

## Maggie's Civics Corner

### Lesson #42 - Martin Luther King, Jr.



*Today's lesson is about MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.* Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a prominent civil rights leader who worked to end segregation in America and ensure equal treatment of all citizens. Segregation was a system of separating people by their race. Many places in the United States used to have separate bathrooms, water fountains, and even schools for different races. Dr. King fought against this unfair and unequal treatment all his adult life.

Martin Luther King was a minister, too, and he used this leadership role in his church to attract people to the **Civil Rights** cause. He was famous for using peaceful protests, such as marches and sit-ins, to convince people that segregation was wrong. Martin Luther King, Jr. organized one of the largest peaceful protests in our nation's history – the [March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom](#) – in August 1968. More than 250,000 people joined him in this protest and heard him deliver his “I Have a Dream” speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial that day. Sadly, five years later, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. met an untimely death, when a white man who did not agree with Dr. King's vision of equal treatment, shot and killed him. On November 2, 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed a bill into law declaring the third Monday in January as a day for our nation to remember and celebrate the many contributions Dr. King made to the *Civil Rights* movement and our country.

**Sticky Situation:** Imagine you and a friend are playing on the carpet in your classroom. A student from another class walks in and says that you aren't allowed to play on the carpet; only students from his class are allowed to play on the carpet. How would you feel about being told you couldn't play on the carpet in your classroom? How would you respond to this student? What actions could you take so that you would be allowed to play on the carpet?

**Activity:** Research civil rights granted to citizens of the United States and make a list of them. Now list which rights you believe are the most important. Why do you believe the things you listed are the most important? Be prepared to explain your answer. Do you think all citizens would be treated equally without these rights? Why or why not?

**Bonus Activity:** Listen to or read Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. his [“I Have a Dream” speech](#) in its entirety. After hearing/reading his speech, how do you think Dr. King would feel about the current state of affairs in the United States? Do you think he would believe that his goals were achieved?