

MARTIN LUTHER KING An American Hero

A Injustice in the south

Like all black people in the southern states, Dr King grew up in a world of discrimination, segregation, and injustice. In the 1950s, many schools were for white children only. They did not admit black children. Black people could not eat in the same restaurants, drink at the same water fountains, or sit on the same bus seats as white people.

B A violent end

In 1964, aged thirty-five, Dr King won the Nobel Peace Prize. In the same year, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, which declared racial discrimination to be illegal. Then, four years later, while he was visiting Memphis, Tennessee, a gunman shot Dr King through the head. The nation mourned.

C Early life

Martin Luther King Junior was born on 15 January, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. His father was a church minister, and his mother was a teacher. At school he was a very clever student, and he went to university in 1944, when he was only fifteen. He became a Doctor of Philosophy in 1955, and accepted a job as a minister of an Alabama church.

D Commemorating a hero

He was only thirty-nine when he died, but his achievements were considerable. In 1986 the government declared a national holiday in his honour. Now, on the third Monday of every January, the people of the United States officially commemorate the life and work of this American hero.

E Spreading the word

All that began to change in 1956, when Dr King led the civil rights movement in a peaceful boycott of the buses in Montgomery, Alabama. Non-violent protest against racial discrimination spread all over the USA. There was a lot of resistance from the authorities. The police arrested Dr King more than thirty times during the 1950s!

1. Read about the life of Martin Luther King. Use the dates to help you to arrange the paragraphs (A_E) into the correct order (1-5)

correct order:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



2. Complete the notes about the major events in the life of Dr. Martin Luther King

Major events in the life of Dr Martin Luther King

1929 born, Atlanta Georgia

1944

1955

1956

1964

1968