

Argument and Persuasion

You encounter arguments and opinions everywhere. Friends share their views on controversial issues. Politicians explain why they deserve your vote. Ads claim that products can fix your problems. Which arguments have merit, and which are just cleverly persuasive? So many decisions you make depend on your ability to analyze arguments and recognize the techniques that are being used to persuade you.

COMMON CORE

RI 5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined. RI 6 Analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose. RI 8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing the reasoning and evidence; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning. RI 9 Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance. SL 3 Evaluate a speaker's use of evidence and rhetoric.

Part 1: The Elements of an Argument

You've heard the word *argument* all your life. It suggests heated discussions characterized by strong feelings and loud voices. In formal speaking and writing, however, an argument is not emotional. An argument expresses a point of view or position on an issue and supports the position with reasons and evidence. Sound arguments appeal strictly to reason, not emotions. They include these elements:

- the **claim**—the writer's or speaker's position on an issue
- the **support**—valid reasons and relevant and sufficient evidence

In addition to supporting the claim, strong arguments anticipate objections that opponents might raise and counter those objections with evidence.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF AN ARGUMENT



STRATEGIES FOR READING AN ARGUMENT

- **Look for the claim.** Often, the claim is stated in the introduction or the conclusion of an argument. Make sure you look for clues in the title too. When the claim is not stated directly, ask yourself: What does the evidence tell me about the writer's or speaker's position or point of view?
- **Track the evidence.** Convincing arguments include a great deal of support. As a result, most arguments are not short. To keep track of how a writer or speaker develops his or her claims and ideas, jot down his or her reasons and supporting evidence—in the same order in which they appear. Look for facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, and quotations from experts. Analyze the quality, credibility (believability), and relevance of the evidence—both in support of the position and in anticipation of counterarguments.

MODEL: THE ELEMENTS OF AN ARGUMENT

In this testimony given before the Maryland Senate, the speaker makes a strong claim about the state's motorcycle helmet law. As you read, look for the elements that she uses to effectively prove her position.

from **MOTORCYCLE HELMET BILL**

Testimony before the Maryland Senate by Janice Golec

I respectfully urge you to oppose any legislation that weakens Maryland's current "all riders" motorcycle helmet law.

Motorcycle helmets help save lives and reduce critical head injuries, and laws requiring helmet use have a dramatic life-saving effect. This has been

5 proven in Maryland and every other state where all riders are required to wear helmets. In such states, death rates from head injuries are half what they are among cyclists in states with no helmet laws or laws which only apply to minors. Where helmet [laws] have been enacted, then repealed, death rates for motorcyclists rise in the absence of a helmet law.

10 This is hardly a fluke; the General Accounting Office, a non-partisan research agency of the U.S. Government, reviewed 46 studies of motorcycle helmets and helmet laws, and reported that every study comparing helmeted with non-helmeted crash victims found that helmeted riders had lower fatality rates, ranging from 28 percent to 73 percent lower. . . .

15 Helmet laws save taxpayers money, too. Studies in six states show that public funds pay up to 82 percent of the costs to treat orthopedic injuries sustained by motorcyclists. A Maryland study showed that acute care costs to non-helmeted riders averaged three times those of helmeted riders. . . .

20 A partial law is almost as bad as no law at all. Statistically speaking, there is negligible difference in death and injury rates between states with no helmet law and states with partial laws. Because partial helmet laws are difficult for police to enforce, helmet-use rates for all riders remain low in states with restricted helmet laws.

25 Helmet law opponents love to talk about motorcyclists' right to decide whether or not they will wear helmets, but some rights are not worth having. . . . To weaken Maryland's helmet law is to condemn 28—or more—Maryland motorcyclists to death. That's a right nobody should have.

Close Read

1. Who is the speaker's audience?
2. What is the speaker's claim, or position?
3. One reason that the speaker uses to prove her claim is boxed. Cite two pieces of evidence that support this reason.
4. Find another reason that the speaker uses to support her claim. What evidence supports this reason?
5. The speaker anticipates opponents' arguments in lines 19–27. How does she counter these viewpoints?

