

**Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Facts of the Day 2017**



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Date	Fact
1	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is the first African American—and the first non-U.S. president—to have an official legal holiday.
2	In 1955, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was recruited to serve as spokesman for the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which was a campaign by the African American population of Montgomery, Alabama to force integration of the city’s bus lines. After 381 days of nearly universal participation by citizens of the black community, many of whom had to walk miles to work each day as a result, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in transportation was unconstitutional.
3	<i>“We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.”</i> —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail
4	In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was one of the driving forces behind the March for Jobs and Freedom, more commonly known as the “March on Washington,” which drew over a quarter-million people to the National Mall. It was at this march that Dr. King delivered his famous <i>“I Have a Dream”</i> speech, which cemented his status as a social change leader and helped inspire the nation to act on civil rights. He was later named Time magazine’s <i>“Man of the Year.”</i>
5	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was arrested numerous times for his participation in civil rights activities. While he preached about justice, empowerment, love and peace, in the final months of his life, his attention was turned towards fighting poverty. Sadly, more Americans live in poverty today than during Dr. King’s lifetime. Forty-seven million Americans currently fall below the poverty line.
6	Drawing inspiration from both his Christian faith and the peaceful teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led a nonviolent movement in the late 1950’s and ‘60s to achieve legal equality for African Americans in the United States. While others were advocating for freedom by “any means necessary,” including violence, Dr. King used the power of words and acts of nonviolent resistance, such as protests, grassroots organizing, and civil disobedience to achieve seemingly impossible goals.
7	<i>“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> —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I Have a Dream
8	In September of 1958, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was stabbed while signing copies of his latest book on a sidewalk in Harlem, New York. The blade rested on his aorta, the main artery in the body. While recovering in the hospital, King received countless letters from well-wishers. Among them was one that King recalled as the most memorable of the bunch: <i>“Dear Dr. King, I am a ninth-grade student at the White Plains High School. While it should not matter, I would like to mention that I’m a White girl. I read in the paper of your misfortune, and of your suffering. And I read that if you had sneezed, you would have died. And I’m simply writing you to say that I’m so happy that you didn’t sneeze.”</i>

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9	<p><i>“Let us rise up tonight with a greater readiness. Let us stand with a greater determination. And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge to make America what it ought to be. We have an opportunity to make America a better nation.”</i> —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I Have Been to the Mountaintop</p>
10	<p>When he was born on January 15, 1929, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s name was Michael King. A few years later, his father, also Michael King, changed his name to Martin Luther King Sr., in honor of the great protestant reformer. At that time, his son’s name was changed to Martin Luther King, Jr.</p>
11	<p><i>“We shall overcome because the arch of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.”</i> —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.</p>
12	<p><i>“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”</i> —Mahatma Gandhi</p>
13	<p><i>“I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.”</i> —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech</p>
14	<p><i>Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On, Not A Day Off!</i> The Department of Defense values those who volunteer. One of the ways it demonstrates this is by honoring distinguished volunteers with the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal. The medal was authorized in 1993 to members of the U.S. Armed Forces and Reserve components and is awarded for outstanding and sustained voluntary service to the civilian community.</p>
15	<p>Born January 15, 1929, Martin Luther King, Jr. was a Baptist minister and social activist who led the civil rights movement in the United States from the mid-1950s until his assassination in 1968. His leadership was fundamental to the movement's success in ending the legal segregation of African Americans in the South and other parts of the United States.</p>
16	<p>More than 40 years after his death, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s example can continue to guide us in addressing our most critical issues. Each of us can contribute to strengthening our own communities by serving in Dr. King’s honor not only on the MLK holiday, but throughout the year. By making service part of our daily lives, together we can create and sustain opportunities for Americans to strengthen their own and others’ economic opportunity, ensure that more young people graduate from high school, support our military families and veterans, and help communities prepare for and recover from disaster.</p>
17	<p><i>“Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored.”</i> —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail</p>
18	<p><i>“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”</i> —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.</p>
19	<p>The MLK Day of Service empowers individuals, strengthens communities, bridges barriers, creates solutions to social problems, and moves us closer to Dr. King’s vision of a <i>“Beloved Community.”</i> On this day, Americans of every age and background celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. through service projects.</p>
20	<p><i>“The time is always right to do what is right.”</i> —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.</p>

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21	<i>“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 oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.”</i> —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I Have a Dream
22	In the face of oppression, intimidation and death, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. maintained a forgiving spirit. He said that <i>“forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude.”</i>
23	<i>“We have more to do to bring Dr. King’s dream within reach of all our daughters and sons. We must stand together for good jobs, fair wages, safe neighborhoods, and quality education. With one voice, we must ensure the scales of justice work equally for all — considering not only how justice is applied, but also how it is perceived and experienced. As Dr. King told us, ‘injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,’ and this remains our great unfinished business.”</i> —President Barack Obama
24	It took 15 years to create the federal Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Congressman John Conyers, from Michigan, first introduced legislation for a commemorative holiday four days after King was assassinated in 1968. After the bill became stalled, petitions endorsing the holiday containing six million names were submitted to Congress.
25	Established in 1968 by Mrs. Coretta Scott King, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change (“The King Center”) has been a global destination, resource center and community institution for over a quarter century. Nearly a million people each year make pilgrimage to the National Historic Site to learn, be inspired and pay their respects to Dr. King’s legacy.
26	Congress designated the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in 1994 as a national day of service, and charged the corporation for National and Community Service with leading this effort.
27	In 1964, at 35 years old, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize. His acceptance speech in Oslo is thought by many to be among the most powerful remarks ever delivered at the event, climaxing at one point with the oft-quoted phrase <i>“I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant.”</i>
28	<i>“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> —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I Have a Dream
29	Less than thirteen years of nonviolent leadership ended abruptly and tragically on April 4th, 1968, when Dr. King was assassinated at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. His body was returned to his hometown of Atlanta, Georgia, where his funeral ceremony was attended by high-level leaders of all races and political stripes.
30	<i>“The choice is not between violence and nonviolence but between nonviolence and nonexistence.”</i> —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
31	In January 1986, Mrs. Coretta Scott King oversaw the first legal holiday in honor of her late husband. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day has come to be celebrated by millions of people in over 100 countries.

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Date	Source
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3	<a href="http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/letter-birmingham-city-jail-0">http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/letter-birmingham-city-jail-0</a>
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12	Chang, Larry, Ed. <i>Wisdom for the Soul: Five Millennia of Prescriptions for Spiritual Healing</i> . Gnosophia Publishers, 2006
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