This quote is from John Lewis. Martin Luther King Jr. was an American activist who fought for all people's rights no matter what race or color of skin you are. Langston Hughes was a poet who wrote poems that inspired lots of people and gave them hope. In the excerpt from “I Have a Dream,” Dr. King’s dream was that he wanted a world where all people were equal and no one would be judged by skin color or how they looked on the outside. They would be judged by how they look on the inside. In the poem from “I Dream a World,” Langston Hughes’ dream was to have a world where people would know freedom and be friends, where greed is gone and people live together no matter what race you are. In my opinion, I agree with the claim that Langston Hughes inspired Dr. King’s most notable speeches.

To begin with, in the excerpt from the speech “I Have a Dream,” Dr. King’s dream was that he wanted a world where all people were equal and no one would be judged by skin color or how they look on the outside. They would be judged by how they look on the inside. In the text, “I Have a Dream” it states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.” Also in the text, “I Have a Dream” it states, “I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.” Dr. King’s dream is still relevant today because some people are still racist and harmful to black African Americans and brown people. That is why Dr. King's dream is relevant because we still didn’t live up to it.

In addition, in the excerpt from the poem “I Dream a World,” Langston Hughes’ dream was to have a world where people would know freedom and be friends, where greed is gone and people live together no matter what race you are. In the text “I Dream a World” it states, “I dream a world where all will know sweet freedom's way, where greed no longer saps the soul.” The author of “I Dream a World” states, “A world I dream where black or white, Whatever race you be, Will share the bounties of the earth And every man is free.” Langston Hughes’s dream is still relevant today because people still need to live up to the dream that all people should be treated equally. There are still people who are greedy for power, fame, and money. People also treat each other as they’re better than one another. Also people are still racist towards each other which means they don’t live in peace with each other. That is why Langston Hughes’s dream is relevant and important today.

Lastly, I agree with the author’s claim that Langston Hughes inspired Dr. King’s speeches because they both focused or believed on a similar dream. Dr. King also took several similar phrases from Langston Hughes’ poems in some of his speeches. The author brings up the point that Dr. King had similar phrases to his speeches and had to carefully avoid people realizing that his speeches were closely similar to some phrases of Langston Hughes’ poems. Langston Hughes’ work did influence the dream Dr. King expressed in the excerpt. It is the same as the dream Langston Hughes expressed in his literary work.

Wisgens Saint Juste – 3rd Place
Grade 5
Mrs. Colon
Florence Avenue School

Dr. King's dream was that he had dreamed of a world where people lived in peace with each other and where there was equality, just like Langston Hughes had expressed in his poem "I Dream a World." Even before Dr. King's speech "I Have a Dream" he already had similar words or phrases in his speeches that were similar to Langston Hughes's poems. In the text "Hughes' Hidden Influence on MLK" it states, "What happens to a dream deferred?" Hughes writes. "Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? ... Or does it explode?" Just three weeks after the premiere of "A Raisin in the Sun," King delivered one of his most personal sermons, giving it a title – "Shattered Dreams" – that echoed Hughes' imagery. "Is there any one of us," King booms in the sermon, "Who has not faced the agony of blasted hopes and shattered dreams?" He'd more directly evoke Hughes in a later speech, in which he would say, "I am personally the victim of deferred dreams." The author in "Hughes' hidden influence on MLK" states, "Langston Hughes' "I Dream a World. A world I dream where black or white, whatever race you be, Will share the bounties of the earth and every man is free. It is impossible not to notice the parallels in what would become "I Have a Dream": I have a dream that one day ... little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers. King spoke truth to power, and part of that strategy involved riffing or sampling Hughes' words. By channeling Hughes' voice, he was able to elevate the subversive words of a poet that the powerful thought they had silenced." This proves that Langston Hughes' work had inspired Dr. King's speeches and his dream that he expressed in his speech "I Have a Dream".

In conclusion, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was an American activist who fought for all people's rights no matter what race or color of skin you are. Langston Hughes was a poet who wrote poems that inspired lots of people and gave them hope. Both Dr. King and Langston Hughes were people who gave hope and inspiration to people to fight for equality and freedom. I do believe that Langston Hughes' work did inspire Dr. King and his speeches. Also that Langston Hughes poem "I Dream a World" did inspire Dr. King's speech "I Have a Dream". I hope after you read my essay you learned that Dr. King and Langston Hughes had similar dreams and that Dr. King was inspired by Langston Hughes' work and poems.

Krismalee Dosreis – 1st Place
Grade 6
Ms. Briggs
Union Avenue Middle School

MLK Essay

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” - Dr. King. Dr. Martin Luther King fought for equality almost daily and is well known for his campaigns to stop racial segregation in public places like bathrooms, buses, and more. The articles “Drum Major Instinct Excerpt” and “The Drum Major Instinct: A Reflection of Dr. Martin Luther King Day” talk about how Dr. Martin Luther King’s main goal was to fight for equality for all and how he fought for righteousness. Because of him, society has improved significantly since then. However, we still have a lot of problems that need to be fixed. The real question is, would he be pleased with today’s society? I think not.

To start, the text “The Drum Major Instinct Excerpt” was mainly about how Dr. Martin Luther King wanted people to talk about what he did for America, not what he earned from it. The last thing he wanted people to focus on was his awards. I’m sure Dr. Martin Luther King would have expected America to be a lot better than it is now. However, at one point in society, we went backwards. The article states, “I want you to say that day that I tried to be right on the war question. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. And I want you to be able to say that day that I did try in my life to clothe those who were naked.” This quote connects with the idea that he would not be pleased with society because today, more people in America do not care for people in those situations than people like Dr. Martin Luther King. A lot of people that try to speak on the topic end up getting shut down. This is why I believe Dr. Martin Luther King would not be pleased. If more people did care, I think America would be a lot better.

In addition, the text “The Drum Major Instinct: A Reflection of Dr. Martin Luther King Day” is mainly about how MLK wanted to help people in need, for example, people that are homeless and people that are suffering from poverty. This text connects with the idea that he would not be pleased with society because now more people are in poverty than ever, and not many people want anything to even do with that. The article states, “We need to acknowledge that he (MLK) was working towards a goal, which was the fight for social justice for all, a fight against poverty.” This quote also connects with the idea that Dr. Martin Luther King would not be pleased because while he died trying to fight to abolish poverty and set a goal that he was sure he would accomplish, it just got worse as time went on. From February to June this year, the number of individuals living in families with COMBINED earnings in poverty rose by 14.1 million, proving my point that we are indeed going backwards.

Lastly, both articles, “Drum Major Instinct Excerpt” and “The Drum Major Instinct: A Reflection of Dr. Martin Luther King Day,” discuss a similar topic related to what Dr. Martin Luther King has done for society as a whole and a lot of his goals. “Drum Major Instinct Excerpt” states, “Yes if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness.” He wanted people to pay more attention to the goals he set out for himself and society and how he went about accomplishing those goals. That, I think, was very important. “The Drum Major Instinct: A

Krismalee Dosreis – 1st Place
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Reflection of Dr. Martin Luther King Day” states, “Don’t we still need to think about social justice? About hunger that causes food riots in cities across the globe?” Dr. Martin Luther King wanted society to be equal; that was all. He wanted people to live in peace.

Today, that’s hard for a lot of people in America. Even internationally, a lot of people are suffering. With the advancements made recently, like having a black woman elected as Vice President of the United States, that is something everyone should be proud of. However, some people think she should **not** be in office because of her race. This goes to show that justice still has not been obtained. Not only that, but there are other problems that I’ve mentioned. I feel for today’s activists; their goal is mainly the same as Dr. Martin Luther King. Now that we have made big advancements since those times, it should be easier. We have to keep trying.

To sum all of it up, I believe Dr. Martin Luther King is a great person to look up to, and he would not be pleased with today’s society. However, I appreciate how he used his fame and popularity as a tool to help him project his voice. He made a pathway for other activists to also project their voices and ideas alongside him. Dr. Martin Luther King was an activist that had an idea for almost every topic, like social justice, poverty, and war. He was always thinking about how he could make other people’s situations better, and thus leading him to accomplish some fundamental goals that led to the advancements America has made today.

Wiyao Palanga – 2nd Place
Grade 6
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Dr. King recited the following in his drum major speech, “Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness.” Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wanted to improve the lives of all people living on this Earth. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr’s “Drum Major Instinct” speech was about peace, justice, and equality for everyone. Paul Farmer’s “Reflection on Martin Luther King Day” mentions that there are good people who sometimes remain silent instead of speaking out about social issues. Both of these texts encourage people to serve and give back to society. Dr. King would not be happy with the advancements made in today’s society because there are many homeless people and everyone is not treated fairly.

Dr. King would not be happy with the advancements made in today’s society because there are still many homeless people and people who are living in poverty. Farmer’s speech states, “Now, as our country and our world faces financial crisis, environmental disaster, war, and growing inequality, is the time to serve. It’s a great time to serve a just cause, to concern ourselves with the oppressed or those less fortunate. Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve.” This evidence is important because there are people who are struggling to support their families. Meanwhile, there are extremely rich people who do not have to worry about feeding and clothing their families. We should all be able to support our families without having to worry about dinner and or having a roof over our heads. There are social injustices that still exist today.

Also, I believe that Dr. King would not be happy with the advancements in today’s society because everyone is not treated fairly. Dr. King wanted justice for all people, no matter who you are. However people are still being treated unfairly because of their race, gender, skin color, and religion. Dr. King’s “Drum Major” speech states, “Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice Say that I was a drum major for peace.” Fair treatment does not exist so why would Dr. King be pleased with society today? He wanted to change the entire world and we are still struggling to love and support one another.

However, Dr. King would be happy with the advancements made in today’s society because some things have improved. For example we do not have Jim Crow laws. You can go to any school that you would like. There are more job opportunities available to all people. In the text it states “I’d like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to give his life serving others.” This evidence is important because it shows that we are working towards creating a better society.

In closing, I believe that Dr. King would not be happy with the advancements made in society today because there are still people in the United States who are treated unfairly. Both Dr. King’s speech and Paul Farmer’s speech encourage everyone to serve and fight for justice.

Woodson Cosmeus – 3rd Place
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“Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for **justice**. Say that I was a drum major for **peace**. I was a drum major for **righteousness**.” Dr. King’s “Drum Major Instinct” emphasizes equality and fairness. Dr. King’s speech tells us that Dr. King wanted to be remembered as a drum major for peace and justice. He doesn’t want anyone to praise his achievements. He wants everyone to give back and serve their communities. Paul Farmer’s “Reflection on Martin Luther King Day” discusses how Dr. King was a leader and anyone could serve and fight just like Dr. King. I believe that Dr. King wouldn’t be happy with the advancements made in today’s society because racism and inequality still exist today and homelessness still exists.

