Read the “Directions” sheet for step-by-step instructions.

SUMMARY
In this activity, children and adults will review one or more composition by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., identify meaningful words and phrases, and create word art using the Wordle Web site.

WHY
This activity will help children develop vocabulary and critical reading skills by encouraging them to think carefully about the words Dr. King used in speeches and letters.

TIME
- 35-55 minutes, depending on interest and reading level of the child

RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP
This activity will work best for children in 1st through 4th grade.

CHALLENGE WORDS (definitions from ReadWriteThink)
- composition: a written, musical, or artistic product
- figurative language: a tool that authors use to help readers visualize what is happening in the story
- idiom: an expression that cannot be understood from the individual meanings of its elements, as in “kick the bucket” or “under the weather”
- metaphor: a comparison of two unlike things that suggests a similarity between the two items, as in “Love is a rose.” or “All the world’s a stage.”
- simile: a comparison using “like” or “as,” as in “She sings like an angel.”

GET READY
- Read Martin’s Big Words together. Martin’s Big Words is a biography of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. For tips on reading this book together, check out the Guided Reading Activity (http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/mlk/mlk_reading.pdf).

More information at http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/mlk.
Word Art with King’s Words

**Parent Guide, page 2 of 2**

- Read the Step Back in Time sheets.
- The Wordle Web site ([http://www.wordle.net/create](http://www.wordle.net/create)) is not a Smithsonian Web site. You may want to preview the site on your own before sharing it with your child.

**YOU NEED**

- Directions sheets *(attached)*
- Step Back in Time sheets *(attached)*
- List of Compositions sheets *(attached)*
- Coloring supplies (such as crayons, markers, or colored pencils)
- Computer with Internet and printer
Word Art with King’s Words

For adults and kids to follow together.

1. Take a quick look at the compositions described on the List of Compositions sheets. Pick one that you think is especially interesting or meaningful.

   Tip Beginning readers may simply review the quotes from Dr. King in the book Martin’s Big Words. The quotes in Martin’s Big Words are shorter and may be easier to read.

2. In the composition you’re looking at, circle words that you think are especially meaningful or important. Dr. King used figurative language to share his ideas with others. You might want to circle examples of Dr. King’s figurative language, for example:

   a. Does Dr. King repeat any word or phrase?

      Tip In many of Dr. King’s speeches, he used a kind of repetition in which he used a word or phrase more than once, and each time he repeated it, he looked at it in a different way or finished the sentence with a different ending.

   b. Does Dr. King mention opposites?

   c. Does Dr. King use idioms?

   d. Does Dr. King use metaphor or simile?

   Tip Advanced readers may want to look for a variety of other types of figurative language. Download ReadWriteThink’s Resource Page for more types of figurative language (http://readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson79/figresource.pdf).
Encourage advanced readers to review the full speech or letter online.

3. Go to http://www.wordle.net/create/. Enter the words or phrases that you circled in step 2 and hit the “create” button.

   **Tip** If you have a phrase or set of words that you want to include together, type in the ~ symbol (tilde) between those words. For example, if you want the words “I have a dream” to appear next to each other, enter “I~have~a~dream” in the Wordle box.

   For help using the Wordle Web site, watch the short tutorial video at (http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/v/worldetutorial.html).

4. Once you have created a Wordle with Dr. King’s words, adjust the layout and font until you like how it looks.

   **Tip** Using a thick font will make it easier to color the artwork in step seven. Consider using Vigo, Meolche, Grilled Cheese, Chunk 5, or Tank Lite.

5. Change your Wordle’s colors to White on Black, or “WB” in the color menu.

   **Tip** Although the Wordle program can automatically add colors to word art, children may get more meaning out of the activity by choosing colors on their own and coloring the art by hand, as described in step seven.

6. Print your Wordle.
7. Use crayons, markers, or colored pencils to add color to your Wordle. Think carefully about the colors you want to use:

- Are there words or phrases that make you think of a specific feeling? Does that feeling have a color for you? For example, the word “love” might make some people think of the color red.

- Color-code based on the type of word or phrase in the Wordle. For example, you could color all adjectives the color blue and nouns the color green, or you could color all of the positive words yellow and all of the negative words purple.

- Use the brightest or boldest colors to highlight some words and use darker colors for the rest of the words. For example, you could brightly color the words that mean the most to you and darkly color the others or brightly color the words that are most representative of Dr. King’s message and darkly color the others.

8. Share your Wordle with a friend or family member. Ask her what kinds of feelings she feels while looking at it. Talk about why you selected the words and colors. Also discuss Dr. King and the original document on which you based your Wordle.

**Tip** If you are doing this activity in a group where several children are working on separate Wordles, have children compare and contrast Wordles, especially if the children are working from the same historical document.

For more activities and information about *Martin’s Big Words* and Dr. King, visit [http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/mlk/](http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/mlk/).
Letter from the Birmingham Jail

April 16, 1963

While in jail, Dr. King wrote a letter explaining the value of a nonviolent movement and his suggested steps for creating one.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham.

