

**Social Science Department**  
**Grades 6-12**  
*The Power of Protest*

**Part I: Protests on the National Level**

1. Read Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's speech, "I Have a Dream." While reading, think about the following questions:

- What issues is King's speech addressing?
- What technique is King using to appeal to his audience? How does he convey his message?"

Current issues surrounding civil rights can be seen in today's society which can include race relations, immigration and women's rights. Think about the following question:

- How do you think King would react to the civil rights issues seen today?"

2. **Attached are several articles that explore various current civil rights issues. Choose a speech that resonates (or has a deep meaning) with you and reflect upon these questions (remember you can change the reading level of the article to what you are most comfortable with):**

- How is this issue similar or different from the issue King addressed in his "I have a dream" speech?
- What would he say about this issue today? Use evidence from his speech to support your answer.
- How would King's message be perceived today in context of this civil rights issue if the speech was given today?

3. **Extension: Pick one of the issues from the Text Set and write the opening 100 words of the speech.**

**Part II: Protests in our Local Community**

Last week, there were protests in Brockton, which you may have seen pictures of. Some were peaceful, some not as peaceful. Mayor Sullivan also held a press conference with the superintendent, police, and social justice groups. You may have seen it on the news, or social media, or maybe were even a part of it. Either way, you are living through a monumental historical event like the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

There is a saying “A Picture is Worth 1000 words”. This means that we can learn a great deal of information just from looking at a picture, even with no explanation. This second assignment option revolves around events transpiring in Brockton from the past week and involves community leaders, students, family members, that you may know and see in these pictures.

**1. Choose 3 pictures from these [protest pictures](#) and answer the following questions about each:**

- What is happening in the picture? What do you see?
- What is the first thing you notice in the picture? Why do you think this is what you saw first?
- How does this picture make you feel? In your opinion, what are the people in the picture feeling? Explain.
- What can you learn about the protests from looking at this picture?

**2. Extension option:** Write a journal entry about how these local protests make you feel and anything you think you will remember about this moment in history year from now.

**Hint:** Write your journal entry to your future self and describe what you know about the protests, the Black Lives Matter Movement, and anything else you’d like to remember in the future.

## Famous Speeches: Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream"

By Original speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on 09.01.18

Word Count 1,778

Level MAX



On Aug. 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, addresses marchers during his "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. (AP Photo/File)

*Editor's Note: In a speech which is now widely regarded as one of the greatest in American history, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. addressed more than 200,000 civil rights supporters during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, a massive rally held in support of civil and economic rights for black Americans. The march was a seminal moment for the civil rights movement and is often credited by historians as being critical to the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In the speech, King opens with a reference to President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and continues to describe the rights that black Americans were still not entitled to, 100 years later.*

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the

Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land.

So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. 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. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check — a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children. It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality.

Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today,

have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone. As we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back.

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. We can never be satisfied, as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "For Whites Only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. 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, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. 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 slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little 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.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring." And if America is to be a great nation this must become true.

So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania! Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado! Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California! But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia! Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee! Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

*© 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; © renewed 1991 Coretta Scott King*

# Detroit teachers call in sick over crumbling schools, poor pay

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 01.25.16

Word Count 717

Level 910L



Western International High School teacher Debrah Baskin, 53, and other teachers from Detroit schools protest outside the Cobo Center only hours before President Barack Obama's visit to the auto show, Jan. 20, 2016. Todd McInturf/Detroit News via AP

More than 85 of Detroit, Michigan's 100 public schools were closed Wednesday as teachers staged a sickout. A sickout is a form of protest in which many employees call in sick at the same time. Teachers are allowed a certain number of sick days each year.

The teachers said they were protesting overcrowded classrooms and crumbling buildings.

Teachers say they are fed up with working in schools that are not fit for them or their students. Classrooms are plagued by rats, cockroaches and mold. Ceilings are full of holes and classrooms are often unheated even on cold days. Teachers say they do not have textbooks or other supplies they need to teach. On top of everything else they have not had a raise in 10 years.