Dr. King wouldn’t be happy with the advancements made in society today because racism still exists and at times it seems to be getting worse. Dr. King would be furious because he would feel like he sacrificed for nothing. There has not been a great deal of change. In the text it states, “I want you to say on that day that I did try in my life to visit those who were in prison.” Dr. King would not be happy because he wanted to imagine a world where everyone came together and stood united as one. People are still being victimized by murders because of the color of their skin. Dr. King would not be happy with police brutality. Some police officers are targeting black men and abusing their power. The same thing was happening in the 60’s. Dr. King was fighting against the same racial injustices that people are currently protesting today.

Also, Dr. King would not be happy with society because he said “I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. And I want you to be able to say that day that I did try in my life to clothe those who were naked.” He tried to stop people from being homeless and still people are homeless. In the text it states, “I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity.” Some people are going homeless because of mass jobs being lost. Dr. King wouldn’t like this current society because there are many homeless people barely surviving from day to day. Many people still go to bed hungry at night or do not have a roof over their heads. This is not the world that Dr. King fought for.

Although, Dr. King would be happy because some police officers are joining in and protesting with the nation. Some police officers are speaking about the injustices being committed and openly saying that they do not agree with the killings of unarmed black men. Paul Farmer’s speech states, “It’s a great time to serve a just cause, to concern ourselves with the oppressed or those less fortunate.” Farmer says that we should speak up when we see injustices and help fight for justice and equality. Those police officers truly are a representation of that.

In conclusion, I believe that Dr. King wouldn’t be happy with the advancements made in today’s society because racism still exists today. Dr. King wanted people to be able to live happily and that isn’t possible for some people because they are mistreated because of the color of their skin and sometimes get wrongfully accused for something they didn’t do. This was not Dr. King’s dream.

Shamirha Jean-Baptiste – 1st Place

Grade 7
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“What Is Your Life's Blueprint?” Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said to a group of middle-schoolers six months before he was assassinated. He encouraged them to have a blueprint for their future. He defined ‘blueprint’ as a pattern, or a guide. He also brought up three goals that should be in their life’s blueprint: “a deep belief in your own dignity”, “the determination to achieve excellence”, and “a commitment to the eternal principles of beauty, love and justice”. I believe that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s goals ARE realistically achievable.

To begin with, Dr. King mentioned that we need to believe in ourselves. “Number one in your life’s blueprint should be a deep belief in your own dignity, your worth, and your own somebodies”. This is one of the three goals that he believes we need in order to build our life’s blueprint, and I agree 100%. We often see these words or phrases in motivational speeches, quotes, and even pictures: *believe in yourself, love yourself, you are special, have confidence in yourself* etc. These words are important because they inspire and motivate people, like Dr. King was doing. I know this is realistically attainable because there is proof that has been done and is still being done. President Barack Obama is the perfect example of Dr. King’s inspiration. Being a biracial child, he had to overcome discrimination because of his race and even his name. However, he didn’t let any of that phase him or keep him from achieving his goals. He believed in himself and grew up to become the first African-American president in the United States.

Secondly, Dr. King says in his speech, “You must have, as the basic principle, the determination to achieve excellence in your various fields of endeavor.” What Dr. King means is that whenever you are doing something, or whatever you choose to do with your life, do it to the best of your ability. One way he says this can be achieved is by staying in school and studying hard. This is achievable because I have seen my mother do it everyday. For example, my mother is a single mother who works her hardest and her best as a nursing assistant, and manages to take care of me, an ignorant twelve year old, to send my older sister to college, to pay rent, and still make time to be with her family. In other words, she is the best possible mom that anyone could ever be. Like Dr. King says in his speech, it doesn’t matter what you do, “set out to do it well”.

Thirdly, Dr. King says, “Finally, in your life’s blueprint, must be a commitment to the eternal principles of beauty, love, and justice”. What he means by that is, everything you do in life, do it fairly and out of love. Look for the good in this world. Also, live with no hatred; and if someone does hate you, love them back in return. This goal is especially challenging because people can get you so angry that it is nearly impossible to like them; let alone love them. However, it is still achievable if you really try and have the desire to change the world. There are so many people in this world who are doing amazing things like feeding the homeless, opening their homes and hearts to the less fortunate, and there are celebrities donating a lot of money to many different charities. Things are not going to change overnight, but Dr. King’s goal is still achievable, one person at a time, one small step at a time.

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Grade 7

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In conclusion, Dr. King's goals are to believe in yourself, do the best you can in everything you do, and do everything fairly and with love. I believe that they are achievable even though they may be challenging. As Dr. King says, we have opportunities that our ancestors didn't have; so it's up to us to make the best of them to make the world a better place for everyone.

Arianna Dejesus 2nd – Place
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On October 26, 1967, at Barratt Junior High School in Philadelphia, Dr. King spoke to a group of students asking, "What is in your life's blueprint?" In the speech, Dr. King suggests three goals young people need in order to have a solid blueprint for their future. The three goals are to have a deep belief in themselves, to achieve excellence in their work, and to be committed to the eternal principles of beauty, love, and justice. I agree with his goals. I feel like they are achievable in today's society.

The first goal that Dr. King suggests is to believe in yourself. In the speech, Dr. King says, "Number one in your life's blueprint should be a deep belief in your own dignity". What I think Dr. King means by this is to have confidence or pride in yourself. There are many things in this world that can challenge this goal. For example, people discriminate against others because of their social, cultural, economic, or racial background. However, we cannot let things like that hold us back. Like Dr. King says, "Don't allow anybody to make you feel that you're nobody. Always feel that you count. Always feel that you have worth, and always feel that your life has ultimate significance". To achieve this goal, you will have to find it within yourself. For example, my father learned to have a deep belief in himself while attending basic Army training. He was very skinny, and not many people thought that he would be able to make it through training. But, he knew he could; so he learned to push his body beyond what he thought he could do; so, he worked hard, built up strength and made it through.

The second goal suggested by Dr. King is to always try to achieve excellence in your work. "Secondly, in your life's blueprint you must have, as the basic principle, the determination to achieve excellence in your various fields of endeavor". I believe that Dr. King means to work hard and be the best you can be in whatever you choose to do in life. This goal is definitely achievable, and Dr. King even provides some examples on how to achieve it. In the speech, he says, "...I would urge you to study hard, to burn the midnight oil; I would say to you, don't drop out of school." Dr. King is saying that it is important to have a good education because it allows you to be the best that you can be; and that opens a lot of doors. Another way that this goal is achievable is through practice and perseverance. My goal is to attend a good college; so, I take my education seriously. I work hard in school, and try to be the best student that I know how to be. I have no doubt that I will achieve my goal.

For his final goal, Dr. King encourages us to have a strong commitment to "the eternal principles of beauty, love, and justice." By what Dr. King says, I think he means that we must make every effort to find beauty, even in a bad situation. Having always been a man of peace, he urges us all to be kind and fair to others, to treat others with love and respect, even if they do not give it in return. This goal is by far the hardest to achieve because the world is so full of hate, and some people these days can be so offensive. However, as my father likes to say, "Kill them with kindness." He says that people where he works can get under his skin, but he continues to be kind to them because he hopes they will notice there's no reason to be that way. He refuses to join in their negative energy or give them the satisfaction to mess up his day. This may not be enough to change the world, but it's a start towards achieving Dr. King's suggested goal.

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Dr. King gave the speech “What is in your life’s blueprint?” to a group of students over fifty years ago, but his words still apply to us all today. The three goals-- believe in yourself, do the best in your work, and be just and kind to everyone-- are challenging, but achievable, just like any goal in life. Dr. King, more than anyone, knew the challenges. That is why he encourages us to remember where we came from, but to stay encouraged and push forward. As he says, "If you can't fly, run. If you can't run, walk. If you can't walk, crawl, but by all means, keep moving."

Aniyah Drakeford – 3rd Place
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I am sure that you have heard of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but are you aware of his goals? Dr. King had three primary goals from his “What Is Your Life's Blueprint?” speech, and they were as follows: Always believe in yourself, always do your best, and always stay in school. These three goals are definitely still attainable today because if we think highly of ourselves and do our very best, then nothing can stand in our way. Not even this pandemic.

First, Dr. King's first goal, *Always believe in yourself*, is still relevant today because your mindset will always determine your ultimate outlook on life. For example, I want to be a surgeon when I grow up and to be a surgeon and I need to believe that I can do it. And I *know* that I can do it! As a matter of fact, Dr. King's first goal tells me that I have no other choice than to believe in myself if I want to see my dreams come true. As Dr. King stated in his famous, “What is your Life's Blueprint?” speech: “Don't allow anybody to make you feel that you're nobody. Always feel that you count. Always feel that you have worth, and always feel that your life has ultimate significance.” In other words, Dr. King preached that we should always have faith in ourselves. Today, believing in ourselves is harder than ever since people will always try to bring us down. As Dr. King stated, we need to love ourselves, because loving ourselves is the greatest feeling in the world. So why not love ourselves all the time if we have the opportunity to do so?

Secondly, Dr. King's stated goal, *do your best*, is still relevant today. In the same speech, Dr. King stated: “In your life's blueprint, you must have, as the basic principle, the determination to achieve excellence in your various fields of endeavor.” And Dr. King is absolutely right. Doing your best is crucial because building your goals, step-by-step, is how you get ahead in life. For example, if I'm planning on being a surgeon, I need to do my best to strive for excellence. I cannot set myself up for failure. I must think about my future, always.

Finally, Dr. King's third goal, *Stay in school*, is realistically attainable today since anybody can stay in school if he or she truly wants to. Just as Dr. King stated: “I understand all the sociological reasons, but I urge that despite your economic plight, despite the situation that you're forced to live in-stay in school.” Again, Dr. King is absolutely right. Staying in school and getting an education is still significant today as it can help us get the job of our choice, such as becoming a surgeon, which is difficult, but not impossible. And if I go to school and learn more about medicine, I can make my dream become a reality. Staying in school is the answer, and that is why Dr. King's goals are still realistically attainable today.

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Grade 7
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In conclusion, all of Dr. King's goals are still attainable today, and we should consider them all.