Part 2: The Craft of Persuasion

Never underestimate the power of **persuasion**—that is, the art of swaying people’s feelings, opinions, and actions. With compelling language, writers and speakers can enhance strong arguments or disguise the flaws in weak ones. To evaluate the real strength of an argument, you first need to recognize the persuasive techniques and rhetorical structures and devices that are being used to sway you. Then you can objectively examine the evidence and determine your position.

PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES

Consider where you have encountered the following persuasive techniques. What are their intended effects on readers, listeners, and viewers?

TECHNIQUES	EXAMPLES
Appeals by Association	
Bandwagon Appeal Taps into people’s desire to belong	▶ You have to come to the concert. Everyone’s going to be there.
“Plain Folks” Appeal Implies that ordinary people are on “our side” or that a candidate is like an ordinary person	▶ Senator Jacobs knows what it’s like to struggle to make ends meet.
Testimonial Relies on endorsements from well-known people or satisfied customers	▶ As an Olympic athlete, I need all the energy I can get. That’s why I start my day with Grain Puffs.
Transfer Connects a product, a candidate, or a cause with a positive image or idea	▶ Freedom is in your hands the minute you hit the road in a Mountainback XRV.
Emotional Appeals	
Appeals to Pity, Fear, or Vanity Uses words that evoke strong feelings, rather than facts and evidence, to persuade	▶ Appeal to Pity For just one dollar a day, you can give a stray pet a second chance.
Appeal to Values	
Ethical Appeal Taps into people’s values or moral standards	▶ Volunteer today—because it’s the right thing to do.
Word Choice	
Loaded Language Uses words with strongly positive or negative connotations to stir people’s emotions	▶ For the safety of our innocent children , we must protect our community from rampant crime .

MODEL 1: PERSUASION IN SPEECHES

In this speech, a government official pledges his commitment to promoting organ donation. What techniques does he use to try to convince you of his proposition?

from *The Gift of Life*

Speech by Tommy Thompson

This month in Fresno, California, members of the Hispanic community gathered . . . to remember 19-year-old Maribel Cordova. Maribel had received an identification card this year and told her mother she wanted to become a donor.

Two weeks later, a damaged blood vessel in her head tragically cut her
5 life short.

Because of Maribel's selfless act, others lived. A 35-year-old man from Northern California received her lungs. A 66-year-old Southern California woman got her liver. . . .

10 These are the human experiences of hope out of loss, of life out of death, that touch and motivate us, that drive us to do everything within our power to promote organ and tissue donation. Through education, outreach, science and the vitally important work of people like you, we will reach that future when organ donation is, quite simply, a fact of life.

Close Read

1. Find two examples of loaded language. One has been boxed.
2. Identify one other persuasive technique used in this speech. Cite details that helped you find it.

MODEL 2: PERSUASION IN THE MEDIA

Persuasive techniques are also at work in TV and magazine ads. How do the words and the visual in this print ad help convey a powerful message?



Make your home defensible against wildfires. Visit Firewise.org, where you can discover some simple things you can do to help protect your home and your loved ones. What have you got to lose, except everything.

FIREWISE
COMMUNITY

Close Read

1. What persuasive technique is used in this ad? Cite specific details to support your answer.
2. Describe the intended effect of the ad on viewers.

RHETORICAL STRUCTURES AND DEVICES

In addition to employing persuasive techniques, writers and speakers use rhetorical devices, which can shape the structure of sentences and paragraphs within a persuasive work in ways that make the work's message resonate. In these examples, notice how the wording makes the message memorable.

RHETORICAL DEVICE

EXAMPLE

REPETITION

Uses the same word or words more than once for emphasis

- ▶ Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all.
Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all.
—from “Glory and Hope” by Nelson Mandela

PARALLELISM

Uses similar grammatical constructions to express ideas that are related or equal in importance. Often creates a rhythm.

