“I Have a Dream” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

(First reading – vocabulary & literary devices)

1. What was the occasion for this speech? ____________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Read the beginning of King’s speech, from “I am happy to join with you today…” to “…long night of captivity.

2. What metaphors does Dr. King use? He compares slavery to __________, the

  Emancipation Proclamation to _______________ and slavery to ________________.

Read the paragraph that begins “But one hundred years later…” to “… finds himself an exile in his own land.”

3. What is segregation? __________________________________________________________

4. What is discrimination? ________________________________________________________
   ➢ 5. What metaphors does Dr. King use? ____________________________________________

Read the following section which begins “And so we’ve come here today to dramatize a shameful condition” and ends with “… that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.”

   ➢ 6. What metaphors does Dr. King use? ____________________________________________

Read the next paragraph: “We have also come to this hallowed spot” to “Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God’s children.”

7. Why is “Now” capitalized? ______________________________________________________

8. What do you suppose “gradualism” is? ____________________________________________
   ➢ 9. What metaphors does Dr. King use? ____________________________________________

Read the next section from “It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment” ending with “The whirlwind of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.”

   ➢ 10. What metaphors does Dr. King use? ____________________________________________
Read from “But there is something that I must say…” through “We cannot walk alone.”

11. What metaphors does Dr. King use? _____________________________________________

Next, read from “And as we walk, we must make the pledge…” through "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

12. Where do you think the quote came from? _______________________________________

Read the paragraph “I am not unmindful…” to “Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.”

13. What metaphors does Dr. King use? ____________________________________________

Read “And so even though we face the difficulties of today…” to “that all men are created equal.”

14. Where do you think the quote came from? _______________________________________

Read from “I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia” to “… join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today!”

15. What do you suppose “interposition” and “nullification” mean in this context? _______

Read from “I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted...” through “knowing that we will be free one day.”

16. Where do you think the quote came from? _______________________________________

17. What metaphors does Dr. King use? ____________________________________________

Read the rest of the speech.

18. What phrase does Dr. King repeat in this section? _________________________________

19. Where do you think the first quote came from? _________________________________

20. What is a “Negro spiritual”? ___________________________________________________

21. What does the ending mean? _________________________________________________

22. What message did you understand from this first reading? ________________________

___________________________________________________________

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(Second Reading – Meaning)

Read the beginning of the speech until “end the long night of their captivity.”

1. Who was this “great American”? ____________________________________________

2. What is the Emancipation Proclamation? _______________________________________

3. What are “the flames of withering injustice”? _________________________________

4. Paraphrase this section into your own words:____________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Read from “But one hundred years later...” to “an exile in his own land.”

5. Using your knowledge of history, why does Dr. King say that “the Negro...finds himself an exile in his own land”? ____________________________

6. Paraphrase this section into your own words:____________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Read from “And so we’ve come here today to dramatize a shameful condition” to "...the riches of freedom and the security of justice."

7. What is this “check” that Dr. King refers to? _________________________________

8. How has America defaulted on this check? _________________________________

9. Paraphrase this section into your own words:____________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Read from “We have also come to this hallowed spot...” to “make justice a reality for all of God’s children.”

10. Who is Dr. King addressing to in this section (what race)? ________________________

11. What is the main idea in this section? __________________________________________
Read from “It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment.” To “the bright day of justice emerges.”

12. Who is Dr. King addressing to in this section? ________________________________

13. What does this section mean? ________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Read from “But there is something that I must say to my people...” to “meeting physical force with soul force.”

14. Who is Dr. King addressing in this section? ________________________________

15. What is Dr. King’s message in this section? ________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Read from “The marvelous new militancy...” to “We cannot walk alone.”

16. What is Dr. King’s message in this section? ________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Read from “And as we walk...” to "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

17. Paraphrase this section into your own words_______________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Read from “I am not unmindful...” to “I say to you today, my friends.”

18. Who is Dr. King addressing to in this section? ________________________________

19. What is Dr. King’s message for the intended audience?_______________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Read from “And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow...” to “all men are created equal.”