Some may argue that Dr. King's goals are not relevant today for various reasons, but I believe these people are not looking at the bigger picture. Hard work *does* pay off. Dr. King compared our lives to a blueprint, but I think having goals is more like looking outside the window before going to the beach. You have to be prepared and ready for anything if you want to enjoy your time in the sun. I will always remember to follow my life's blueprint, and I have Dr. King to thank for letting me know just how to do it.

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Grade 8
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**Non-Violence:
Dr. King's Answer to Defeating Injustice**

Violence is one of the most reoccurring tragedies currently happening in protests, with people of color being the main individuals targeted, all while marching for justice and equality. One phenomenal man named Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. refrained from violent retaliation as he led the most inspiring movement in this country's history, the Civil Rights Movement which was a movement for Black Americans to obtain equal rights in America. He knew the method of nonviolence practice was the best civil action to embrace in order to overcome injustice. Therefore, I agree with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his statement that, "nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time - the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression." Non-violent methods have a greater impact to achieve social and racial justice.

First and foremost, I agree with Dr. King's non-violent rhetoric because using non-violent methods lead to more positive outcomes modeling for our American and world culture how to successfully make your voices heard. As Dr. King stated in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, "Negroes of the United States, following the people of India, have demonstrated that nonviolence is not sterile passivity, but a powerful moral force which makes for social transformation." As Dr. King expressed, by taking nonviolent steps to change the structure of the environment, it isn't a way of harming others because of how it can transform society facing any great threat. According to <https://biography.yourdictionary.com>, "...Dr. King and his followers moved into St. Augustine, Florida, one of America's most thoroughly segregated cities. After weeks of nonviolent demonstrations and violent counter-attacks by Whites, a biracial committee was set up to move St. Augustine toward desegregation. A few weeks later the 1964 Civil Rights Bill was signed by President Lyndon Johnson." Dr. King knew that if we all worked together as he did with others in his nonviolent demonstrations, our voices would be heard. Ultimately, their voices were heard and that led to the passage of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964 which prohibited discrimination based on your race, color of skin, religion, or gender and also desegregated schools.

Moreover, the second reason why I concur with Dr. King's non-violent method is because using increased violence will compel more violence. Therefore, injustice, social, and racial atrocities will not be solved efficiently. Messages of peace can permeate the ears and hearts of people especially when we never give up hope, keeping our eyes on the prize of justice for all. As expressed in Dr. King's Nobel Prize acceptance speech, "This faith can give us courage to face the uncertainties of the future. It will give our tired feet new strength as we continue our forward stride toward the city of freedom." Dr. King hoped for and dedicated his life to a better future in which nonviolent approaches would be utilized by everyone to solve the uncertainties that come when citizens have not learned from the lessons of our complex history.

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According to <https://www.huffpost.com/>, “Since the start of the protests ignited by the police killing of George Floyd in May, cities across the country have seen an alarming spike in violent crime. In New York, sixty-four people were shot over the Fourth of July weekend. Brooklyn’s Canarsie neighborhood had three drive-by shootings in a single day. In total, the recent shootings in New York City represent a two hundred ten percent increase over the same time period in 2019.”

This demonstrates a great example of creating a long-lasting chain of effects as one violent, criminal act has led to an uproar in many states leading to an increasing amount of violence.

Furthermore, I accept Dr. King’s notion of non-violence for greater change because succumbing to the “need” to act violently, can result in life-altering consequences. In recent months, there have been violent clashes between pro-Trump supporters and Antifa demonstrators. Some of those clashes have resulted in stabbings and gun-fire. This seems to exhibit that some people may take violent means to protest to have their voices heard, however, the message was dissolved by the sounds of gunfire. According to Dr. King’s acceptance speech, “I believe that even amid today’s motor bursts and whining bullets, there is still hope for a brighter tomorrow. I believe that wounded justice, lying prostrate on the blood-flowing streets of our nations, can be lifted from this dust of shame to reign supreme among the children of men.” Dr. King and many others believed that a brighter tomorrow would occur if we just terminate using any violent course of action, since it is causing hazardous danger to others.

Undoubtedly, many would argue that the methods of nonviolence have not proven to be the most effective answer to the “crucial political and moral questions of our time - the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression.” On the contrary, many facts have proven that using nonviolent means in racial justice protests will assist many of us without harming others. According to time.com, during the year 2020, “More than 2,400 locations reported peaceful protests, while fewer than 220 reported “violent demonstrations.” The authors define violent demonstrations as including “acts targeting other individuals, property, businesses, other rioting groups or armed actors.” This reveals that many individuals accept the idea that utilizing nonviolent techniques would allow their voices to be heard while leading and demonstrating by example. According to paceebene.org “Organized and disciplined nonviolence can disarm and change the world – and our lives, our relationships and our communities. Techniques for everyday nonviolence are spreading – from nonviolent communication to restorative justice; from peaceful parenting to trauma healing; and from anti-racism training to nonviolent community-building.” Thus, organized nonviolent protests will transform the world for the greater good, but many need to understand how to benefit from those non-violent methods.

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In essence, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. undertook numerous responsibilities that shaped the world in regard to civil acts of justice. Present day issues such as police brutality, racism, the American presidential election, and even the coronavirus pandemic have led to dividing violent circumstances especially when it comes to differences of opinions and beliefs. Unfortunately, some people perceive violence to be the superior way to carry their voices. However, there are alternative ways to achieve social and racial justice, as citizens are able to vote, start a movement, or do something as effortless as to just mail your city and state elected officials your concerns. Discounting methods of nonviolence causes chaotic rupture and leads to more uncivilized acts of injustice. We must take advantage of our nonviolent tactics because we have been shown a better way as exemplified by Dr. King, and when we know better, we are supposed to do better. As Dr. King once so passionately articulated, “Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals.”

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Nonviolence: Man's Strongest Weapon

“Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.” This statement was made by the historic Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi, who influenced another great champion of humanity named Dr. Martin Luther King. Dr. King was inspired by the teachings of Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi who believed in nonviolent methods to overcome oppression and achieve racial justice and equality. Dr. King was an American Christian minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the Civil Rights Movement because of his use of nonviolent methods to resolve issues. Consequently, I agree with Dr. King's statement that, “nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time.” Thus, in order for civilization to thrive, violence and oppression must be disposed of if human beings are to survive the test of time.

First and foremost, I agree with Dr. King because when using non-violent solutions you can acquire positive results without having to deal with the repercussions from being violent. In Dr. Martin Luther King's Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech he articulated, “I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of thermonuclear destruction. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why, “right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. I believe that even amid today's motor bursts and whining bullets, there is still hope for a brighter tomorrow.” This means that Dr. King truly believed that humanity itself could stray away from wars and fighting to love and coexist in peace. According to the website, www.history.com, “Dr. King led the first large-scale U.S. demonstration against segregation, the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Sparked by the arrest of Rosa Parks on December 1, 1955.” The Montgomery bus boycott was a thirteen-month mass protest where about ninety percent of African- Americans in the area did not use buses. This ended with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that segregation on public buses was unconstitutional. Even though people were wrongly arrested, this event can be seen as a prime example of nonviolence being used to still acquire change in your favor.

Moving forward, another reason I share Dr. King's sentiments on non-violence is because using violence to attempt to resolve issues will only result in more problems occurring. For example, Dr. King as a civil rights leader and activist received many death threats and was always knocking on the doors of death daily. Even though so much aggression and hate was directed towards him he never resorted to violence as a response. In Dr. Martin Luther King's Acceptance Speech he stated, “Sooner or later all the people of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace, and thereby transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. If this is to be achieved, man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation.” The important idea he wants to convey here is no matter the magnitude of what is done to you, never seek revenge since it will only cause more problems.

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According to the website, www.history.com, “an unidentified white supremacist terrorist bombed the Montgomery home of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. No one was harmed, but the explosion outraged the community and was a major test of King’s steadfast commitment to non-violence.” Instead of adding fuel to the fire of his angered supporters, Dr. Martin Luther King assured them that the person who did this would be dealt with and they needed to continue to use nonviolent methods to make changes now more than ever.

Moreover, I support Dr. King’s use of non-violent methods to overcome injustice because there are other ways to bring about social and racial change, such as boycotting. In Dr. Martin Luther King’s I’ve Been to the Mountaintop Speech, he proclaimed that “We (African Americans) have an annual income of more than thirty billion dollars a year, which is more than all of the exports of the United States, and more than the national budget of Canada. Did you know that? That’s power right there, if we know how to pool it.” “And so, as a result of this, we are asking you tonight, to go out and tell your neighbors not to buy Coca-Cola in Memphis. Go by and tell them not to buy Sealtest milk. Tell them not to buy -- what is the other bread? -- Wonder Bread.” Before Dr. King’s untimely death he was planning to boycott big companies like Wonder Bread and Coca Cola because they weren’t being fair to all people in regard to hiring practices and job opportunities. He knew the saying “money runs the world” is true and once you start messing with someone’s pockets, you will definitely get their attention to answer your demands. Ultimately, African American people have a massive impact on the U.S. economy and if we boycott these companies they would collapse showing Dr. King’s non-violent methods are very effective.

On the other hand, many people would argue that there is a need to resort to violence when issues and problems have escalated out of control. I can understand why they feel this way, but they fail to realize that resorting to violence will only lead most likely to harsh consequences that come with being violent. Others will argue that using nonviolent solutions isn’t effective and is basically like doing nothing. In Dr. King’s Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech he declared, “Civilization and violence are antithetical concepts. Negroes of the United States, following the people of India, have demonstrated that nonviolence is not sterile passivity, but a powerful moral force which makes for social transformation.” Through the work of Dr. King we can see that nonviolence definitely is effective, it can affect people economically, instead of having the direct negative physical results on people like violence does.

Jayden Michel 2nd Place
Grade 8
Ms. Pollard
University Middle School

In conclusion, I agree with Dr. King that, “nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time.” The only way for human beings to progress and survive the tests of time is to dispose of violence and oppression, instead embracing our nonviolent solutions like Dr. King modeled. Dr. King would definitely be proud of the progress we have made in America if he were still alive. In the past decade we've already had an African-American male president and will soon have an African-American female Vice President of the United States of America. Most notably, that dream was able to become a reality because of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, in which Dr. King used civil disobedience to not only help African-Americans but all people obtain the right to vote. That act has allowed this country to make global history and when we continue to follow Dr. King’s non-violent techniques, even greater history will be written. That is what made America great and that is what will make America great again!