- ▶ We cannot, we must not, refuse to protect the right of every American to vote in every election. . . . And we ought not, and we cannot, and we must not wait another eight months before we get a bill.
—from “We Shall Overcome” by Lyndon Baines Johnson

ANALOGY

Makes a comparison between two subjects that are alike in some ways

- ▶ Have you heard the canned, frozen and processed product being dished up to the world as American popular music today?
—from a commencement address by Billy Joel

In the speech below, Sojourner Truth, a 19th-century leader in the antislavery and women's rights movements, responds to men who had spoken against women's rights. How does her use of rhetorical devices enhance her message?

from *And Ain't I a Woman?*

Speech by Sojourner Truth

- That man over there say that women needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or give me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen 'em mos' all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Close Read

1. Notice the boxed question that the speaker repeats. What is the effect of the repetition?
2. Find an example of parallelism. Identify the words, phrases, or sentences that exhibit parallel structure.

Part 3: Analyze the Text

In 1962, when President John F. Kennedy gave this stirring speech about space exploration, people were feeling threatened by the possibility of war with the Soviet Union. Using what you've just learned, analyze Kennedy's argument. What techniques does he use to persuade his audience?

from **The New Frontier**
Speech by John F. Kennedy

No man can fully grasp how far and how fast we have come, but condense, if you will, the 50,000 years of man's recorded history in a time span of but a half century. Stated in these terms, we know very little about the first 40 years, except at the end of them advanced man had learned to use the skins of animals to cover them. Then about 10 years ago, under this standard, man emerged from his caves to construct other kinds of shelter. Only five years ago man learned to write and use a cart with wheels. Christianity began less than two years ago. The printing press came this year, and then less than 2 months ago, during this whole 50-year span of human history, the steam engine provided a new source of power.

Newton explored the meaning of gravity. Last month electric lights and telephones and automobiles and airplanes became available. Only last week did we develop penicillin and television and nuclear power, and now if America's new spacecraft succeeds in reaching Venus, we will have literally reached the stars before midnight tonight.

This is a breathtaking pace, and such a pace cannot help but create new ills as it dispels old, new ignorance, new problems, new dangers. Surely the opening vistas of space promise high costs and hardships, as well as high reward. . . .

If this capsule history of our progress teaches us anything, it is that man, in his quest for knowledge and progress, is determined and cannot be deterred. The exploration of space will go ahead, whether we join in it or not, and it is one of the great adventures of all time, and no nation which expects to be the leader of other nations can expect to stay behind in this race for space.

Those who came before us made certain that this country rode the first waves of the industrial revolutions, the first waves of modern invention, and the first wave of nuclear power, and this generation does not intend to founder in the backwash of the coming age of space. We mean to be a part of it—we mean to lead it. For the eyes of the world now look into space, to the moon and to the planets beyond, and we have vowed that we shall not see it governed by a hostile flag of conquest, but by a banner of freedom and peace. We have vowed that we shall not see space filled with weapons of mass destruction, but with instruments of knowledge and understanding.

Close Read

1. Summarize Kennedy's claim.
2. Does this speech mostly appeal to reason or to emotion? Explain your answer.
3. In lines 1–15, Kennedy uses a “capsule history” to describe a span of 50,000 years. Why might he begin by producing this analogy describing time?
4. Identify one persuasive technique that Kennedy uses. Cite evidence to support your answer.
5. One example of parallelism has been boxed. What is its effect? Identify another example.

I Have a Dream

 Video link at
thinkcentral.com

Speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

VIDEO TRAILER  KEYWORD: HML9-660

Can a **DREAM** change the world?

COMMON CORE

RI 6 Analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance a point of view. RI 8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and claims in a text. RI 9 Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical significance.

Time and again someone has a dream, or vision, of how to make the world a better place. That vision finds expression in powerful words—words that stir others to find ways to improve our lives. In the speech you are about to read, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. eloquently sets forth the vision he had for the future.

QUICKWRITE What is your vision for a better world? Does it involve better schools? safer communities? cleaner air? Write a paragraph describing your vision of how to change one aspect of the world.



TEXT ANALYSIS: ARGUMENT

In an **argument**, a writer or speaker takes a position on an issue and provides support for the position by appealing strictly to reason. The position is referred to as the **claim**, or proposition. The **support** for the claim may be reasons, evidence, or both—but this support should be credible, relevant to the claim, and of sufficient quality to be persuasive. In “I Have a Dream,” King makes this claim about the status of African Americans:

But one hundred years later [after the Emancipation Proclamation], the Negro still is not free. . . .

