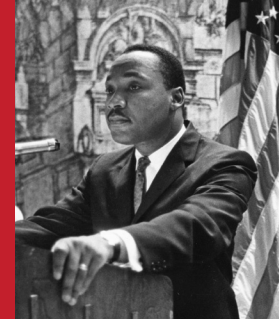


**Audio Recording:**

# **DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

Address to the New York State Civil War Centennial Commission

September 12, 1962



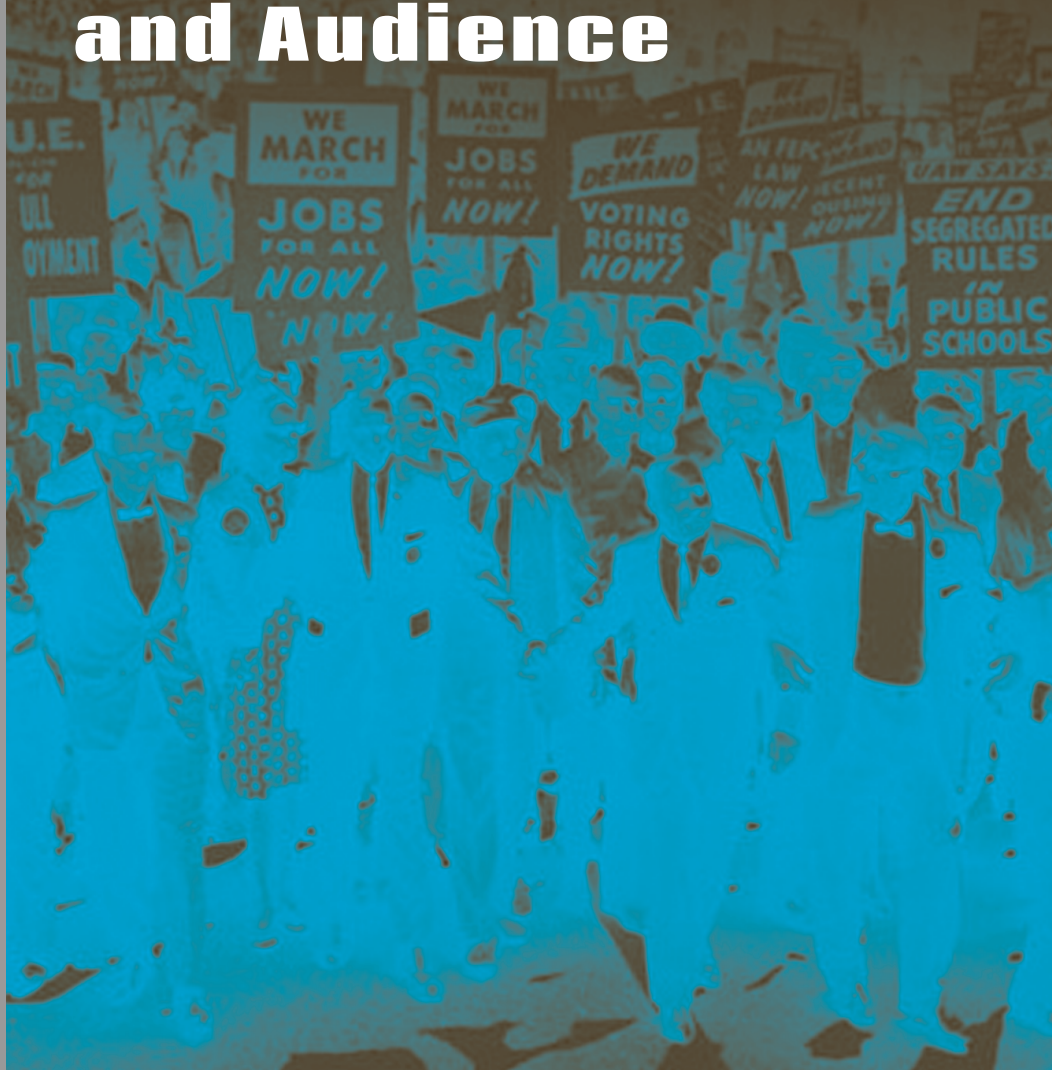
## **EXERCISE 3**

# **Understanding Historical Context and Audience**

## **Teacher's Guide**

**Grades 8–12**

This curriculum is aligned  
with the New York State P-12  
Learning Standards



March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom,  
Martin Luther King, Jr. and Joachim Prinz  
pictured, 1963