Shirley Sanchez – 3rd Place
Grade 8
Mrs. Lester
Union Avenue Middle School

Another Pain by Another Stain in Society: Say NO to Violence! Martin Luther King Jr. was a luminous and admirable man who once said, “Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” Violence is never the answer; you should think before you act. You should take a deep breath and try to resolve the problem by talking nicely. Any person of sound mind should want to be a role model. People should want to be role models for their children. I agree with the great social rights activist, Dr. Martin Luther King's acceptance speech, where he stated, “...nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time- the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression.” We should not depend on violence as the end all be all. We need to change for the better good of humanity.

Nowadays, most people depend on violence as their first option, which results in bigger conflicts. For instance, “I can’t breathe,” doesn’t that sound familiar? It was all over the news; an innocent father was brutally killed just because of his skin color. The police had his knee on George Floyd’s neck for about 8 minutes and 46 seconds until he stopped breathing, and he died. They should have handled it a different way, with no violence. After years of people fighting for equality, you would think that it would be over and resolved, but unfortunately, that's not the case. Hopefully, in the future, violence and racism is not an issue like in today's society. We have to keep a lot of hope and love, as Dr. King said in his speech, “Let us hope that this spirit will become the order of the day. As Arnold Toynbee says: Love is the ultimate force that makes for the saving choice of life and good against the damning choice of death and evil. Therefore, the first hope in our inventory must be the hope that love is going to have the last word.” More leaders should step up to the plate and be like Dr. King because many people do not like violence; however, they don’t speak up, so it will keep happening. Violence will continue until someone speaks up; the more, the merrier.

Furthermore, you cannot forget what historical event occurred on March 7, 1965, when John Lewis, a great leader, led over 600 marchers across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. The article said that the following was stated by Dr. King, “This is Selma, Alabama. There are more negroes in jail with me than there are on the voting rolls.” Marchers were protesting the denial of voting rights to African Americans. This peaceful march gained national attention, and the nation was shocked, not for a good reason, but because human beings were treated like they were nothing; oncoming state troopers beat them. As stated in the article by Christopher Klein, “Outrage at “Bloody Sunday” swept the country. Sympathizers staged sit-ins, traffic blockades, and demonstrations in solidarity with the voting rights marchers. Some even traveled to Selma where two days later Dr. King attempted another march, but to the dismay of some demonstrators, turned back when troopers again blocked the highway at the Edmund Pettus Bridge.” As you can tell, numerous people were supporters of this peaceful protest against the outrage of “Bloody Sunday.”

Shirley Sanchez – 3rd Place
Grade 8
Mrs. Lester
Union Avenue Middle School

As a teenager, I feel like our generation should speak up more to make this world a much better place. All generations have to do their part to make this world a non-violence environment; we all have minds that can be very powerful if we all join together as one.

Moreover, Dr. King's Acceptance Speech, made for the Nobel Peace Prize, definitely articulates a powerful message that violence should never be an alternative to fulfill your anger. On the other hand, non-violence should be a method everyone thinks of first in a disagreement. Dr. King interpreted this when he stated, "Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon. Indeed, it is a weapon unique in history, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it." I believe in the strong word, non-violence; it is the only way to reestablish and fix this potentially wonderful world. I am even more thrilled by Klein's article about "Bloody Sunday," which provides a precise account of humanity at its worst and best. It was very miserable to see how people were treated like animals. This was certainly a tragedy to the human race. Who would imagine that this could happen in this country, where the first amendment gave us the rights of free speech, free press, and free society? Bloody Sunday should have been handled differently, so we can remember it as a wonderful protest and not as a historical event that ended in bloodshed streets and the death of some. Klein's article plays an integral role in the past and certainly leaves the readers with much to ponder about when it comes to one's rights and violence. Contrary to this awful event that took place many years ago, we are still subject to violence in the 21st century.

In closing, the words of Dr. King will permanently live on, and the sad part of history that took place in Selma, Alabama, will forever be a stain on America. Unfortunately, this stain seems to be an entity that can't be removed to some degree. Sadly, this stain keeps showing up, but the stain has certainly gotten better, and I think it will continue to get better. As the 21st century presents injustices unbearable to process, it is still a work of art to hold to King's philosophies and make the world a better place. Violence has the ability to destroy, where nonviolence can allow the world to prevail with the understanding that it does not resort to bloodshed. As human beings, we deserve a nonviolent world that thrives on the consciousness of what is good for all humankind. You have to try to put yourself in someone else's shoes before you want to use violence; you would not want to get beaten up or killed just because of your skin color.

Gensis Nova – 1st Place
Grade 9
Ms. Hooper-Hughes
Irvington High School

Martin Luther King once said “The life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and discrimination.” These words were used by Dr. King in his “I Have A Dream” speech given at the Lincoln Memorial during the March on Washington. He discussed the racial injustice African Americans faced and how they were still not fully free, even though they were no longer enslaved. The nation has made a lot of progress since then, but there is still much more to be made. The arguments made in Dr. King’s speech are still valid in today’s society on account of the fact that African Americans still face discrimination, racial injustice, and police brutality.

To begin with, African Americans still face a lot of discrimination solely on their skin color today. In his “I Have A Dream” speech, Dr. King states “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.” He expresses how he hopes there will be a time where his children would be treated equally and not be judged solely on their skin color. African Americans have faced many situations where they have been verbally and physically attacked because of their skin color. They have had offensive comments thrown at them and hate groups who have committed racially motivated attacks towards them. Clearly, Dr. King’s dream has still not been fully fulfilled.

Furthermore, African Americans have experienced a lot of racial injustice in today’s society. Dr. King says “Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock brotherhood.” Dr. King states how it’s the time to fight for racial justice and join together for equality as a country. Today there have been many instances where African Americans have faced racial discrimination while finding a job, interacting with the police, buying a house, and going to the doctor. This demonstrates that our nation still has to break free from racial injustice and grant African Americans equal opportunities.

Opponents may argue that in today’s society, blacks are no longer treated unfairly and are given the same opportunities. This may be a strong argument considering that the vice-president elect is a black woman and many blacks are successful, however, African Americans are still victims of police brutality. In the speech, Dr. King states “Some of you have come from areas where your quest of freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality.” Here, he talks about how African Americans have been deeply affected by the mistreatment against them by police and are being killed as a result of it. Statistics show that blacks are the main target for police violence and more likely to be killed than any other race. The fight for police brutality is still ongoing after all these years, strongly supporting my argument.

Gensis Nova – 1st Place
Grade 9
Ms. Hooper-Hughes
Irvington High School

The points Dr. King presented in his I Have A Dream speech can still be applied today. African Americans are faced with instances of discrimination, racial injustice, and police brutality far too often and this needs to be terminated so that Dr. King's dream can be fully fulfilled one day. As a nation, we the people, need to fight for racial justice and give African Americans true equality. The fight for equality is not over yet.

Jailyn Agard – 2nd Place
Grade 9
Ms. Hooper-Hughes
Irvington High School

In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King “Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.” Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said this in his “I Have a Dream” speech. A speech on the inequalities that black people faced back in the early 1900s after the signing of the Emancipation of Proclamation, this ended slavery, but still left black people not equal to white people. Nowadays, the topic of if black people are still under the same circumstances is debatable. The arguments made in Dr. King’s speech are not valid in today’s society due to the fact that segregation is no longer a thing, the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence’s promises have been held up, and black people have lived up to their potential.

To start off, Black people are no longer segregated as they were in the past. In the speech, Dr. King states, “But one hundred years later, the Negro is still not free; one hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination”. This points out that black people were dealing with segregation problems during the time speech was given. In today’s society, black people are not faced with segregation in America as they were back then. Blacks are allowed in the same establishments as others and given the same opportunities.

The Constitution, along with the Declaration of Independence have held up their promises of providing every person in the U.S the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In the text it says, “When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious that America defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned”. This quote shows how black people were oppressed for their rights back then. Blacks have come a long way, the vice-president elect is a black woman! Equality is evident in today’s society as promised in the U. S. foundational documents.

People who disagree may claim that blacks are discriminated against and not offered the same opportunities as others. While there are many instances in which blacks are treated unfairly, major progress has been made and black people have lived up to their potential. Black businesses are thriving as shown through black artists, athletes, and professionals. In the text it states, “Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy; now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice; now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.” Dr. King believed that black people would overcome the injustice that they were facing and become successful. Now, there are many very successful black people, therefore leaving this quote irrelevant to today's society.

Jailyn Agard – 2nd Place
Grade 9
Ms. Hooper-Hughes
Irvington High School

The debate on if Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s arguments in his "I Have a Dream" speech are still relevant to today's society is a complex one. Dr. King's arguments are no longer relevant to considering the current successes of blacks. Segregation is no longer a thing, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution held up their claims and black people are living up to their potential.

Christ Badeau – 3rd Place
Grade 9
Mr. Davis
Irvington High School

A preacher with a message has impacted the globe many times. In the mid 1950's it occurred again with Dr. Martin Luther King a social activist and a Baptist minister who played an important key role in the American civil rights movement. Dr. King had the power to change America and many people's views on nonviolence and African Americans. Dr. King was also known for many of his great speeches. One of his speeches that is known by many is the "I Have a Dream Speech." This speech is arguably one of the most important speeches, a seminal piece of American culture. The central idea of Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" was to impart an idea on how one-hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed the slaves, is not keeping its promise for all African Americans to be treated as equals in the United States. He dreamed of a future where black children would not be judged based on their skin color or race. Dr. King's arguments within his "I Have a Dream" Speech are still valid to this day because its arguments are still used to prove that nonviolence is a better answer than resorting to violence. Dr. King points out African Americans are still being persecuted 57 years later, this message resonates with many Americans as they protest racial injustices and police brutality today. Thirdly, the "I Have A Dream" speech effectively persuades and motivate the audience to achieve the promised check of equality for all American citizens to this day.

Dr. King's speech clearly outlines nonviolence is a better answer than resorting to violence. King states "We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force." This idea supports the argument used by many protesters today because it shows that words are more powerful than meaningless violence. Whether it's George Floyd or Brianna Taylor the many names of black lives taken are avenged not through violence but a majestic height of organized protest. The "soul force" isn't just non-violent and peaceful– it is also truthful, respectful and kind, in both words and deeds now as in Kings day.

Christ Badeau – 3rd Place
Grade 9
Mr. Davis
Irvington High School

In addition, Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech continues to resonate because of the unchanged conditions that create protest racial injustices and police brutality. The "I have a dream speech" was a vision of what America wanted to be, and what America can be. Carl Rogner in his article "History professor says Martin Luther King Jr.'s message still relevant today" states that "On August 28, 1964, roughly a quarter million people gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. to listen to Martin Luther King Jr. share his dream for an America without racism. 57 years later, his "I have a Dream" speech continues to resonate with many Americans as they protest racial injustices and police brutality. "The 'I have a dream' speech was a vision of what we wanted America to be, what America can be, but is not yet because of stereotypes," says Dr. Selika Ducksworth-Lawton, a history professor at UW-Eau Claire. Ducksworth-Lawton says King's dream is yet to become reality".