You may well ask: “Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn’t negotiation a better path?” You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored.

Read the whole letter online at www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/letter-birmingham-city-jail-1

I Have a Dream speech

August 28, 1963

In 1963 about 250,000 Americans of all races joined together in Washington, D.C., to stand firm against racial injustice and to demand the passage of national civil rights laws. At the March on Washington, Dr. King proclaimed, “I have a dream,” speaking to the hopes of all Americans seeking racial harmony.
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 the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four 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.

Read the whole speech online at www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/i-have-dream-1

**Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech**

December 10, 1964

When Dr. King went to Oslo, Norway, to accept the Nobel Prize for Peace, he talked about why he believed in nonviolent protest and how he was representing many other people who wanted to improve the world through peaceful civic action.

After contemplation, I conclude that this award which I receive on behalf of that movement is profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral question of our time—the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression.
Civilization and violence are antithetical concepts. Negroes of the United States, following the people of India, have demonstrated that nonviolence is not sterile passivity, but a powerful moral force which makes for social transformation. Sooner or later all the people of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace, and thereby transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood.

Read the whole speech online at www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/nobel-prize-acceptance-speech

**I’ve Been to the Mountaintop Speech**

April 3, 1968

Dr. King’s last major speech, the day before his assassination, was in support of the sanitation workers strike in Memphis, Tennessee. In this speech, he gave a timeline of what had been accomplished during the nonviolent civil rights movement and encouraged his audience to continue to protest.

Now let me say as I move to my conclusion that we’ve got to give ourselves to this struggle until the end. Nothing would be more tragic than to stop at this point in Memphis. We’ve got to see it through. And when we have our march, you need to be there. If it means leaving work, if it means leaving school, be there. Be concerned about your brother. You may not be on strike, but either we go up together or we go down together. Let us develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness.

Read the whole speech online at www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/ive-been-mountaintop

Other compositions and recordings are available online at The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute at Stanford University (http://kingpapers.org/).
In 1955, African Americans in Montgomery, Alabama, organized to demand equal treatment with whites on city buses. They chose as their leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a pastor at a church in the community. Dr. King had studied the lives of leaders who made changes through nonviolent protests. Like Mohandas Gandhi, who helped India gain independence from Great Britain without using violence, King believed that the moral power of nonviolence was the strongest force for social changes.

Dr. King used powerful speeches to lead others in marches, boycotts, and other forms of peaceful demonstrations. Nonviolent demonstrators often met with violence and were sometimes arrested for their protests. When these demonstrations were reported in the news, more people learned about the problems of other citizens and began to pay attention to how the demonstrators felt.

Dr. King fought against many kinds of injustice. He believed that all people had the right to go to good schools, get fair treatment at their jobs, and be able to use all public places like buses and restaurants.

Many of the injustices Dr. King protested against were considered customs in the communities where he worked. Many people in the governments of those communities
communities benefited from these customs and made laws supporting them, so Dr. King and his followers couldn’t just work with the local governments to make changes. Instead, Dr. King led nonviolent demonstrations and met with members of Congress, U.S. presidents and other national leaders, to talk about problems that needed to be solved.

**Important Dates**

- In 1963 about 250,000 Americans of all races came together in Washington, D.C., to protest against racial injustice and to demand strong national civil rights laws. At the March on Washington, Dr. King declared, “I have a dream,” appealing to the hopes of all Americans seeking racial harmony.

- In 1964, Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in the nonviolent civil rights movement.

- In 1968, while he was working on a protest in Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. King was killed by a man who disagreed with his words and actions.

*custom:* unwritten law  
*demonstration:* public display of group feelings toward a person or cause  
*demonstrator:* person who is part of a demonstration (see above)  
*harmony:* balanced and peaceful relationship  
*injustice:* unfair act  
*nonviolence:* a philosophy or strategy for change that opposes the use of violence  
*protest:* public demonstration of disapproval
Read the “Parent Guide” and “Directions” sheets for step-by-step instructions.

OBJECTIVES
Students will be better able to:

■ Make judgments while reading.
■ Communicate ideas and information through colors and words.
■ Describe Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his message to others.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
■ Selects logical words or phrases from the written document.
■ Follows instructions within the Wordle Web site.
■ Uses colors to communicate ideas or information.
■ Defends word choices in the context of historical information or linguistic analysis.

STANDARDS
NCHS History Standards
K-4 Historical Thinking Standards
4B: Obtain historical data.

K-4 Historical Content Standards
4C: The student understands historic figures who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy.

4D: The student understands events that celebrate and exemplify fundamental values and principles of American democracy.

IRA/NCTE Language Arts Standards
1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

**21st-Century Skills**

*Learning and Innovation Skills*
- Creativity and Innovation

*Information, Media, and Technology Skills*
- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- ICT (Information, Communications, and Technology) Literacy

**National Educational Technology Standards for Students (NETS.S)**

1A: Create original works as a means of personal or group expression

6A: Understand and use technology systems