Repository: American Jewish Historical Society

# EXERCISE 3

## Understanding Historical Context and Audience

### OBJECTIVE

Students will examine different influences in the speaker's background and time period, which also shaped the perspective and ideas given in the text. Students will also identify how a speaker relates to his or her audience, and examine the ways in which the speaker specifically communicates to them.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Please see Teacher's Guide introduction for historical background and the following article from the New York Archives Magazine:

[https://considerthesource.s3.amazonaws.com/8617/0611/8741/The\\_Incomplete\\_Celebration.pdf](https://considerthesource.s3.amazonaws.com/8617/0611/8741/The_Incomplete_Celebration.pdf)

### LEARNING STANDARDS

#### NEW YORK STATE NEXT GENERATION ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS:

<https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/nys-next-generation-ela-standards.pdf>

#### Reading Anchor Standard 3:

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

#### Reading Anchor Standard 6:

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text, drawing on a wide range of global and diverse texts..

#### New York State Social Studies Framework, Grade 8

<https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/ss-framework-k-8a2.pdf>

#### 8.9 DOMESTIC POLITICS & REFORM:

The Civil Rights movement and the Great Society were attempts by people and the government to address major social, legal, economic, and environmental problems. Subsequent economic recession called for a new economic program. (Standards: 1, 4, 5; Themes: TCC, SOC, CIV, ECO)

**8.9a** The Civil Rights movement began in the postwar era in response to the long-standing inequalities in American society, and eventually brought about equality under the law, but slower progress on economic improvements.

Students will compare and contrast the strategies used by civil rights activists, such as Thurgood Marshall, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

**Address of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., New York State Civil War Centennial Commission,** Park Sheraton Hotel, New York City, Wednesday Evening, September 12, 1962.

- ✓ Audio Recording
- ✓ Transcript
- ✓ Event Program for *State Civil War Centennial Commission*
- ✓ Teacher-selected graphic organizers for close reading and summary

Downloadable source materials for versions of this speech can be found on our website:

<https://www.nysm.nysed.gov/address-new-york-state-civil-war-centennial-commission/typewritten-speech>

Event Program for State Civil War Centennial Commission: <https://digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov/index.php/Detail/objects/41096>

## WARM-UP

Students will read the Event Program in which the speech was given. Students will highlight three important details from the program that indicate audience and aid in understanding the speech.

Asking the following questions will aid students:

“Who was at this dinner and why was the event held?”

“Why was Dr. King asked to speak at this dinner?”

“What was Dr. King’s background? What prepared him to be a successful orator?”

## INSTRUCTION/DEMONSTRATION OF SKILL

Discuss the importance of audience and historical context in understanding the meaning and purpose of a text.

## GUIDED PRACTICE

Students will listen to the audio recording and read along with the official transcript for the first three paragraphs of the speech and highlight anything which indicates either the speaker’s background or audience. The teacher may pause the audio recording at any time to discuss verbal clues. Students will be asked to describe the speaker’s mood and tone.

## INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Students will progress through the remainder of the speech, listening to the audio as they read along with the official transcript and pointing out any clues that reveal Dr. King’s personal background, time, place, or audience. Students will extrapolate the speech’s purpose and the speaker’s intention. Students will also examine chronological events or themes as stated by Dr. King, and will examine how the audience shaped his words. Students should know that they are searching for clues revealing historical context and the author’s perspective.

## ASSESSMENT

Students write an argumentative essay in which they discuss the influence of audience, historical context, and personal background of the author of the text.

Ask the following questions to help assess comprehension:

“What did Dr. King get in return for speaking that night?”

“What were his goals in giving the address?”

“Can you hear where Dr. King is speaking generally to Northerners or New Yorkers? Can you hear where Dr. King is speaking specifically to Governor Rockefeller and President Kennedy?”

“Point out where Dr. King reveals events or information which reference his era.”

