

“I Have a Dream” Speech

Fact Page Key

Read the following statements and decide whether they are true or false.

1. King was supposed to speak for 4 minutes, but he spoke for over 16. **(T) F**

This didn't cause a problem however because the program was running ahead of schedule and people were more than willing to stick around to hear Dr. King.

2. This was the first time King had ever made an “I Have a Dream” speech. **(T) F**

King had used the phrase “I have a dream” in other speeches in many cities. However, this was the first time that most Americans had heard him use the phrase and the most famous part of the speech was actually impromptu.

3. King had not planned on speaking about his Dream that day; it was impromptu. **(T) F**

During his speech Mahalia Jackson called out “Tell them about the dream Martin!” and King began to speak, and some say preach, about his famous dream for equality. He left out lines like “And so let us go back to our communities as members of the international association for the advancement of creative dissatisfaction....” and instead thundered, “Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.”

4. King was honored at the March by letting him go last to give the keynote address to the marchers. **(T) F**

The truth is that no one wanted to go last. The speakers believed that the television news journalists would be gone by the end of the event. King volunteered to go last, and everyone stuck around to hear him deliver what would become one of the most important speeches in the history of the United States.

5. King's speech was immediately recognized as a defining moment in civil right history. **(T) F**

King's speech was praised by many in the days following the March, but it was only later that it became a defining moment in civil rights history.

6. The actual name of the March was “The March on Washington for Freedom”. **(T) F**

The actual name of the March was “The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom”. The demands of the marchers included legal justice as well as economic equality for all.

7. 2,000 marshals were planted in the crowd by the U.S. Government to keep the peace. **(T) F**

The 2,000 marshals that were scattered through the crowd were trained and provided by the organizers of the March themselves. Many in the government were afraid that the demonstration would turn into violent riots, however the March remained peaceful and was a resounding success.

Source: “Two Score Years Ago: The Making of a Memorable Address” by Fern Shen, The Washington Post