



Reading Selection

Reading Strategy

• Identifying Rhetorical Devices*

Rhetorical devices are special techniques of using language to evoke* a particular reaction from the audience. By identifying the rhetorical devices in a text, the reader can understand the author’s feelings, intentions, or deeper messages hidden “between the lines.”

In “I Have a Dream,” a famous speech by Martin Luther King, Jr., the following rhetorical devices are frequently used:

(1) **simile***: directly comparing two things using “like” or “as”

e.g. ...justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.

(2) **metaphor***: comparing two things by implying their similar characteristics

e.g. ...the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination.

(3) **repetition**: repeating a word, phrase, or sentence

e.g. I have a dream that...the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that...an oasis of freedom and justice.

☺ [Word Bank](#) rhetorical device 修辭技巧 evoke 引起 simile 明喻 metaphor 暗喻

Note the Details

1. When and where did Dr. King deliver the speech “I Have a Dream”?
2. What “shameful condition” does Dr. King want to dramatize?
3. What kind of nation did Dr. King wish his four children to live in?

On August 28, 1963, **Martin Luther King, Jr.***, **marched**¹ to the **Lincoln Memorial**^{2*} in **Washington, DC*** and delivered a historic speech before a crowd of over 250,000 people. In that speech, King **outlined**³ his hopes for the future—a time when **racism**⁴ would end and African Americans would be treated by whites as equals. That speech turned out to be a **decisive**⁵ moment in the **civil**⁶ rights movement. Had Dr. King not made the speech, the United States might not have introduced a series of laws to **grant**⁷ new rights to African Americans within just a few years.

I am happy to join with you today in what will **go down in history** as the

greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the **Emancipation Proclamation***. This **momentous* decree*** came as a great **beacon*** light of hope to millions of **Negro*** slaves who had been **seared*** in the **flames⁸** of **withering⁹** injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their **captivity¹⁰**.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly **crippled¹¹** by the **manacles*** of **segregation¹²** and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the **midst¹³** of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still **languishing*** in the corners of American society and finds himself an **exile¹⁴** in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a **shameful¹⁵** condition.

...“When will you be satisfied?” We can never be satisfied **as long as** the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, **heavy with** the **fatigue¹⁶** of travel, cannot gain **lodging*** in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic **mobility¹⁷** is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and **robbed¹⁸** of their **dignity¹⁹** by a sign stating: “For Whites Only.” We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in **Mississippi*** cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.

...Let us not **wallow*** in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

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.”

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 the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state **sweltering*** with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of **oppression²⁰**, will be transformed into an **oasis*** of freedom and justice.

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.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its **vicious**²¹ racists, with its **governor*** having his lips dripping with the words of “**interposition***” and “**nullification***” — one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to **join hands with** little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be **exalted***, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the **crooked*** places will be made straight; and the glory of the **Lord*** shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to **hew*** out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the **jangling*** **discords*** of our nation into a beautiful **symphony**²² of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom [to] ring, when we let it ring from every village and every **hamlet***, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and **Gentiles***, **Protestants*** and **Catholics***, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God **Almighty***, we are free at last!

*Although Dr. King’s dream **has yet to** be fully realized, his speech did lead to significant change. His **eloquence**²³ appealed to human emotions, and his **rhetorical**²⁴ skills awoke the **consciences**²⁵ of many Americans who had ignored or **condoned*** racial oppression. “I Have a Dream” was to civil rights supporters what a battle cry is to a **warrior**²⁶. The speech continues to inspire people to this day and will likely do so as long as inequality exists.*

—Excerpted from “I Have a Dream” by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Reading Strategy

Review: Making Inferences

Making inferences allows readers to understand things that are implied but not actually written in the text. When making inferences, readers use not only the text itself but also personal knowledge and experience to uncover more details about an event or a character, understand the reasons behind certain occurrences, or make predictions about the story. Making inferences improves comprehension and develops critical thinking skills.

The following are some descriptions of American society at the time when the speech was given. Check the ones you can infer from the speech.

Many African Americans were treated violently an