This speech gave African Americans hope of a better future for them but, a future where African Americans will have the same equal right as white people. The "I Have A Dream" speech was a clear call for equality and for an end to racial discrimination that persists well beyond the August heat of the United States' civil rights movement.

Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech is still used to this day because of how effectively it persuades and motivates the audience to achieve the promised check of equality for all American citizens. In the website [Martin Luther King: Motivating the Audience](#) "With knowledge of rhetoric and persuasion, King had a substantial impact on the civil rights movement. Martin Luther King Jr.'s use of ethos, pathos, and logos appeals enable King to persuade the audience to achieve equality." This evidence supports the idea that change can be created in people's mind on racial injustice and bring equality for all people in America. Secondly, this idea supports the argument because it shows the "I have a dream" speech is still valid to this day because of how it can motivate people to cause change for racial injustice in America.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "I Have A Dream" is still valid to this day. Many people still use Dr. King's ideal or ways to gain change in many protests. But for other's, many still think that violence is the answer or solution to gain things or end problems, but in reality it makes it worse and causes other to use violence as well. So in the end Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's speech is one the best speeches in America.

Kassandra Gabriel – 1st Place
Grade 10
Ms. Martin
Irvington High School

The Dalai Lama, a spiritual leader, stated, "Nonviolence doesn't mean we have to passively accept injustice. We have to fight for our rights, and we have to oppose injustice" (n.d.). Dr. King's methods of gaining his rights are working with their nonviolent aspects and will ultimately help him reach his total equality goal. Dr. King's nonviolent techniques are explained in texts, such as the "Letter from Birmingham Jail." Furthermore, the peaceful methods are supported for their success in articles such as "Nonviolent Campaigns are Still Succeeding More Often than Violence" (Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan), and "How Nonviolence Works" (Brian Martin). Therefore, nonviolent protests have proven to be more potent in today's civilization. Their significance to current society is civil disobedience being able to draw more attention. It is the best way to raise public awareness of a cause, and nonviolence is a philosophy and strategy for universal change.

To start off, nonviolent resistance works because it can draw more attention. For example, Dr. King felt that without nonviolent expression (marches or sit-ins, for instance), the only type left is violence, which history tells us is never a viable choice (King, 2015, p. 329-330). Clearly, Dr. King is stating nonviolent resistance draws more attention, especially with all the marches and graphics in images to express themselves. In addition, it will interest people in coming out. Similarly, Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan illustrated that nonviolent protest works in the article entitled, "Nonviolent campaigns are still succeeding more often than violence." They said, "Whereas the frequency of violent insurgencies — defined with a 1,000-battle death threshold has declined since the 1970s, campaigns relying primarily on nonviolent resistance have skyrocketed," (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2016). Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan are stating that nonviolent campaigns have become increasingly common and are becoming preferable since violent insurgencies fail. These authors succeed in demonstrating how nonviolence attracts people, which results in nonviolence campaigns progressing.

Furthermore, nonviolence is the best way to raise public awareness of a cause. Dr. King illustrated that nonviolent protest points out the problem by explaining that, "Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with" (King, 2015, p. 327). Clearly, Dr. King is stating nonviolent protest does not cause tension; it brings it to the surface. Similarly, Brian Martin, the author of "How nonviolence works," reminds his readers of the struggle for freedom that occurred in India (Martin, 2005, para. 10). Gandhi said, "In my humble opinion, a struggle so free from violence has a message far beyond the borders of India" (Martin, 2005, para. 10). In other words, Gandhi's view relates to King's argument made sometime later. Both advocates agree with nonviolence being able to bring tension and public awareness towards a topic. These authors succeed at explaining how nonviolence is self-suffering but with a decisive outcome.

Kassandra Gabriel – 1st Place
Grade 10
Ms. Martin
Irvington High School

Moreover, nonviolence is a philosophy and strategy for universal change. According to King, nonviolent direct actions will lead to understanding strategy and brotherhood (King, 2015, p. 322). It is apparent that nonviolence not only leads to a general change, but it builds a family foundation. Similarly, Richard Gregg (author and an expert on Gandhi's methods) stated, "Nonviolence induced shame in the attacker.

To induce this effect on the psychology of the attacker, activists had to adopt particular psychological states themselves: thereby demonstrating sincerity and deep commitment, and yet love their opponent," (Martin, 2005, para. 24). Therefore, nonviolence works primarily by affecting the psychology of the attacker. These authors display the approach nonviolence resistance has and how nonviolence can affect it, antagonists, and psychologically.

All in all, the more we experiment with using nonviolence, the more we will discover its power to transform conflict into a mutual understanding. Peaceful protests can draw more attention, achieve public awareness of a cause, and lead to change. Dr. King's nonviolent techniques are explained in texts, such as the "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (Dr. King). Furthermore, the nonviolent methods are supported for their success in articles such as "Nonviolent campaigns are still succeeding more often than violence" (Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan) and "How nonviolence works" (Brian Martin). Moreover, nonviolent protests have proven to be more potent in today's civilization. To sum up, as Mahatma Gandhi explained, "nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is the mightiest weapon devised by the ingenuity of Man," (Gandhi, n.d).

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Louvianov Paul – 2nd Place
Grade 10
Ms. Martin
Irvington High School

The filmmaker and director Ava DuVernay once said, "Nonviolence is pretty ballsy, pretty advanced weaponry" (DuVernay, n.d.). As DuVernay alludes to, the notion of nonviolence is something that requires willpower and courage. It is not something that anyone can do without the right mindset. The action of peaceful protesting and campaigning is vital when spreading a message in this day and age. Nonviolent practices can be defended and has been made relevant in texts, such as "The Letter From Birmingham Jail" (Dr. Martin Luther King), "How the world is proving Martin Luther King right about violence" (Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan), and "Nonviolent Resistance Proves Potent Weapon" (Michelle Nicholasen). These texts illustrate that nonviolent methods are proven efficient in today's society. Nonviolent protesting is still relevant today because it sparks reform within countries and reveals what has been hidden, and it is statistically more successful than violent protests.

Firstly, nonviolent resistance is effective because it forces issues that have been swept under the rug to come up to the surface. Dr. King illustrated that peaceful protest works when he stated that he wished the white moderate understood where he was coming from in the sense that the current tension necessary for change (King, 2015, p. 327). People who fight nonviolently are not the ones who create the pressure, the tension is already present, and it is just being revealed (King, 2015, p. 327). Clearly, King is stating that it is better to take action when there is tension as it creates an opportunity for people to recognize the problem and deal with it properly. Similarly, Chenoweth illustrated that peaceful demonstration works in the article entitled "Nonviolent Resistance Proves Potent Weapon." Chenoweth explained that when nonviolent protests are repressed they do not automatically begin fighting with their body (Nicholasen, 2019, para. 9). This strategy makes the opposing side's intentions go wrong with their persecution (Nicholasen, 2019, para. 9). Therefore, Nicholasen's interview with Chenoweth is stating that there is always going to be something that is restricting oneself from doing something right. In that sense, Dr. King mentions tension, which can be related to the word repression. These words both mean uncomfortably. These authors succeed in relaying the message of tension being present.

Furthermore, nonviolent resistance works because countries that run peaceful campaigns tend to reform to democracies. According to Nicholasen, Erica Chenoweth found that civil disobedience campaigns often lead to countries undergoing reforms and transitions to democracies (Nicholasen, 2019, para. 19). Peaceful campaigns are ten times more likely to turn into a democracy than violent ones (Nicholasen, 2019, para. 19). Additionally, countries could develop and reform into new countries that hold values of democracy because of nonviolent protests. Similarly, Dr. King talked about the importance of democracy when he said that people should use time wisely and take advantage of the time to do the right thing (King, 2015, p.328). It is now the time to show the promises of democracy and transform the nation (King, 2015, p.328). Dr. King explains the purpose of democracy. One side of democracy is unity and communion, and these countries were able to reform by protesting peacefully. In short, these authors succeed at showing the cause and effects of nonviolent resistance and how that relates to reform and democracy.

Louvianov Paul – 2nd Place
Grade 10
Ms. Martin
Irvington High School

In addition, peaceful resistance works because studies show that nonviolent campaigns succeed more than violent ones. For example, Stephan and Chenoweth say that since the 1900s to 2015, nonviolent movements have succeeded about 51% of the time (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2016, para 15). In comparison, violent campaigns have only succeeded 27% of the time (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2016, para. 15). Studies show over the years that nonviolent resistance has indeed been more successful. Likewise, Nicholasen presented Chenoweth's perspective on nonviolent protests in the article entitled "Nonviolent Protests Proves Potent Weapon." For instance, the Nicholasen's article states that black townships in the apartheid government had to prepare for the long term and make sure that they had enough food (Nicholasen, 2019, para. 3). Therefore, Nicholasen is aiding in explaining how effective peaceful protests are if there is thorough preparation. One of the reasons why many nonviolent protests were successful was the time that was put into preparing everything. These authors succeed in proving that peaceful resistance is the best method.

In short, nonviolent methods work because it can be used as a way for reform, it is statistically more successful than violent methods, and it reveals what has been concealed. The peaceful campaigns are proven to be effective when an issue is brought up that causes tension and is dealt with properly. Research has found that over the years, nonviolent protests have been more successful than violent protests. Chenoweth also explains that in some cases, nonviolent protests can convert countries into democracies. Peaceful protests are a better alternative to violent ones. Society will be in good hands if people decide to step up and protest peacefully.

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Trinniety Charlestin – 3rd Place
Grade 10
Ms. Johnson
Irvington High School

In today's society black people are faced with police brutality and racism and so much more. In the text "Letter From Birmingham Jail" by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. , King touches on most of these topics throughout his speech. King responds to the criticism of the non-violent protests in Birmingham. He then talks about how disappointed he is in the white moderates. He speaks on racial segregation, and injustices that people of color have faced. King's speech is valid throughout today, and people should resist injustice everywhere with non-violent disobedience which is a valid argument. In Max Fisher's article "Peaceful Protest is much more effective than Violence for Toppling Dictators," Fisher discusses the success rates of non-violent protests with evidence and facts. In Michelle Nicholasen's "Nonviolent resistance proves potent weapon" Nicholasen talks about Chenoweth's discovery on how it is more successful in effecting change than violent campaigns.