As you read the speech, look for this claim and the reasons and evidence King provides to support it.

READING SKILL: UNDERSTAND RHETORICAL DEVICES

Writers and speakers typically use more than just arguments to persuade. They also use **rhetorical devices** such as these three:

- **Repetition** is the repeated use of the same word or phrase. It is used primarily for emphasis.
- **Parallelism** is the repetition of similar grammatical structures, words, phrases, or sentences. It is used to show that ideas are related or equal in importance.
- An **analogy** is a point-by-point comparison of two subjects. It can help convey ideas that are hard to grasp, such as how a complex object looks or functions.

As you read, write down examples of these devices and describe their effects, using a chart like the one shown.

Word, Phrase, or Sentence	Type of Device	Effect
<i>“one hundred years later”</i>	<i>repetition</i>	<i>emphasizes how long African Americans have been denied their rights</i>

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

King chose the words shown in boldface to inspire his audience. Use the context to figure out their meanings.

1. a **momentous** occasion
2. miss payments and **default** on a loan
3. turned from protest to **militancy**
4. two evils **inextricably** joined
5. a **legitimate** excuse



Complete the activities in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

1929–1968

Crusader for Justice

Preaching a philosophy of nonviolence, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. became a catalyst for social change in the 1950s and 1960s. He galvanized people of all races to participate in boycotts, marches, and demonstrations against racial injustice. His moral leadership stirred the conscience of the nation and helped bring about the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In that same year he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. King continued his work for justice and equality until he was assassinated in 1968.

Inspirational Speaker

An eloquent Baptist minister from Atlanta, King often used religious references in his speeches. On the night before his death, he told an audience in Memphis, Tennessee: “I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight, that we as a people will get to the Promised Land.”

BACKGROUND TO THE SPEECH

March on Washington

In August 1963, thousands of Americans marched on Washington, D.C., to urge Congress to pass a civil rights bill. King delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial before more than 200,000 people.

Author Online
THINK central
 Go to thinkcentral.com.
 KEYWORD: HML9-661



I Have a Dream

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score¹ years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation.² This **momentous** decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free; one hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination; one hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity; one hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land. **A**

So we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note³ to which every American was to fall heir. This note was the promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has **defaulted** on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in

Analyze Visuals ▶

What impression do you get of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. from this photograph?

