

# Shared Inquiry™ Lesson Plan for “Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ” by David Dinkins

(recommended for grades 6–12)

## What Is Shared Inquiry?

This lesson plan helps students explore the speech “Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,” using a method of learning called Shared Inquiry.

In Shared Inquiry, readers help one another understand a complex text by sharing their questions and ideas about it. Sustained interaction with the text through several readings and collaborative discussions helps students develop their own interpretations. Then, optionally, students can apply their understanding of the text to contemporary issues.

## Session One (25–40 minutes total)

### Text Opener (10–15 minutes)

**Student Learning Objective:** To activate and build background knowledge and personal connections related to a text

1. Tell students they will be reading a speech by David Dinkins, who would later become the mayor of New York City, that he delivered several days after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.
2. Engage students in a short conversation about this question: **Why is violence so common in the United States?**

### First Reading (5–8 minutes)

**Student Learning Objective:** To listen to the text read aloud and to note places that prompt confusion, curiosity, and other reactions

1. Provide each student with a copy of the speech.
2. Have students follow along as you read the text, writing a question mark beside words they don't know or wherever they have a question (such as places where they're confused or curious about something).

### Overview

- **What Is Shared Inquiry?**
- **Session One**
  - » Text Opener
  - » First reading
  - » Sharing questions
- **Session Two**
  - » Rereading activity
  - » Shared Inquiry discussion (speech)
- **Extensions** (*optional*)
  - » Shared Inquiry discussion (contemporary issue)
  - » Argumentative writing

### Sharing Questions (10–15 minutes)

1. Ask students for their initial reactions to the speech (*What do you think? How do you like it?*)
2. Encourage students to share questions about the parts of the speech they marked. Record these questions where all can see them.
3. Lead students in helping one another resolve and find answers to factual questions that may interfere with comprehension.
4. Save other questions for possible research (see Session Two) or for consideration during your Shared Inquiry discussion.

### Follow-Up Questions

Throughout all Shared Inquiry activities, guide students' thinking by asking questions. Respond to students with follow-up questions, such as those below, to help them explain, support, and connect their ideas.

- *What do you mean when you say that?*
- *Would you tell us more about your idea?*
- *What part of the text makes you think that?*
- *Where do you see that in the text?*
- *Do you agree with what [student] said?*
- *Can you add to [student's] idea?*

## Session Two (35–50 minutes total)

### Rereading Activity (15–20 minutes)

To help students move beyond basic comprehension of a text, have students revisit the text using one of the following activities.

#### Option 1: Close Reading with Note-Taking Prompts

**Student Learning Objective:** To compare and explain notes made during rereading in order to explore different responses to the text

1. Ask students to mark places in the text where Dinkins gives his listeners a sense of **hope** with **H**, and places where he gives his listeners a sense of **fear** with **F**.
2. Post this open-ended prompt so all can see it as they reread:
  - H = sense of hope
  - F = sense of fear
3. Have students take turns sharing with the class examples of what they have marked and why (*I marked "make his dream a reality" with an H because . . .*).
4. Each time a student shares that they marked a passage a certain way, ask if anyone marked it differently. Ask follow-up questions to help students explain their reasoning.

#### Option 2: Researching Questions Using Informational Texts

**Student Learning Objective:** To read and apply information from outside resources to answer questions about the text

1. From the list of students' questions from Session 1, have pairs or small groups of students select one or two questions that require research or supplemental reading.
2. Have students use reliable resources or reference materials to find answers to the questions. The list below offers some suggestions.

3. Ask students to reread the speech, noting any new reactions or questions they have based on the information they found.

### List of Suggested Sources

**1. Dr. King’s biography**

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/about-dr-king>

**2. Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” address, 1963**

<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/i-have-dream-address-delivered-march-washington-jobs-and-freedom>

**3. Dr. King’s Nobel Prize acceptance speech, 1964**

[http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documententry/doc\\_acceptance\\_speech\\_at\\_nobel\\_peace\\_prize\\_ceremony/](http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documententry/doc_acceptance_speech_at_nobel_peace_prize_ceremony/)

**4. David Dinkins’s biography**

<http://www.blackpast.org/aah/dinkins-david-n-1927>

## Shared Inquiry Discussion (20-30 minutes)

**Student Learning Objective:** To develop a sound interpretation of a text by generating ideas, supporting those ideas with evidence, and responding to others

For the discussion, students will need their copy of the text and the Shared Inquiry Discussion page provided in this lesson.

As the leader, you will open the discussion with a question that has more than one reasonable answer that can be supported with evidence from the text. This opening **focus question** is comprehensive enough to sustain a deep exploration of the text, and you will want to return to it from time to time so that students consider it from many angles.