20. What “American Dream” is Dr. King talking about? ________________________________

21. How could America live out the meaning of this creed? ________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
Read from “I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia...” to “This is our hope.”

22. In your own words, explain the “dream” that Dr. King has: ____________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

Read from “With this faith...” to “the curvaceous slopes of California.”

23. Paraphrase this section into your own words: _______________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

24. What do these geographical locations have in common? _____________________________

Read from “But not only that” to “From every mountainside, let freedom ring.”

25. What do these geographical locations have in common? _____________________________

Read the end of the speech.

26. Paraphrase this section into your own words: _______________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

“I Have a Dream” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Read from the beginning of the speech to “And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.”

1. What was Dr. King’s purpose in beginning his speech by talking about the Emancipation Proclamation?

______________________________________________________________________________

2. What tone does Dr. King immediately establish and how?

______________________________________________________________________________

Read from “In a sense we've come to our nation’s capital” to “the riches of freedom and the security of justice.”

3. What was Dr. King’s purpose in using the extended metaphor about the check:

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

4. What tone does Dr. King use in this section?

______________________________________________________________________________

Read from “We have also come to this hallowed spot...” to “Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.”

5. Why is it an appropriate metaphor for Dr. King to call racial injustice “quicksand”?

______________________________________________________________________________

6. What tone does Dr. King use in this section?

______________________________________________________________________________

Read from “It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment” to “until the bright day of justice emerges.”

7. Dr. King seems to be responding to something in this section. Make an inference about what Dr. King may be responding to.

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Read from “But there is something that I must say to my people” to “We cannot walk alone.”

8. Infer what “new militancy” Dr. King is addressing:

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

9. What can you infer about Dr. King’s views based on this section?

______________________________________________________________________________
10. What tone does Dr. King use in this section? ________________________________

Read from “And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead” to "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

11. List the reasons Dr. King gives for why people must continue to fight for civil rights:

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

12. Why does Dr. King list these reasons? ________________________________

13. What tone does Dr. King use in this section? ________________________________

14. Do these conditions still exist for African-Americans today? ________ Explain your answer:

____________________________________________________________________

__________

Read from “I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations” to “Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.”

15. Dr. King addresses the “trials and tribulations” that many in his audience have suffered while fighting for their civil rights. Explain why he does this.

____________________________________________________________________

16. What tone does Dr. King use in this section? ________________________________

Read from “I say to you today my friends” to “the content of their character.”

17. The last line in this section is one of the most famous lines from the speech. Why do you suppose this line resonates with people?

____________________________________________________________________

18. What tone does Dr. King use in this section? ________________________________

19. How is the tone in this section different than the tone in the previous section? __________

____________________________________________________________________

20. Has America achieved Dr. King’s dream, as explained in this section? ______________

21. Explain why or why not? ________________________________________________

Read from “I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama” to “This is our hope.”
22. Dr. King keeps repeating “I Have a Dream.” Why? ____________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

23. Specifically, why does Dr. King repeat “I have a dream today?” ____________________

24. What tone does Dr. King use when talking about Alabama? Explain. ____________________
____________________________________________________________________________

25. Why does Dr. King quote scripture? ____________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Read from “This is the faith I go back to the South with” to “From every mountainside, let freedom ring!”

26. Why does Dr. King use these song lyrics? ____________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

27. What goal does Dr. King explain in this section? ____________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

28. Has America achieved this goal? Explain why or why not? ____________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

29. What tone does Dr. King use in this section? ____________________________

Read from “And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true” to “the curvaceous slopes of California.”

30. Explain why Dr. King chose to list these states first? ____________________________

Read from “But not only that” to “From every mountainside, let freedom ring.”

31. Explain why Dr. King chose to list these states last? ____________________________

32. Why does Dr. King keep repeating “let freedom ring”? ____________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Read from “And when this happens” to the end.

33. Why did Dr. King end with this particular quote? ____________________________

34. How is this quote related to the beginning of the speech? ____________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

35. Describe the tone Dr. King uses at the end of his speech? ____________________________