momentous
(mō-mě'n'təs) *adj.*
of great importance

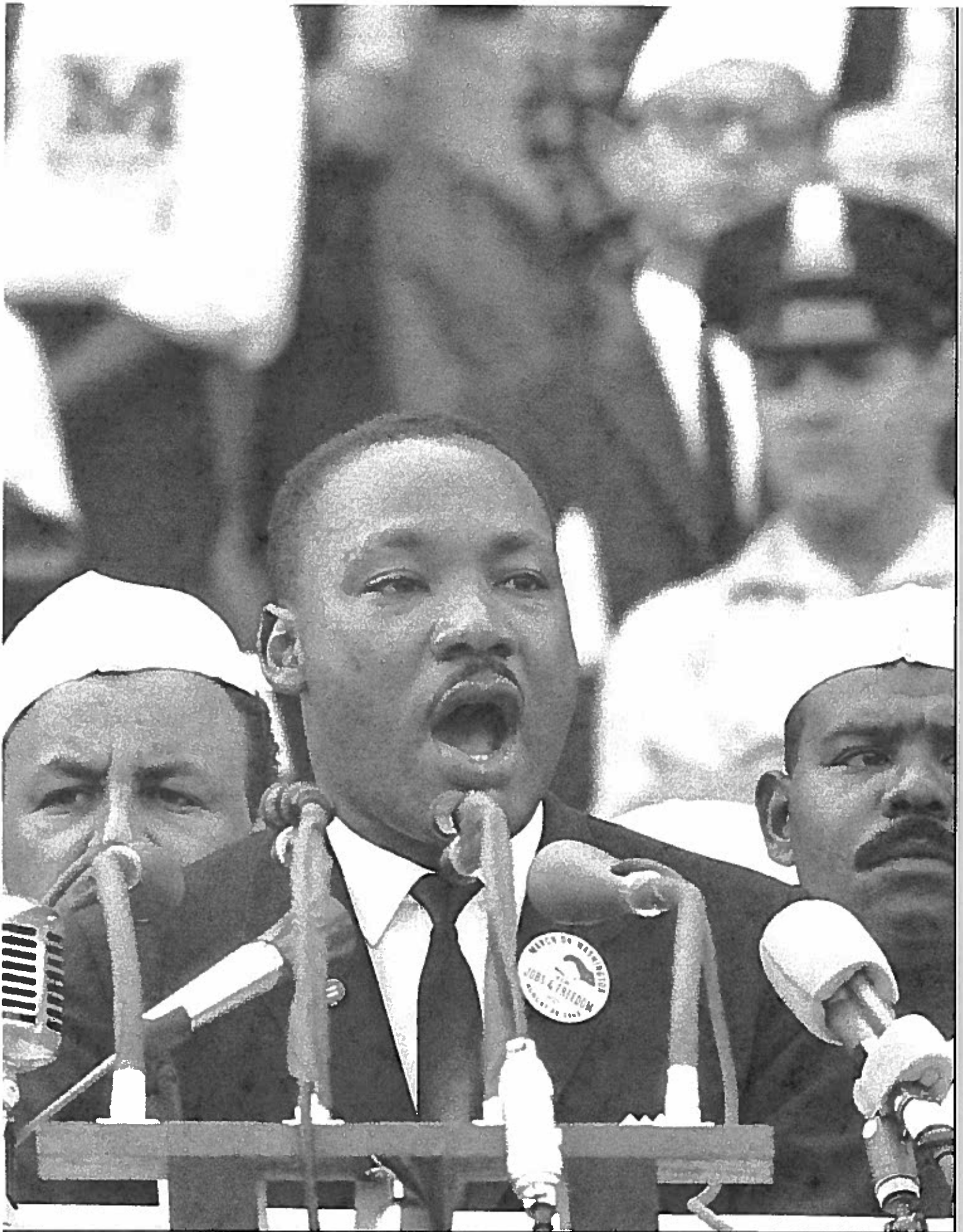
A ARGUMENT

Reread lines 8–13. What evidence does King provide to support the claim that "the Negro still is not free"? Is the evidence relevant and credible? Explain.

default (dī-fôlt') *v.* to fail to keep a promise, especially a promise to repay a loan

1. **five score:** 100; *score* means "twenty." (This phrasing recalls the beginning of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: "Four score and seven years ago...")
2. **Emancipation Proclamation:** a document signed by President Lincoln in 1863, during the Civil War, declaring that all slaves in states still at war with the Union were free.
3. **promissory** (prŏm'ĭ-sŏr'ē) **note:** a written promise to repay a loan.

August 28, 1963: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his speech at the Lincoln Memorial during the March on Washington, D.C.





More than 200,000 marchers gather on the mall between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. To the right, civil rights leaders march with King.

the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce
 30 urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism.⁴ Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy; now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice; now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood; now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children. It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's **legitimate** discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. **B**