1. Have students arrange their seats or desks in a circle, and sit with them in the circle.
2. Pose the focus question (in box, right) and have students write it on their Shared Inquiry Discussion page.
3. Give students time to write an initial answer and a piece of evidence. Encourage

**Focus question: According to the speech, what does Dinkins mean when he says that “any eulogy must be for us, the living”?**

**Related questions:**

- When Dinkins says that the “mourners and losers” are left to make decisions, what decisions does he mean?
- Why does Dinkins say that “there are no words we can say” for Martin Luther King, when he goes on to speak about King and his work?
- Why does Dinkins try to convey a sense of urgency, saying that “there is only time for action”?
- Why does Dinkins say Martin Luther King is dead because of his belief in “nonviolence in a world of violence,” rather than blame the individual who killed him?
- What does Dinkins mean when he says that “we will not have an America about which to decide” unless Martin Luther King’s dream is made a reality?
- Why does Dinkins repeat the words, “Martin Luther King is dead now”?

them to look back at the text for evidence. Make sure everyone has written something before you begin the discussion.

4. Begin the discussion by asking the focus question. Invite a volunteer or call on a student to share the first idea. Ask follow-up questions (see box on page 2) to help students explain, support, and connect their ideas.
5. Introduce related questions (see box on page 3) to deepen the discussion, to direct attention to other parts of the text, or to encourage students to consider other aspects of the focus question.
6. As the discussion winds down, have students complete the Shared Inquiry Discussion page by writing the answer they have arrived at after sifting through and weighing all the ideas and evidence they heard.
7. After all students have written their final answers, you may wish to have students share them. Ask students to tell the group how their answer changed or grew as a result of the discussion.

## Extensions (optional)

After listening to their peers' ideas and developing their own interpretation of the speech, students are prepared to apply those ideas to a related contemporary issue or write an argumentative essay.

### Option 1: Discussion of a Contemporary Issue (15–20 minutes)

1. Use the basic directions for a Shared Inquiry Discussion above.
2. Have students discuss a focus question related to a contemporary issue, such as: *What is the best way to bring peace to an intense, even violent, conflict between groups of people?* Consider customizing this question to ask about a specific conflict in the news or one that students are interested in.
3. Ask follow-up questions such as these to probe students' thinking: *What makes you think so? Do you agree or disagree with the ideas in the text? With other students?*

### Option 2: Argumentative Writing (20–30 minutes)

Students can extend their thinking about the text or the contemporary issue by writing about either focus question after discussing it. Writing in response to a discussion focus question enables students to use the work of discussion to inform their essays.

1. Have students use their Shared Inquiry Discussion page as the basis of a rough draft. Encourage them to include:
  - Ideas and evidence they heard in discussion that strengthen and support their answer
  - Counterarguments they heard in discussion that they should respond to

You may wish to have students work with a partner during this step.

2. Using your own writing process, have students write an essay answering one of the following questions:
  - A. What is the difference between a legacy and a memory? Write about someone you knew (or knew of) whose legacy lives on. What kind of legacy did this person leave, and why has it continued to exist?
  - B. Why was Martin Luther King Jr. so determined to fight injustice in a nonviolent way? Research the principles of passive resistance and nonviolence. Do you believe that social change can occur through nonviolent means in today's world?

Students will need to state a claim and explain their reasoning. When writing in response to these questions, students should use mainly textual evidence to support their argument. When writing about the contemporary issue focus question, students should use both textual evidence and personal values and experiences to support their ideas.

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## Shared Inquiry Discussion

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Text: \_\_\_\_\_

Focus question: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your answer before the discussion: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your answer after the discussion: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What in the text helped you decide on this answer? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did the discussion affect your answer? Did it change your mind? Provide additional support for your answer? Make you aware of additional issues? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

David Dinkins

*David Dinkins, who would later become the mayor of New York City, delivered this speech several days after Dr. King was assassinated.*

Martin Luther King is dead now, and we, the mourners and losers, are left with his dreams—with decisions to make. He is dead now, and there are no words we can say for him, for he said his own. He is dead now, and any eulogy<sup>1</sup> must be for us, the living.

Martin Luther King is dead now, so for him there is no tomorrow on this earth. But for us there are tomorrows and tomorrows. He painted a picture of what our tomorrows could be in his dream of America. This past weekend painted a picture of how that dream could become a nightmare should we lose sight of his principles.

Martin Luther King is dead now, but he left a legacy.<sup>2</sup> He planted in all of us, black and white, the seeds of love of justice, of decency, of honor, and we must not fail to have these seeds bear fruit.

Martin Luther King is dead now, and there is only time for action. The time for debate, the time for blame, the time for accusation is over. Ours is a clear call to action. We must not only dedicate ourselves to great principles, but we must apply those principles to our lives.

Martin Luther King is dead now, and he is because he dared believe in nonviolence in a world of violence. Because he dared believe in peace in a world of conflict. He is dead now because he challenged all of us to believe in his dream.

Martin Luther King is dead now, and we cannot allow the substance of his dream to turn into the ashes of defeat. If we are to build a tribute to what he stood for, we must, each of us, stand for the same things.

Martin Luther King is dead now, and I ask each of you, the living, to join him and me, to go from this room and keep the dream alive. We must now commit ourselves, we must now work, we must now define what kind of America we are going to have—for unless we make his dream a reality we will not have an America about which to decide.

Martin Luther King is dead now—but he lives.

1. eulogy: commendation or praise usually given at a funeral
2. legacy: a gift given to future generations