

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Biography Page Count: 24 Word Count: 1,494

Book Summary

Martin Luther King Jr. was one of the most important civil rights leaders in American history. He worked hard for equality and taught others how to stand up for what they believed in. This book tells the story of his courageous life from his birth in 1929 to his death in 1968.

Book and lesson also available at Levels M and P.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Summarize

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of summarizing to understand text
- Understand and identify cause-and-effect relationships
- Identify and use pronouns
- Recognize and use synonyms and antonyms

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Martin Luther King Jr.* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Thesauruses
- **Summarize, cause and effect, synonyms and antonyms worksheets**
- **Discussion cards**



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

- **Content words:**
Story critical: civil rights, equality, integrate, protest, race, segregated
Enrichment: assassinated, nonviolent

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students what they think it means to be treated fairly. Encourage them to give examples of fairness at home or at school. Ask who they depend on to make sure they are treated fairly at home or at school.
- Group students by hair or eye color and, as an example, explain to students in one group (for example, blond-haired people) that there is a new (imaginary) rule at school, and they will always have to stand at the back of the line for recess, or they may not play on the same playground as everyone else. Lead a discussion with students about their reaction to this “new” school rule.
- Explain that these conditions really did exist in the United States not long ago, and that Martin Luther King Jr. worked very hard to make sure that people of all colors would have equal rights and have equal access to the same things.

Preview the Book
Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, fiction or nonfiction, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name).
- Preview the table of contents on page 3. Remind students that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book, based on what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy: Summarize

- Explain to students that one way to understand and remember information in a book is to write a summary, or a brief overview, of the most important information in a section or chapter. Point out that a summary includes the main idea and one or two supporting details. It often answers the questions *who, what, when, where, and why*.
- Create a chart on the board similar to the [summarize worksheet](#), with the headings *Who, What, When, Where, and Why*. Read the introduction on page 4 aloud to students and model summarizing.
Think-aloud: *To summarize, I need to decide which information is the most important to remember in a section. To do this, I can consider who and what the section was about, what happened, and when and why it happened. Then I can organize that information into a few sentences. This page is quite short, but I can still identify Who: Martin Luther King Jr., a great African American leader. Under the What heading, I will write celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Under When, I will write third Monday in January. It does not mention a place, so I will leave the Where heading blank. Under the Why heading, I can write to honor a man who worked for freedom of all people. When I organize all this information, a summary of this first page might be: On the third Monday in January, we celebrate a great African American leader named Martin Luther King Jr., who worked for freedom for all people.*
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: Cause and effect

- Discuss cause-and-effect relationships. Explain that a *cause* is an action or event that makes something happen, and the *effect* is what happens because of, or as a result of, the action or event.
Think-aloud: *I know that there are reasons, or causes, for events to happen. When the temperature outside is very cold and it drops below 32 degrees (0 degrees Celsius), a puddle of water will freeze. The cause is the temperature dropping; the effect is the puddle freezing.*
- Explain to students that there can be more than one effect resulting from a cause. Ask students what else can happen when the temperature drops below 32 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Explain to students that they will be looking for cause-and-effect relationships as they read the book.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Model strategies that students can use to work out words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letters and sounds, base words, prefixes, and suffixes. They can also use the context to work out meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Have students find the word *nonviolent* on page 9. Ask how they might read this word if they don't already know it. Suggest that they look at how the word starts, and point out the *non-* prefix. They might recognize the base word *violent* or be able to break the word into syllables, or chunks.

- Remind students to look for clues to a word's meaning in the sentence that contains the unfamiliar word as well as in sentences before and after. Read aloud the paragraph on page 9 and point out the synonym *peaceful* right before *nonviolent*.
- Explain to students that sometimes they will not find any context clues that define an unfamiliar word. Point out the glossary at the back of the book. Review or explain that a glossary contains a list of words from the book and their definitions. Model how students can use the glossary to locate a word's meaning. Have a volunteer read the definition for *nonviolent* in the glossary.
- Have students locate other content vocabulary words in the glossary and text. Read and discuss their definitions as a class.

Set the Purpose


- Have students read to find out more about Martin Luther King Jr.'s life. Remind them to stop after every few pages to identify the most important information to summarize.

During Reading

Student Reading

- Have students read to the end of page 8. Encourage those who finish early to go back and reread.
- Model summarizing important information in the book.
Think-aloud: I want to stop reading at the end of this page to summarize what I've read so far. First, I thought about the information that answered the questions who, what, when, where, and why. Then, in my mind, I organized the important information into a few sentences. In this section, I read that Martin Luther King Jr. grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, in a loving family. The South had always treated African Americans unfairly. Even after the Civil War and slavery ended, Jim Crow laws kept blacks separate from whites, and they were deprived of many rights. Martin saw that these laws were unfair and wanted to help change them.
- Invite students to assist you in filling in this information on the chart. Have them decide which facts go in the various boxes. Point out that sometimes not all of the questions (*who, what, when, where, and why*) are answered in every section.
- Create a summary with students for this section, based on the information in the chart. (*Martin Luther King Jr. grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, where laws had always been unfair to blacks. Even though slavery had ended, laws still kept blacks separate, and they didn't have equal rights.*) Guide students to understand that not all the information from the book will go in the chart—only the most important details.
- Create a two-column cause-and-effect chart on the board. Write *Celebrate every third Monday in January* under the *Effect* heading. Ask students to use the text and think-aloud discussion to identify what caused this to happen (*Martin Luther King Jr. was a great leader whom we honor for his work to make laws fair*). Write this information under the *Cause* heading.
- Introduce and explain the [cause-and-effect worksheet](#). Ask students to write the information from the board on their worksheet. Have them identify and write on their worksheet a cause-and-effect relationship that happened as a result of Martin being born in the South (he saw black people suffering and learned that the laws were unfair.)
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 10. When they have finished reading, have them work with a partner to identify the important information (*Who:* Martin Luther King Jr.; *What:* Went north to finish education and become a minister; studied about Gandhi; met his wife and got married; moved to Alabama; *When:* 1950s; *Where:* north, Montgomery, Alabama; *Why:* wanted to use peaceful, nonviolent ways to help his people).
- Have students work together on a separate piece of paper to create a summary of page 8.
- Have students identify and write on their worksheet a cause-and-effect relationship that happened as a result of Martin reading about Mohandas Gandhi (*Cause:* Martin read about Mohandas Gandhi; *Effect:* Martin decided that he, too, wanted to use peaceful, nonviolent ways to help people).

