

I HAVE A DREAM - EXERCISES

Figures of Speech

Certain rhetorical devices called **FIGURES OF SPEECH** are used in both poetry and prose to make ideas more memorable and forceful. For centuries speakers and writers have known that such well said devices affect listeners and readers in powerful ways.

Alliteration - repetition of a sound, normally a consonant, at the beginning of neighbouring words, to produce a rhythmic effect. (*Around the rugged rock the ragged rascal ran*)

Allusion - the direct or indirect reference to something/somebody the reader or listener is supposed to recognize (e.g. historical events, literature, Bible...)

Anaphora - repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of a sentence, verse or paragraph. (*I have a dream... I have a dream...*)

Metaphor - comparison between two things (without using the words 'as' or 'like') which are basically quite unlike. (*There's daggers in men's smiles*, Macbeth)

Simile - also a comparison, but while a metaphor says that something is like something else, a simile says that something is like something else, and uses the words 'like' or 'as' to draw that comparison. (*the storm had blown itself out like a candle*)

1. 'Five score years ago,' the opening phrase of King's speech, is an **ALLUSION** to what or whom? Why was this an appropriate and strong way for King to begin his speech?
2. King's speech contains other **ALLUSIONS** in addition to the one with which he opens his speech. Find an allusion to the Declaration of Independence and the Bible.
3. Find an example of **ALLITERATION** in King's speech.
4. Find an example of a **METAPHOR**.
5. Find an example of a **SIMILE**.
6. In the second paragraph, King says that "the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination." These words bring up strong **IMAGES OF SLAVERY**. Why would this be an effective method of moving his audience?
7. Besides the famous "I have a dream" phrase, find two other examples of **ANAPHORAS**.
8. List at least two possible effects upon King's audience of repeating the phrase, "I have a dream."
9. Nearly every line of King's speech is filled with powerful images, or "**MENTAL PICTURES**," many created by using figures of speech. Images help audiences to feel what speakers/writers want them to feel, help them remember what they have read or heard, and help them understand difficult material. Write a well-developed paragraph telling which of King's images you find most powerful and appealing and explain why this image had meaning for you.

Relating to the Dream

1. What is your definition of **RACISM**?
2. The **CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT** was met with much opposition, from Southern governors and other elected officials to cross-burning members of the Ku Klux Klan. Unfortunately, Civil Rights opponents sometimes turned to violence against black leaders and members of the black community.
 - o Why do you think extreme right-wing organizations such as the Klan would chose violence as a means to fight against the civil rights movement, even though their actions enraged the rest of the country and gained sympathy for the cause of Southern blacks?
 - o Why do you think the black community withstood such violent attacks without responding with their own violent retaliations?
3. Today's "**SKINHEADS**" share the same radical right-wing philosophies and views supporting white supremacy and segregation of the races that had been held by Hitler during World War II and the Klan during the civil rights movement. Do you think today's skinheads are dangerous? Why or why not?
4. King was assassinated for his work in civil rights. A **QUOTATION FROM THE BIBLE** on the memorial at his gravesite reads, "Behold the dreamer. Let us slay him, and we will see what will become of his dream." What do you think has become of King's dream? Write two paragraphs: one telling in what ways the dream has been fulfilled and one telling what yet remains to be accomplished.

