African American Leaders

Martin Luther King Jr. was an African American leader who lived from 1929 to 1968. He worked to help people be treated fairly and equally. We remember him with a national holiday. Look inside to learn about other African Americans who have made a difference in the history of the United States.

Famous African Americans

Look at our scrapbook of some African American leaders who have changed history.

Rosa Parks fought for civil rights for African Americans. Civil rights make sure people are treated equally under the law. In 1955, she was arrested in Alabama for not giving up her bus seat to a white man.

Jackie Robinson batted his way into history. In 1947, he became the first African American to play major-league baseball.

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1 scrapbook - a book filled with blank pages in which someone can add his or her own photos, newspaper clippings, and other things

2 civil rights - protections that allow everyone to be treated fairly and equally under the law
baseball.

Condoleezza Rice is the first African American woman to be the U.S. Secretary of State\(^3\). In this important job, she helps the President work with the governments of other countries.

George Washington Carver was a famous inventor who found more than 300 uses for peanuts. He discovered that peanuts could be used to make soap, glue, and paint.

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**A Special Speech**

In 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. He spoke in Washington, D.C., in front of the Lincoln Memorial. During the speech, Martin Luther King Jr. shared his hope that all people would be treated equally.

"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

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\(^3\) Secretary of State: A person in the government, appointed by the President, who represents when talking with other countries.
Oprah Winfrey is a talk show host and an actor. She helps children around the world. She recently helped build schools and gave supplies to more than 50,000 needy children in South Africa.

— Martin Luther King Jr.
“African American Leaders” Questions

1. What traits best describe Martin Luther King, Jr.?
   a. fair and hopeful
   b. angry and impatient
   c. happy and violent
   d. sad and caring

2. What do all of the people in the article have in common?
   a. They all like peanuts.
   b. None of them like to ride the bus.
   c. They all want a holiday named after them.
   d. They are all African Americans who somehow changed history.

3. The author included part of Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech in the article
   a. to show that he knows about the speech.
   b. because he thinks it is a good speech.
   c. to show Martin Luther King Jr.’s hope for a better future.
   d. to convince the reader that he really liked Martin Luther King Jr.

4. Jackie Robinson was very
   a. athletic.
   b. important.
   c. determined.
   d. All of the above.

5. Why did Rosa Parks fight for civil rights?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
African American Leaders” Answer Sheet

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5. Why did Rosa Parks fight for civil rights?
   Answers will vary but should reflect an understanding that she wanted all people to be treated equally.

Suggested Additional Vocabulary: leader, arrested, government, inventor, host