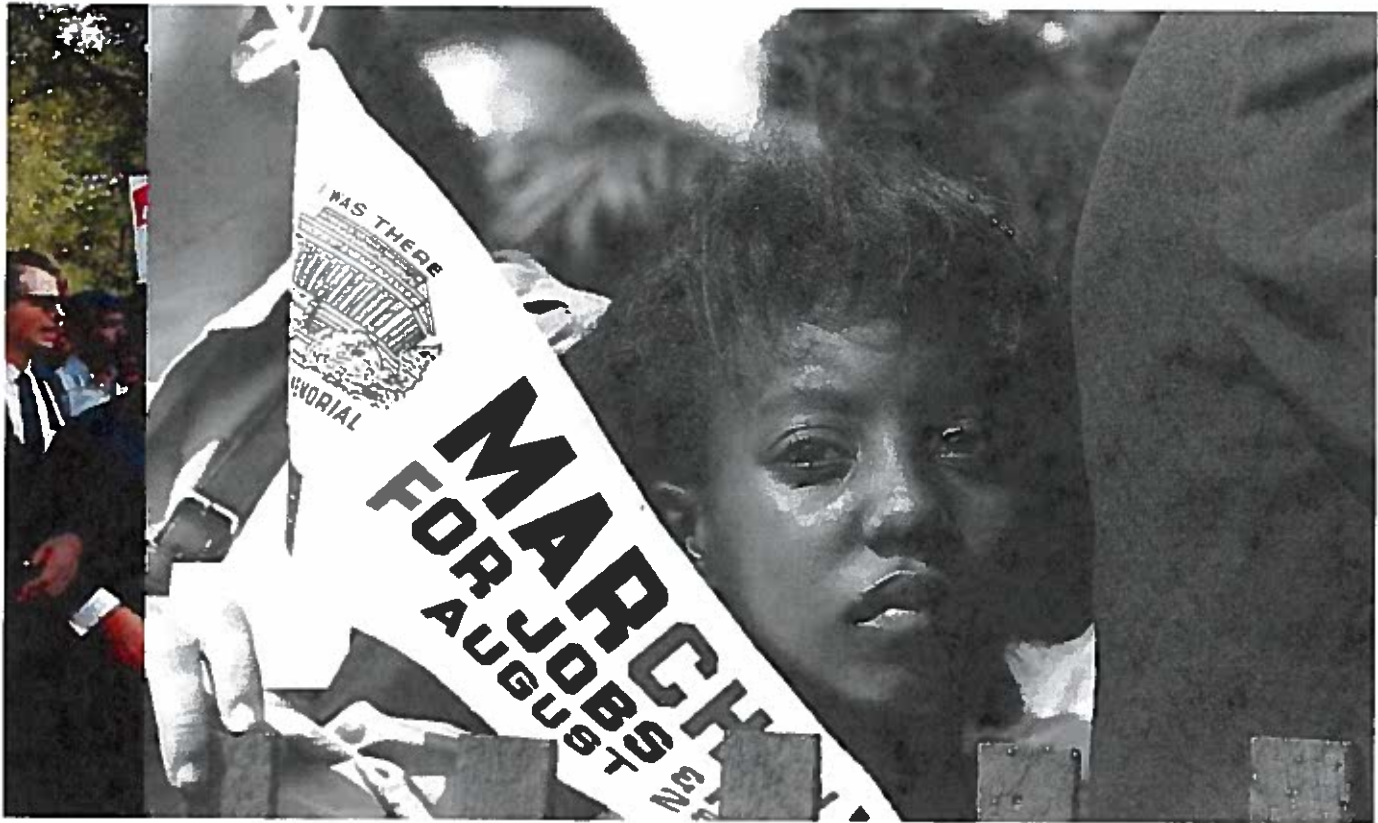
Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope
 40 that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

legitimate (lə-jī't'ə-mī't)
adj. justifiable; reasonable

B RHETORICAL DEVICES

Reread lines 29–38. What rhetorical device does King use, and what is the effect of using it?

4. **gradualism**: a policy of seeking to reach a goal slowly, in gradual stages.



A young woman participates in the demonstration.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the worn threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plain of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protests to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new **militancy**, which has engulfed the Negro community, must not lead us to a distrust of all white people. For many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is **inextricably** bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality; we can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities; we cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one; we can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of

▲ Analyze Visuals

What do these photographs suggest about King's effectiveness as an orator and a leader? Explain.

militancy (mīl'ĭ-tənt-sē)
n. the act of aggressively supporting a political or social cause

inextricably
(ĭn-ĕk'strĭ-kə-blē) *adv.*
in a way impossible to untangle

their dignity by signs stating For Whites Only; we cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No! No, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until “justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a
70 mighty stream.” **C**

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.⁵ Go back to Mississippi. Go back to Alabama. Go back to South Carolina. 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
80 valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. 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 have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. 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
90 justice. 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. **D**

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day down in Alabama—with its vicious racists, with its Governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification⁶—one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and
100 mountain shall be made low. The rough places will be plain and the crooked places will be made straight, “and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” **E**

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will

5. **unearned suffering is redemptive:** undeserved suffering is a way of earning freedom or salvation.

6. **Governor . . . nullification:** Rejecting a federal order to desegregate the University of Alabama, Governor George Wallace claimed that the principle of nullification (a state’s alleged right to refuse a federal law) allowed him to resist federal “interposition,” or interference, in state affairs.