With this in mind, Non-Violence is a good way to overcome any conflict and is a peaceful alternative. King says that non-violence campaigns and communicating with the leaders helps. In the text it states "In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action" (Lines 53-55, Martin Luther King, 1963) King suggests these ideas to help with campaigns. In Fisher's article he proves with evidence the success rates of non-violent protests/campaigns. In the text it states "And that trend is actually "increasing over time," Chenoweth adds. "Nonviolent campaigns are becoming increasingly successful. (Paragraph 3, Max Fisher, 2013) As time goes on more and more nonviolent campaigns are starting to work in the people who protest in favor.

For instance, King's argument was to speak to his audience on the inequality faced by people of color. In the text it states "I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (Lines 36-38, Martin Luther King, 1963) King wants to be heard and wants the people of color to be heard as well. In Nicholasen's article she goes over the most common concerns when campaigning. In the text it states "This is because even though they "failed" in the short term, the nonviolent campaigns tended to empower moderates or reformers within the ruling elites who gradually began to initiate changes and liberalize the polity" (Paragraph 10, Michelle Nicholasen, 2019) When protesting you could win or lose most of the time it's a loss, but if even the slightest amount of moderates or people in power Acknowledges it, it's a win.

Ultimately, King's speech is valid in today's society. And that people should resist injustice everywhere with non-violent disobedience which is a valid argument. Using non-violence is a great way to go when protesting/campaigning. King spoke on the inequality faced by people of color to his audience. Its important people know about the two different types of protesting and they should know that using non-violence is the better option to avoid conflict of any kind.

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English novelist and playwright Edward Bulwer-Lytton once said, "The pen is mightier than the sword" (Bulwer-Lytton, 1839). Lytton believed that words or communication held more power over violence. The after-effects of using words to bring about change were more peaceful and empowering, unlike those of violence that only continued a vicious cycle of more hatred, bitterness, and death. The power of nonviolence can be illustrated in the articles; "Think Again: Nonviolent Resistance" (Erica Chenoweth), Brian Martin's "How nonviolence is misrepresented," and Martin Luther King Jr.'s autobiography, *Pilgrimage to Nonviolence*. These texts cover the importance of nonviolent protests and their power while debunking the conviction that social change can only be achieved through violence. The authors do this by employing historical facts, personal experiences, and highlighting historic advocates' achievements in peaceful protests. However, in the article "Teaching Martin Luther King Jr. in the Age of Freddie Gray" (Syreeta McFadden), the students argue that violence is a high-yielding form of response that is not true. Nonviolent protest is the only practical and effective way to enact social change because of the moral and ethical weight, its lasting efficiency, and it is less physically demanding.

Firstly, the concept of nonviolent protest is still a practical and effective way to enact social change because of the weight it carries on someone's conscience morally and ethically. According to Dr. King's autobiography, *Pilgrimage to Nonviolence*, "The whole Gandhian concept of satyagraha (Satya is truth which equals love, and paha is force; satyagraha this means truth-force... As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi, my skepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished" (King, 1998, p. 422). After Dr. King had examined the Gandhian concept of satyagraha (truth-force or love-force), he became a true believer in the power that love holds and how it could essentially lead people towards the right path. The Gandhian philosophy of truth force serves as a concrete example for the cause and effect theory because through the power of love, peaceful protests are formed. Hence, all immoral and unethical practices usually found in violent protests can be avoided by nonviolent direct action. Thus, Dr. King believed that by putting one's trust in love, one might retain their virtue and ability to separate right from wrong by doing the moral thing and essentially avoiding any guilt that may come with choosing a dishonorable path. Similarly, in her article ("Think Again: Nonviolence Resistance"), Erica Chenoweth explained that the number of people likely to join violent protests is low. The numbers are diminished because of people's moral compass (Chenoweth, 2011, para. 3). Also, it is harder for certain groups to take part in them (Chenoweth, 2011, para. 3). She elaborated by giving an example of Egypt's 2011 peaceful uprising that managed to mobilize men, women, children, the elderly, students, laborers, Islamists, Christians, rich, and poor (Chenoweth, 2011, para. 3). Violent protests are usually very physically demanding; hence participation from a wide range of people cannot be expected, unlike nonviolent protests where each and everyone has a chance to contribute.

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Not only that, many people are individuals with moral compasses, principles, and values who will most likely condemn a violent protest instead of joining one. As a result, peaceful resistance is imminently the morally righteous path to take. Evidently, both Martin Luther King Jr. and Erica Chenoweth succeed at evincing the low prospect of a violent protest being successful due to its inability to gain proper participation of the people.

Additionally, nonviolent resistance is more effective in making lasting changes. Dr. King explains in *Pilgrimage to Nonviolence* that when he took the trip to India, it had won its independence through nonviolent means (King, 1998, p. 423). King became more convinced of the power of peaceful protest because a friendship with equal standings between Britain and India now existed within the commonwealth (King, 1998, p. 423). He saw no after-effects such as bitterness and hatred, unlike in violent protests (King, 1998, p. 423). India and Britain serve as examples of how peaceful demonstrations have a higher likelihood of forming everlasting tranquility because of how easily friendship can be formed between the parties even after conflicting views. Whereas in violent protests, the two groups involved have towering feasibility of harboring resentment towards one another because of the excessive amount of hatred displayed from both sides. In her article, "Think Again: Nonviolence Resistance," Erica Chenoweth states, "Palestinians have made the most progress toward self-determination and lasting peace with Israel when they have relied on mass nonviolent civil disobedience" (Chenoweth, 2011, para. 5). Many accounts recorded in history have acted as precedents of the effectiveness in using nonviolent protests for lasting change, with the Palestine protests serving as an example. Through their mass nonviolent defiance, Palestinians managed to hold talks with Israel and were eventually given self-governance. To this day, Israel and Palestine still have self-authoritarian power. Palestine's victory through peaceful civil disobedience further reveals that peaceful protests can efficiently enact the social or political change that one needs with persistence and patience. Hence, both authors managed to explicate different accounts documented throughout history that have managed to divulge the success of nonviolent protests in the long run.

However, some people still believe that violence is the only constructive form of protest, especially if the other side uses violence. McFadden's students, in the article "Teaching Martin Luther King Jr. in the Age of Freddie Gray," commented on the street protests after the death of Freddie Gray. They stated, "The police were violent, too, and they were placing people in mortal danger just to protect some buildings from being damaged" (McFadden, 2015, p. 3). The phrase "Don't fight fire with fire" comes into effect when it comes to such resistances. When one fights fire with fire without getting to the root of the fire or finding other alternatives to put it out, they might end up causing quite the explosion. Most people do not realize that the same hypothesis applies to violence. Fighting violence with violence only ends up in a vicious cycle filled with hate, bitterness, anger, and more carnage. In his article, "How Nonviolence is Misinterpreted," Brian Martin also explained that even though the situation suggests violence is justified, it does not necessarily mean that it is the best option to act on (Martin, 2008, p. 13). He further expands on this point by providing an example of not suing somebody if they swear at you because you know it's a waste of funds and time (Martin, 2008, p. 13). Often in such cases where violence is a justified response, it does not automatically make it the choice to prompt.

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The aftermath of choosing violence induces the odds of there being an alarming amount of bloodshed and hate. Nonviolence, however, is meant to eradicate these odds and make sure that change is still achieved even then. Consequently, fighting violence with more violence would just be adding salt to the wound. No healing or peace will ever occur if neither of the parties is willing to stop the bloodshed. Nonviolent retaliation is still retaliation, which makes it one of the most practical ways of protest.

Therefore, renouncing violence during protests is principled and morally empowering; it creates lasting changes. Unlike violent protests, there is a lower probability of it leading to a vicious cycle of violence, hence why peaceful protest is better at enacting social change. Even though McFadden's students argue that violence is a fructuous form of protest, the benefits sowed by refraining from violence during social movements can be exemplified in the articles; "Think Again: Nonviolent Resistance" (Erica Chenoweth), Brian Martin's "How nonviolence is misrepresented," and Martin Luther King Jr. autobiography *Pilgrimage to Nonviolence*. The texts cover the significance of peaceful protests during times of dissent and the formidable power they hold while obliterating the stance that brutality and bloodshed are the only paths to take to achieve social amendment. The authors do this by utilizing records throughout history, individual encounters, and highlighting memorable advocates' accomplishments in their battle towards more tranquil forms of protest. In short, nonviolent protest is a powerful way of generating social reform with little to no menacing consequences. Desisting violence during demonstrations is not only the righteous thing to do; it is also the most constructive and effective form of a social movement. More people should be encouraged to take up peaceful disobedience for communal transformation due to its non-discriminatory trump card when it comes to participation from the general public and the upper-hand it holds of how successful it has been throughout history.

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Is it really possible for a war to establish equality? How can a cause wage war against the other and expect to be on an equal footing? Due to ferocity and aggressive action being the primary catalyst in creating animosity between two parties, violent protests are not ideal in striving for equality and making a positive social augmentation. Many others share the same opinion and have expressed it through text and articles. For example, texts such as "How Violent Protests Change Politics" (Isaac Chotiner) see nonviolence as an effective means for change. Also, the text "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence" (Dr. Martin Luther King) agreed to this sentiment. Nonviolent protests are more effective than violent protests because this type of direct action enacts social change with better results. It solidifies the protestor's point, decreasing the chance of casualties.

Firstly, between nonviolence and violent protest, it is apparent that nonviolence has a better success rate. Dr. King agrees with this sentiment because in his autobiography, he states that "Method of nonviolence was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom" (King, 1998. P. 422)." Therefore, nonviolent protest is something that works. It would not be considered a potent weapon if the success rate was low. Also, Dr. King thought otherwise until he started to research the history of nonviolent protest, and he found them reliable. If we were to take this on a statistical level, research was done explaining the rate at which demonstrations consisting of low violence are often more successful than those filled with physical turmoil. In the article, "Nonviolent resistance proves potent Weapon," it discusses how Harvard Professor Erica Chenoweth conducted some research and deduced that between 1900-2006, a higher percentage of nonviolent protest succeeded in making difference violence did (Nicholasen, 2019, para. 2). Imagine that within 106 years that the arguably slowest form of action had a greater effectiveness rate than its faster and to the point counterpart. Hence, what is the point? Yes, one might require a longer time and more endurance and patience, but what is the point of rushing a process with a low probability of solving the issue?