- Have students read the remainder of the book. Encourage them to stop after each section to think about *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why* as they read the rest of the story. Remind them to continue thinking about cause-and-effect relationships as they read.

 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Divide students into small groups. Assign each group one of the following sections from the book: “Starting His Work,” “Marches and Struggles,” or “I Have a Dream.” Have each group discuss the important information in their section. Have them use the information to write a group summary of the section, making sure to include *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*.
- **Independent practice:** Distribute the summarize worksheet to students, and have them complete it on their own using the final section of the book, “One Last March.” Invite volunteers to read their summaries if time allows.
- **Think-aloud:** *I know that summarizing keeps me actively involved in what I’m reading and helps me remember what I’ve read. I know that I will remember more about Martin Luther King Jr. because I summarized as I read the book.*


Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Discuss with students the information on their cause-and-effect worksheet. Point out that sometimes one effect leads to another, and so on. Return to the chart on the board and explain how the last effect you recorded (Martin decided that he, too, wanted to use peaceful, nonviolent ways to help people) causes another effect: Martin encouraged people to work together peacefully to win civil rights for everyone.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete their worksheet by identifying at least one more cause-and-effect relationship. If time allows, have them share their findings.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this story, you read about a great man who believed he could solve conflicts in a peaceful way. Now that you know this information, what will you think about the next time you have a conflict with a friend or family member?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Pronouns

- Explain or review that a *pronoun* is a word used in place of a noun. Write examples of pronouns on the board: *I, she, he, it, her, him, they, we*, and so on. Write the following sentence on the board: *Martin became the leader of the Montgomery bus boycott.* Model how to replace the word *Martin* with a pronoun (*He* became the leader of the Montgomery bus boycott.).
- Have students turn to page 14. Write the following sentence on the board: *The boycott went on for over a year.* Underline the words *the boycott*. Invite a volunteer to reread the sentence, replacing the underlined words with the appropriate pronoun (*it*).
- Discuss the reasons that authors use pronouns in place of nouns (to make the writing flow better; to avoid repeating the words, and so on).
- **Check for understanding:** Repeat the activity as time allows, but replace pronouns with appropriate proper nouns within the sentence. Monitor student responses.

 **Independent practice:** Ask students to underline all the pronouns on page 14. Have them write an appropriate proper noun above each underlined pronoun. Check their answers for accuracy and discuss student answers if time allows.

Word Work: **Synonyms and antonyms**

- Write the word *peace* on the board. Ask students to suggest a word that means almost the same thing (*calm, quiet*). Review or explain that a word that means the same or almost the same as another word is called a *synonym*. Ask students to suggest a word that means the opposite of peace (*war, unrest*). Review or explain that a word that means the opposite of another word is called an *antonym*.
- Ask students to turn to page 5 to find the word that tells what Martin’s family was like, in addition to busy (*loving*). Ask them to suggest a word that means the same or almost the same as *loving* (*kind, caring*). Ask students to suggest a word that might mean the opposite of loving (*cruel, unkind*).
- Show students a thesaurus. Explain how a thesaurus is used by showing several entries.
- **Check for understanding:** Give student pairs a thesaurus. Ask them to find the word *loving* and have them confirm synonyms. If the thesaurus lists antonyms, have them find antonyms for *loving*. If needed, provide additional practice using a thesaurus.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [synonyms-and-antonyms worksheet](#). Support students’ use of a thesaurus to complete the worksheet. Discuss their answers aloud after they are finished.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students practice summarizing each section of the story with someone at home.

Extend the Reading

Biography Writing Connection

Provide Internet access and other resources for students to research the life of another person mentioned in the book (Mohandas Gandhi, Rosa Parks, or John F. Kennedy). Have students compile and present their information in a biographical format, telling when and where the person was born, the important events of his or her life, and the impact the person had on history and on the civil rights of all people.

Visit [Writing A–Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on expository writing.

Social Studies Connection

Now that students have background knowledge from the book, read to them an actual transcript of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, or have them listen to a recording of it. Lead a roundtable discussion of students’ reactions to the wording and content of the speech.

Skill Review

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.

- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently use the strategy of summarizing to comprehend the text during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly understand and identify cause-and-effect relationships in the text and on a worksheet
- accurately identify and use pronouns in place of proper nouns in a discussion and in the text
- accurately identify, select, and use synonyms and antonyms in a discussion and on a worksheet; use a thesaurus appropriately

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)