C ARGUMENT

Identify the examples of racial injustice that King provides as strong, relevant, and credible evidence to convince his audience to share his views.

D RHETORICAL DEVICES

Reread lines 71–92. What examples of parallel grammatical structures help make the expression of ideas memorable?

COMMON CORE RI.9

E SEMINAL U.S. DOCUMENTS

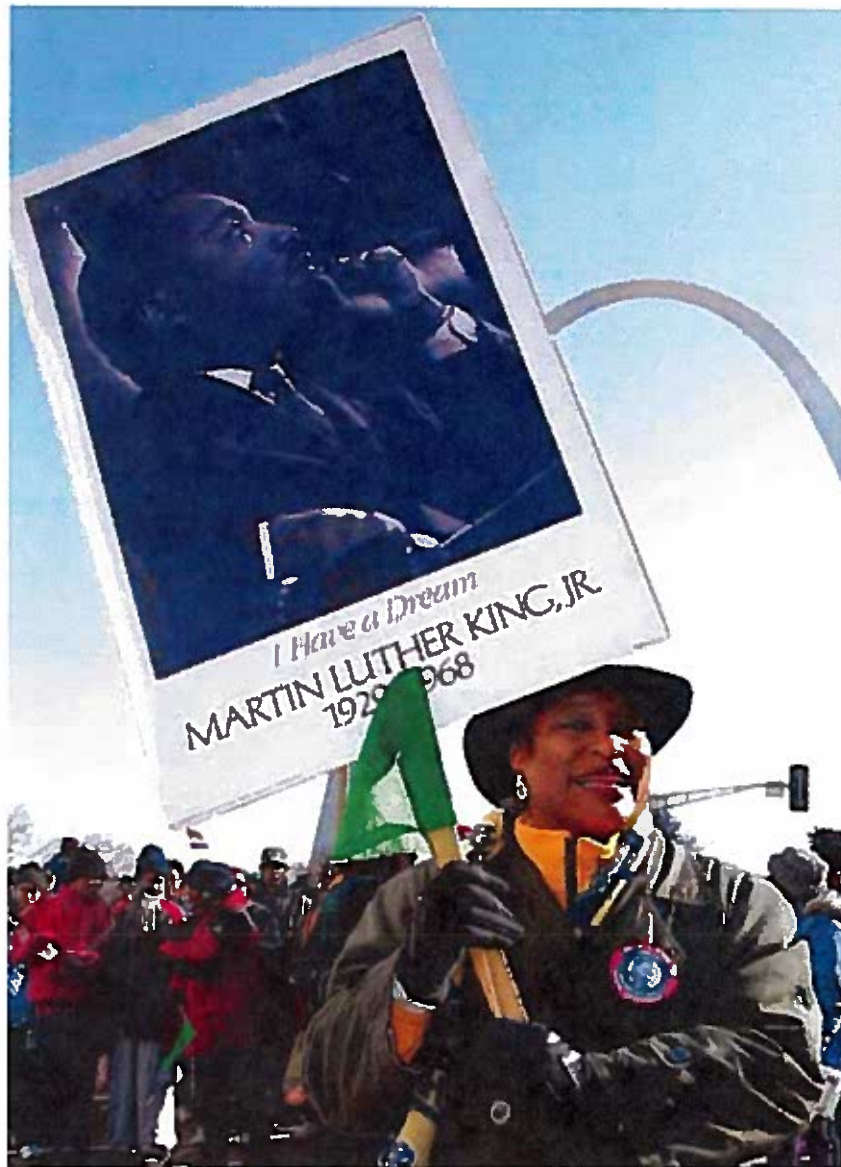
Lines 81–102 of Dr. King’s speech include his most familiar and stirring words in support of civil rights, emphasizing repeatedly that the dream of justice and equality can be realized for all Americans. Why do you think these lines establish Dr. King’s speech as a significant text in American history?

be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. And this will be the day. This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrims' pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

110
120 And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire; let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York; let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania; let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado; let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that. Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia; let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee; let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. "From every mountainside, let freedom ring."