Additionally, what violent people fail to realize is that acting violent rarely gets the point across. In fact, it often takes away from the argument depending on the reason. Furthermore, in the article "How Violent Protests Change Politics," (Isacc Chotiner) states, "When we observed a wave of violent protests in the mid-to-late sixties, those white moderates who supported the Democratic Party after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 defected to the Republican Party in 1968," (Chotiner, 2020, para. 3). This wave is a prime example of how supporters are quick to turn on the cause of violence is shown. When the protesters started to show their anger in that form, they looked like the aggressors. Thus, they lost support. The fear of losing his argumentative ground is why Dr. King refrained from conflict because it made what he preached look hypocritical. In correlation, the same article expresses how it is vital to maintain the sympathy of the press and the people. The strategy is to obtain a substantial amount of media coverage; however, when violence is shown, it provides an opportunity to build its "coalition" (Chotiner, 2020, para. 7). A cause without support is barely anything worth mentioning. For this reason, maintaining a justified standpoint to the public eye is essential for success (a feat aggressive protesting cannot achieve). To further develop this point, Chenoweth stated, "If campaigns allow their repression to throw the movement into total disarray or they use it as a pretext to militarize their campaign, then they're essentially co-signing what the regime wants — for the resisters to play on its playing field.

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And they're probably going to get totally crushed" (Nicholasen, 2019, para. 9). Professor Chenoweth acknowledges how lashing out alters the perception of who is the victim or the aggressor. Anger manifested in the wrong way, taints the point that is trying to be made.

On the other hand, some people do not see the value of peaceful resistance. For example, in the article "Teaching Martin Luther King Jr. in the Age of Freddie Gray," the students of the author stated, "Are we saying property is more valuable than a human being" (McFadden, 2015, p.3). These students' response to the police attacking peaceful protesters is understandable but misguided. While protesting nonviolently is not always safe, it still decreases the chance of death because there is less combat being involved. Likewise, if one takes a more in-depth look at the situation, if that is what they would do to peaceful people, imagine the actions taken out on these people if they were rowdy rioters. Additionally, in the article "Think Again: Nonviolent Resistance" (Erica Chenoweth), Chenoweth research implied that peaceful protest is better because armed rebellion results in the rebels' deaths (Chenoweth, 2011, para. 4). Peaceful may not one hundred prevent death in these scenarios, but it sure does reduce the number of fatalities.

Nonviolence is the better choice between violent and nonviolent demonstrations because of its success rate, how it supports the cause and reduces deaths. A variety of people share the same notion and have expressed their agreements through their texts. For instance, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," "How Violent Protests Change Politics," etcetera. All provide some form of evidence that denounces the ideal destructive protest or demonstrations. Now with what was said, all that is left is for us to continue to question ourselves. Are we willing to wait for change, or are we eager to take it by force? One will undoubtedly lead to a rather disappointing result.

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Nonviolence is 28% more effective between nonviolence and violent protest than putting other people's lives in danger through violence (Chenoweth, 2011, para. 2). Between the 1940s and 2006, the data that Erica Chenoweth collected, nonviolence is more effective in making a statement. After reading "The Success of Nonviolent Civil Resistance" by Erica Chenoweth and various articles that support and agree with Erica Chenoweth, such as and "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence" (Martin Luther King Jr.). Another writing piece, "How Nonviolence is Misrepresented" by Brian Martin, agrees with Erica Chenoweth. A nonviolent movement is more functional and appropriate. A nonviolence movement demonstrates a slow but proper way of handling a problem, allows more participants to join the campaign, and bring awareness within the community.

Dr. King elucidates how nonviolent movements are more effective even though the results and progress are slow. Dr. King stated, "I am sure that many of our white people in Montgomery and across the south continue to disrespect our Negro leaders, even though some of the leaders follow a way of love and nonviolence. So the nonviolent approach does not immediately change the heart of the oppressor" (King, 1998, p.423). According to Dr. King, nonviolence is a slow process but is the most effective and appropriate way to protest. Dr. King further states, "I came to see for the first time that the Christian doctrine of love operating through the Gandhian method of nonviolence was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom" (King, 1998, p.422). Not using violence is the most efficient way to have people understand self-control and create a meaningful voice towards the oppressors. A peaceful demonstration can be useful in many ways and can have many positive effects even though it is a slow process.

Data clearly shows that peaceful demonstrations of force are more effective. Chenoweth emphasizes that "Civil resistance offers a variety of lower-risk tactics such as people would vacate typically populated areas, boycotts, and people would move at half-pace at work and in the streets that would encourage other people to participate without making enormous personal sacrifices" (Chenoweth, 2011, para.3). More people are willing to join a nonviolent movement because many people will not have to dwell on losing something that brings meaning to their lives. Chenoweth points out the uprising in Egypt that took place in 2011. She states, that "Men, women, children, the elderly, students, laborers, Islamists, Christians, rich, and poor," all participated in this revolution (Chenoweth, 2011, para 3). Additionally, this participation level was unparalleled in recent history (Chenoweth, 2011, para 3). More and more people join a nonviolent movement because it has a less likely chance of being in a dangerous situation, unlike in violent direct action. The more people that join a nonviolence movement, the more powerful and successful the result may be.

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On the opposing side, it may seem hard to meet harsh treatment by turning the other cheek. McFadden, a teacher, tried to bring awareness to her students about the importance of nonviolent protest, but her students could not understand her. McFadden states, "My students were concerned with headlines that called for nonviolent protest. One of the students noted that the police were violent, and they were placing people in danger just to protect some buildings from being damaged" (McFadden, 2015, para 7). The police officers who are meant to protect people end up harming people to prevent buildings from being damaged.

However, Dr. King demonstrates how having a nonviolent movement is a slow process because many oppressors may not recognize or understand the rights of the oppressed. Brian Martin also expresses that, "Nonviolent action is nonviolent on the part of those who use it. Their opponents can and often do use violence, sometimes brutally" (Martin, 2008, para.13). Even though protesting people are not using any violence, it is not always promised that the oppressors will react the same way, let alone cautiously. Clearly, the protesting people are not putting the oppressors' lives in danger; instead, the oppressors who choose to react violently allow society to understand better how corrupt the system is. Thus, nonviolence is still beneficial to society.

To summarize, a peaceful protest is more efficient because it allows more people to join the protest, allows people to be aware of how society views different people, and shows how civil disobedience is the more appropriate way despite the slow process. Civil disobedience has benefits, such as bringing awareness within the community and exposing that some people still choose to react violently towards people who do not harm others. Syreeta McFadden expresses her journey of teaching students about the Civil Rights Movement and Dr. King. She helps the students understand some people still choose to oppress others. Hence, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in "Pilgrimage to nonviolence" that it is a slow but effective process. One of the benefits of having a civil disobedience movement is that it encourages more participants to join the movement. Erica Chenoweth perfectly explains and provides proof of how nonviolence is more efficient. In future terms, continuing to have violent protest results with no moving forward, more jobs taken away, and increased deaths and restrictions. Therefore, if violent protests are less likely to succeed and statistically do not prove a point, why indulge in this act?

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Carl Edouard – 1st Place
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When sufferable actions suddenly become insufferable, what does one do? Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., minister and civil rights activist, claimed “...nonviolent resistance was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their quest for social justice.”

Weaponizing nonviolence as a transformative power in the presence of violence: King grasped the ideology that nonviolence was neither passive nor violent. Within the articles, *The Radicalism of Martin Luther King Jr.’s nonviolent resistance* by David Chappell, *The Problem with Protesting Violence with Violence* by John Horgan, and *Martin Luther King Jr.’s policy agenda is as relevant today as it was when he created it* by Jared Bernstein: the importance of nonviolence in a developing society is argued. Although some view nonviolence as submitting to the sympathy of others: nonviolent protesting in the recent century overshadows violence due to its nonviolent nor passive actions, its capability of gathering momentum thanks to the little requirements on its activists, and the flexibility it has in establishing actions other than protesting. As decades pass, nonviolence continues to stand the test of time, in an ever growing society.

In present day, the idea of nonviolent protesting being submissive to the brute force of the opposition: is what deters many away. However, the non-restrictive ability to convey the type of message being represented, is what makes nonviolence efficient in the modern day era. Chappell credited King's method, stating that “their nonviolent armies did not helplessly wait to be attacked. They seized the initiative,” (Chappell, p. 1). In a world filled with police brutality, injustice amongst civil rights, and minorities being threatened by the majority: one cannot wait to simply be attacked in order to send out a message. Nonviolence allows for catering the type of message being conveyed to the public. For example the 2018 March for Our Lives protests, which saw protesting against the leniency of gun regulation laws within the United States. These nonviolent protests aided in passing over 280 bills, turned into firearm regulation laws across the nation within the year of the protests. Recognizing the power nonviolence held, King and his supporters “seized the initiative” through scheduling where the reports or media coverage would take place: in order to progress their goal. In many instances, protestors utilizing violent means “have been seduced by the macho glamour of violence and by the rough justice of combating state oppression with brutality of their own.”(Horgan, p. 1) Horgan recalled a protest in Washington DC, where the protestors righteous efforts were overshadowed by the violence that followed. This is one of many issues violent protesting brings. Where the efforts of the people are often overshadowed by yellow journalism and heavy brutality. King recognized this through studying Gandhi, where in India they would utilize journalism to bring their message to a greater audience. With this, King employed “positive social philosophy”. Alerting journalists and informing them of certain situations so that their message would not be misconstrued, but magnified for the masses to see. An issue with violence is that the message being conveyed is often overshadowed, by the violence that is accompanied and by the brutalization that follows. It is associated with violence and the message has a hard time reaching others.

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Furthermore, the flexibility that nonviolence utilizes in establishing actions other than protesting: showcases its superiority over violence. In the modern day era, many instances of non-violent protesting have occurred. Whether it be the Black Lives Matter protesting in the United States or farmers protesting against government laws in India: nonviolence is a transformative and potent weapon, continuing to stand against the test of time. King once stated that, "...nonviolent resistance was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their quest for social justice." In King's time, social justice meant the unalienable rights his people were robbed of due to injustice. He is oftentimes known as "the one who brought change". However, King also fought for another form of social justice within the United States. Something that is present in modern day, that people continue to fight against. King advocated for the social standings and economic standings of those forgotten and robbed of from big corporations. As Covid-19 continues to wreak havoc on the world, research shows that, "38 million have filed for unemployment insurance during the pandemic". (Rothwell, 2020) People have started protesting by utilizing online petitions, and webforms to spread awareness of those affected by covid. This is crucial in an ever changing world, flexibility is needed to establish other means of protesting. By creating petitions, nonviolent protesters are able to abide by regulations while advocating for the financial well-being of others. This flexibility allows for a greater audience to be pulled towards the cause: utilizing social media as a platform to further reach other potential protestors (something violent protests are not able to do).

