

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**  
***I Have a Dream***

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# Sentence structure

“We cannot walk alone.”

This quote enhances the meaning of the speech for the listeners because it is a very short sentence in between two very long paragraphs and it stands out.

(King para. 10)

# parallelism

“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”

This quote enhances the speech for listeners by repeating “go back to”. When MLK jr repeated this in his speech to make his listeners feel

(King para.

# Punctuation

“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.”

When MLK jr ask a question in the middle of this quote it enhances his speech because it makes his listeners think about When they will ever be satisfied.

(King para. 13)

# Metaphor

“the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty”

Comparing an african americans life to a lonely island in this speech enhances it by painting the listeners a picture of what an african americans life was really like.

(King para. 3)

# Simile

"we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

This simile enhances the speech because it shows how much justice and righteousness MLK jr. wants.

(King para. 13)

# Analogy

“In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check... America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked “insufficient funds.”” (King para. 4)

By this, MLK is comparing the nation's capitol as a bank, and he is saying that the African Americans were expecting to get justice and freedom, but in return they got nothing, hence the “insufficient funds”.

This comparison could also be considered a metaphor as well.

# Signifying

"This note was a 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."" (King para. 4)

MLK says that whites AND blacks were suppose to be given all the same equal rights, but clearly the nation had broke their promise. And by MLK saying this, he is sort of considering them liars and making them look that way to the audience.



# Hyperbole

“I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight;” (King para. 18)

MLK exaggerates that everything will be fixed if African Americans get their justice.

This hyperbole could also be considered a metaphor.

# Understatement

“Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning.” (King para. 7)

When King said this phrase in his speech in 1963, he had no idea the impact that it would have on America. From that point in time, black people have gained so many rights, and now are as equal in America as white people are. For example, our president for the past two terms has been a black man, who had as good of a chance as a white man to run our country.

# Rhetorical Question

"When will you be satisfied?" (King para. 10)

MLK asks this question, not for anyone to answer it, but for African Americans in general to really think about it, and ask themselves when it is that they will be satisfied.

# Antonomasia

“But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free.” (King para. 3)

MLK uses “Negro” as a nickname for the African Americans.

# Irony

“This note was a 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.” (King para. 4)

MLK uses this statement to say that in our constitution it states that all men are created equal yet the African Americans were still not treated equal.

# Antithesis

“Nineteen sixty-three is not the end, but the beginning.” (King para. 7)

MLK uses this date to say its not the end, but the beginning for the African Americans.

# Anaphora

“I have a dream that...” (King para. 17-24)

MLK repeats “I have a dream that..” throughout the speech.

# Reversed Structure

“... we've come to cash this check, a check...”  
(King para. 5)

MLK uses reversed structure when ending a phrase with “check” and starting the next with “a check”.



# Bibliography

"Martin Luther King I Have a Dream Speech - American Rhetoric." *Martin Luther King I Have a Dream Speech - American Rhetoric*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Nov. 2013.