130
140 And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children—black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics—will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last." ∞



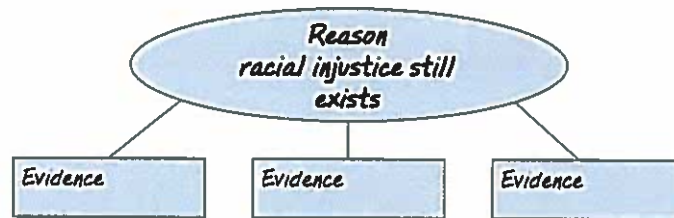
January 20, 2003: Marchers in St. Louis celebrate King's birthday, a national holiday.

Comprehension

1. **Recall** What examples of racial injustice does King describe?
2. **Clarify** What does King predict will happen if justice is denied African Americans?
3. **Summarize** What is King's dream?

Text Analysis

- 4. **Analyze the Argument** On a graphic organizer like the one shown, list at least three examples of racial injustice that King uses as effective support for his claim that African Americans are not free.



- 5. **Understand Rhetorical Devices** Review the chart you created as you read. Then identify an example of repetition or parallelism and explain its effect.
- 6. **Understand an Analogy** Reread lines 14–28. In these paragraphs, King uses an analogy to compare a familiar object—a promissory note—to something abstract—the promise of equal rights. What does King mean when he says that America has given African Americans a “bad check”? Explain your answer.
- 7. **Evaluate an Allusion** Reread lines 81–85. An allusion is an indirect reference, within a work, to something that the audience or reader is expected to know. As King begins to explain his vision, he alludes to the Declaration of Independence, quoting its famous lines. How effective is this allusion? Support your evaluation.

READING-WRITING CONNECTION

WRITING PROMPT

Extended Constructed Response: Analysis
How would you account for the extraordinary acclaim King's speech has received, not only when it was first delivered but many years later? Write a three-to-five-paragraph analysis of the effectiveness of King's address. Consider both the strength of its logic and its emotional power.

REVISING TIP

Review your analysis. Did you state the qualities that make the speech memorable? Did you provide relevant examples from the speech?

Can a DREAM change the world?

How can you turn a dream for change into a reality?

COMMON CORE

RI 6 Analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance a point of view or purpose. RI 8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and claims in a text. RI 9 Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical significance. W 9b (RI 9) Draw evidence from informational texts; analyze U.S. seminal documents.

Vocabulary in Context

▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Answer the questions to show your understanding of the vocabulary words.

1. Which would be more **momentous**—the birth of a baby or the first snow of the season in upstate New York?
2. If you **default** on a loan, do you sign up to borrow money or fail to make a payment?
3. If your teacher judges your doctor's note to be **legitimate**, would you be sent to the principal's office or allowed to miss gym?
4. Who would be more likely to support a course of **militancy**—a person starting a new job or a person unfairly denied an opportunity to work?
5. Which items are more likely to be **inextricably** linked—the products on a shelf at a grocery store, or the necklaces kept in a dresser drawer?

WORD LIST

default
inextricably
legitimate
militancy
momentous

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING

• coherent • differentiate • evident • relevant • technique

The **technique**, or rhetorical device, of repetition is **evident** in Dr. King's speech. Using the technique of repetition, write a paragraph or two on a topic you care about, such as the environment or education. Use at least one Academic Vocabulary word in your writing.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: ANALOGIES

Recall that an **analogy** is a comparison between two things that are alike in some way. Writers often use analogies to explain a complicated idea or describe the appearance or function of an object. Here is another analogy from King's speech:

Five score years ago, a great American . . . signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves. . . . (lines 3–5)

In this instance, King is saying that the Emancipation Proclamation was like a beacon—the proclamation spread hope much as a beacon spreads light.

PRACTICE Identify the analogy in each of the following sentences by noting what two things are being compared. Then produce your own analogy by comparing the first thing to something else.

1. Reading a poem is like opening an oyster; you may find a pearl within.
2. The Internet works like a system of roads, transporting information at different speeds depending on the traffic and each road's "speed limit."
3. In the NASA photograph, the distant moon looks like a half-peeled potato.

COMMON CORE

L 5a Interpret figures of speech in context.

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