



LOW HANGING FRUIT

Honoring Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

By Allison Floyd

Monday, Jan. 17, is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and there are a number of ways you can mark the occasion in your classroom.



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, a federal holiday marking the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. (whose actual birthday falls on Jan. 15), is observed on the third Monday in January each year to honor his role as the chief spokesperson for nonviolent activism in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s, which strove to overturn laws discriminatory to African Americans because of their race (World Book Advanced).

Resources for incorporating Martin Luther King, Jr., the Civil Rights Movement, and Black history into your lessons abound. For example, you could have your class complete the Black History Month webquest available on World Book Student (<https://lili.org/dbs/world-book-student/>), lili.org's online encyclopedia for middle school students. To access this and other webquests, visit World Book Student, click on the Educator Tools menu on the upper right, and select Webquests from the menu on the left of the page you will be taken to. The Black History Month webquest is under the Social Studies/Government heading, beneath the Holidays and Celebrations Webquests subheading. Or, you could use this fun trick—hit the Ctrl and F keys at the same time and then type “Black history” in the search bar. Although Black History Month is in February, this webquest is topical to a lesson featuring Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement and a great way—as are all of the World Book webquests—to help students obtain experience and greater comfort with doing scholarly research and database searching. Even better, each webquest comes with a Teacher Page containing the answers!

For additional ideas, inspiration, and resources for incorporating Marth Luther King, Jr. Day into your lessons, see the sidebars to the right. As is evident from current events and the ongoing national conversation, the issues addressed by the Civil Rights Movement remain highly relevant today. As educators, we can do our part by helping to raise our students' awareness of the historic and ongoing struggle to secure and honor the rights of all of us.

LINKS TO MORE LEARNING



National Day of Service

MLK Day is a national day of service, and there are lots of ideas for students to volunteer as a class. A few are in this article, along with a bit of information about how volunteer projects support SEL skills, cooperation, teamwork, and more.

<https://www.weareteachers.com/best-volunteer-opportunities-for-kids/>

National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel

Visit the museum's website for programs, events, and learning opportunities.

<https://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/educators>

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



Explore the Interactive Exhibit at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture.

Visit <https://www.searchablemuseum.com/explore> to virtually explore a variety of exhibits at the museum covering African American history and culture. Students can explore independently or in groups. There are loads of resources for educators, as well.

DIGITAL TOOLS



Explora Secondary

Designed for use by high school students and beyond, this database offers a wealth of information via traditional article entries, but also video, primary source documents, and more. It boasts all the standard database features, including citation help, and the ability to print or email an article, just for starters. Check it out—and do a search for Martin Luther King, Jr.—here:

<https://lili.org/dbs/explora-secondary/>.