Albeit, some may claim that throughout history reformations were only possible through violence. For example, the Hong Kong protesting that "ushered in attention to denounce police brutality in China". (Ramzy, Ives, 2020) With the world watching, it created a spotlight for reforms to be received by the government. However, factors not taken into account when protesting with violence is the speed at which demands and policies are being met; as well as the momentum of followers gained in such a short time. Returning back to Hong Kong protesting, while the world certainly has pressured the government due to the media attention gained: the situation there unfortunately has not changed. When on the subject of civil rights, history shows significant black nonviolent and violent protesting within the United States. Notable figures such as Martin Luther King Jr (nonviolent civil rights activist), and his counterpart Malcolm X (violent civil rights activist): protested the condition to which African Americans were treated during the 20th century in the United States. While King advocated for a nonviolent, non-passive nor violent resistance in an effort for change, Malcolm X advocated for self-defense which led many of his gatherings to turn violent. Under the Jim Crow Laws, the African American community were at a disadvantage when it came to rights, so when police presence pressured them to halt the protests: any violent occurrence would validate the police brutality and actions that later followed. King's nonviolent protesting was successful because it brought reformation to his people at historical speeds. As Chappell expresses, King's "protests of the 12-odd years [during] his short public career, from December 1955 to April 1968, led to rare, even revolutionary achievements".(Chappell, p. 3) Achievements in laws regulating equal treatment in civil rights, that were not obtained even throughout 400 years of slave rebellions(which can be seen as violent protesting).

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Finally, while violent protesting may bring attention to an ever growing situation, it is nonviolence that allows change in that situation. Similar to how a firefighter would not fight fire with fire, or give the flame oxygen to grow: violence only allows for the situation to expand its destructiveness. As reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr mentioned that “...nonviolent resistance was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their quest for social justice.” It is the utility of nonviolence that allows it to trump over violence. A utility that authors John Horgan, David Chappell, and Jared Bernstein recognize is crucial in a society where the voice of protesting is the younger generation. An important time in history where if captivated by the seductive macho of violence, the protestors will change the path for future protesting.

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If one was to put human history in chronological order, it would be evident that violence spawns more violence. In this world fueled by violence, nonviolent protests seem to act as a catalyst to change, which so many people in today's society are starting to take notice of. The book "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence", by Martin Luther King Jr. makes points about the effectiveness that nonviolent protests pose. A video entitled, "Do Violent Protests actually work" gives reasoning provided by facts and examples on the effectiveness of nonviolence. In the Washington Post article entitled, "The radicalism of Martin Luther King Jr.'s nonviolent resistance," by David Chappell, King states "...nonviolent resistance was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their quest for social justice." Nonviolent protests even to this day are still a practical and effective way to enact social change. It has proven to entice a greater change and send a stronger message to get people's attention.

Dr. King, who was a crucial part of the Civil Rights Movement, believed that nonviolent protests have sent strong signals to people to get them to pay attention to the cause. Dr. King's "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence" states, "India won her independence, but without violence on the part of Indians" (King, 1960, p.423). To cause a monumental change such as winning independence, violence was not needed. Dr. King affirmed, "the bus boycott had begun due to colored citizens being weary of the humiliating experiences they constantly faced on the bus. In response, they expressed themselves in a mass act of noncooperation." (King, 1960, p.423). Most people in business value one thing, and that is money. When African Americans along with other supporters started the boycott, business owners could not ignore the huge loss of profits. They had to comply with demands.

Moreover, it could surely be said that nonviolent protests have proven to entice greater change for the better. In the video "Do Violent Protests actually work"; it states "Nonviolent protests are twice as effective as violent protests". If one looked at the facts they would see that statistically nonviolent protests work better than violent protests. Through numerous protests, it is proven that great change has mostly been a product of nonviolent protests and limited record has been given to convey violent works. In several parts of the world, nonviolent protests have been used and have been effective. Peaceful protests and acts are so efficient that they have reformed society and the government itself. In comparison to peaceful protest, violence simply shows its inferiority.

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On the other hand, some may think that peaceful protests are not as effective today as they were back in the 1960s. According to the article “Why Violent Protests Work” by Laura Bassett, “In fact, many of the protests have been peaceful, and the police have often stoked violence where it didn’t exist by showing up with military-grade weapons and shooting rubber bullets at demonstrators.” (Bassett, 2020, para. 3). Dr. King was able to restrain and discipline his people to not fight back against police forces but times have changed. Even now at protests that were meant to be nonviolent, police have started violence where it did not exist. This makes it super ineffective to peacefully march while there is a military presence ordering the people to disperse. Most current nonviolent protests have turned into riots because the people are tired of police brutality.

The patience of the people has worn thin since the 1960s, and it only makes sense that people will unleash their anger in more of a physical manner rather than recited chants on the armored force that stands in their way. However, violent protests are even more destructive and rarely work in favor of the oppressed.

All in all, great change is a product of nonviolent movements even in today's society. This method of fighting brings morals to a table that would otherwise be discarded if the path chosen was violent. The piece of text “Pilgrimage to Nonviolence” by Martin Luther King Jr advocates the use of nonviolent protests. “Do Violent Protests actually work” gives evidence on the usefulness of peaceful protests throughout our history. It is proven that peaceful protests cause great change, are a way to send the people strong signals of the cause that is being fought for, and is an all-around more intellectual approach. As Gandhi stated, “non-violence is a weapon of the strong”. Ergo either use this weapon to its fullest potential or let the world turn to a more barbarous nature.

According to Martin Luther King, “In spite of temporary victories, violence never brings permanent peace,” (King, n.d.). This is to show that the results of violent protests do not last long, which is why nonviolent protests is more effective in society because they are long-lasting, and also because people respond better to words than fists. Several articles, such as “Teaching Martin Luther King Jr. in the Age of Freddie Gray” (Syreeta McFadden), and “Think Again: Nonviolent Resistance” (Erica Chenoweth) have explained the effectiveness of nonviolent campaigns versus violent ones. Other writing pieces, for example, Brian Martin’s “How nonviolence is misrepresented,” utilizes research and studies to debate on the nonviolence topic. Experts in nonviolent protest have shared their opinion on the subject, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. does so in his autobiography, “Pilgrimage to Nonviolence.” Nonviolent protests is still a practical and effective way to enact social change because studies have shown that non-violent protests are very successful, it causes a lasting change in society, and it humanizes the oppressed in the eyes of the oppressors.

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Firstly, Dr. King, a leader of the Civil Rights Movement, believed that nonviolent protest causes a lasting change in society. The process of nonviolent protest can be slow but it can have long-lasting effects on the world. As Dr. King once stated in his autobiography, “Pilgrimage to Nonviolence,” “So the nonviolent approach does not immediately change the heart of the oppressor,” (King, 1998, p.423). Dr. Martin Luther King, who is an expert in peaceful protest, points out that though the task of nonviolent protest can be slow, it is very successful and effective in society. Dr. King also stated that today there is a mutual and respectful friendship between Indian and British based on complete equality, (King, 1998, p. 423). Presently, India and Britain have mutual respect because they were able to talk it out and also because of the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi and his nonviolent beliefs. If Americans had used the same approach as Gandhi, then maybe we would have a better and respectful relationship with Britain. The power of nonviolent resistance works wonders.

Additionally, nonviolent protest is an effective way to enact social change because studies have shown that it is very successful across cultures when utilized. Brian Martin states that “In the vast body of research on social movements, there is little on the effectiveness of violence,” (Martin, 2008, p. 245). This is to say that there is not much evidence or research on the effectiveness of violent protest. In contrast, the act of nonviolent has proven effective in many non-violent campaigns. According to Erica Chenoweth in his article (“Think Again: Nonviolent Resistance”), “The recent past alone suggests as much; even before the Arab Spring, nonviolent campaigns in Serbia (2000), Madagascar (2002), Ukraine (2004), Lebanon (2005), and Nepal (2006) succeeded in ousting regimes from power,”(Chenoweth, 2011, para. 2). The evidence displays that the use of peaceful force worked and succeeded in all these campaigns. Chenoweth’s article also said that from 1900 to 2006, major nonviolent resistance campaigns seeking to overthrow dictatorships, were more than twice as successful as violent seeking the same goals, (Chenoweth, 2011, para. 2). Non-violent protests are more effective than violent protests that have the same goals, and several non-violent campaigns that succeed in their goals have proved that fact. The power of violent protest cannot march up to the competence and achievements of peaceful protests.

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Some believe that nonviolent protest may not work, because of the current racial tension in American. Freedom is the right to go against what one view as unfair and wrong, which is why people protest. Unfortunately, McFadden’s students were exposed to the media's coverage of what happened to Freddie Gray, which left them to wonder, if properties are more valuable than human beings, (McFadden, 2015, p. 2). It is very hard to remain peaceful when we are faced with violence because we feel that for us to be heard, we need to use our fists instead of our words, which is not always true but the practice of nonviolence is not always an immediate tool for change. As King states, “Nonviolence will work miracles overnight. Men are not easily moved from their mental ruts or purged of their prejudiced and irrational feelings. When the underprivileged demand freedom, the privileged first react with bitterness and resistance,” (King, 1998, p. 423). Almost all humans are naturally stubborn and headstrong, so it takes a lot of effort to change their minds but through perseverance, dedication, and acts of nonviolence, anything can be accomplished. Even to this day, where we still have racial inequality and social injustice, the brave act of early activists preaching nonviolence is what got us this far, which just proves that nonviolent protest is more effective.

To conclude, peaceful resistance is still effective in today’s society. Studies have shown that nonviolent protest is successful across many countries. Nonviolent protest humanizes the oppressed in the eyes of the oppressors, and it causes a long-lasting change in society. Literary and article pieces like, “Pilgrimage to Nonviolence” (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr), “Teaching Martin Luther King Jr. in the Age of Freddie Gray” (Syreeta McFadden), “How nonviolence is misrepresented” (Brian Martin), and “Think Again: Nonviolent Resistance” (Erica Chenoweth), have examined the debate of Nonviolence versus violence in their pieces. Many have realized that nonviolence is a powerful weapon that leads to a successful protest that heals its opponents. Like Martin Luther King once said, “Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon. Which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals,” (King, n.d.).