"We felt it was time to take a stand. No more. Enough is enough," said teacher Marietta Elliott. "We need better working environments for our students to be educated in. We need supplies to be able to adequately educate them." Teachers also want fair pay for the work they do, she added.

### **Protest Closed Most Schools**

Ann Mitchell runs a local teachers group, the Detroit Federation of Teachers. She said that some Detroit teachers have 45 kids in a class. A class that size is around two times the national average.

Wednesday's teacher sickout was the largest in a series of sickouts this month. It was the second to close most of the schools in the 46,000-student system.

Elliott said the protest was planned by a group called Detroit Public School Teachers Fight Back.

One of the teachers' key demands is a return to local control over the school system. For the last six years, Detroit's public schools have been under the control of a series of state emergency managers.

Outside managers were brought in by the state government because the city's school system was said to be failing. Teachers claim they have done nothing to help.

### **"From Bad To Worse"**

Every year and with each new emergency manager, "things have just gone from bad to worse," said Mitchell. "The schools are just totally neglected."

The schools' current emergency manager is Darnell Earley. He has been criticized for his previous term as emergency manager of Flint, Michigan, from 2013 until January 2015. It was during that period that Flint began using the Flint River as its drinking water source. The result of that move was elevated lead levels in drinking water and a public health crisis.

Earley claims he was not to blame for Flint's crisis. He says the decision to switch water sources was made before he took over in Flint.

Teachers were angered by comments Earley made after a Jan. 11 sickout that closed 64 schools. Earley claimed the tactic is unfair and unprincipled because teachers are depriving students of a school day to win something for themselves.

### **Governor, Mayor Respond**

Hearing Earley call the sickouts unfair was just too much to take, said teacher Vanessa Dawson. Just look at what "he's done in Flint and the condition of our schools," she said.

Dawson admitted the sickout was extreme, but said it was absolutely necessary. "At this point someone had to hear what we were saying."

The teachers' Jan. 11 sickout drew national media attention and responses from state and local lawmakers. Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan toured several schools and declared that conditions in some of them "break your heart." The mayor said city officials will inspect every building by April.



Duggan also set up a way for parents, teachers and students to report unsafe and unhealthy conditions in schools.

State lawmakers are working on ways to help solve the Detroit school system's problems. Next week new state legislation will be introduced which, if it passes, would split the school district into two. The current school system would be in charge of paying off debt. At the same time a new district would actually operate the schools. It would be run by a school board whose members would be appointed by the governor and the mayor.

During his State of the State address Tuesday night, Governor Rick Snyder urged lawmakers to act quickly to help fix schools. "The Detroit Public Schools are in a crisis," he said. "Too many schools are failing at their central task."

## Lewis mixes old-school past, social media in new type of civil disobedience

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 06.28.16

Word Count 703

Level 840L



Representatives Elizabeth Esty and John Lewis occupy the House floor during a sit in. Rep. Esty/Twitter

John Lewis has been staging sit-ins for a long time. The lawmaker from Georgia was once a young leader in the civil rights movement.

Lewis was head of a student group that aimed to win equal rights for African-Americans. In Alabama, he marched from Selma to Montgomery for equal rights.

At age 76, Lewis is educating young people about making change. Lewis uses platforms that young people understand, including websites and comic books.

Lewis' Twitter and Facebook pages are filled with pictures of civil rights leaders. Lewis worked with Martin Luther King Jr. and others more than 50 years ago. Lewis's websites are very popular.

Along with each photo, Lewis often adds the words "good trouble."

### **Sitting In Protest, Wearing Rainbow Ribbons**

Lewis said he was getting into good trouble on Wednesday. Lewis and nearly 100 other Democratic lawmakers held a sit-in at the U.S. House of Representatives. Led by Lewis, the lawmakers sat shoulder to shoulder for 16 hours on the House floor. The protesters wore rainbow ribbons for the 49 victims of the mass shooting in Orlando, Florida. After the shooting, Democratic lawmakers called for tougher gun laws. The protesters said they would sit until the House voted on new laws. The group expanded with each hour and they broadcasted themselves live on the internet.

Lewis began the sit-in with a rousing speech.

"There comes a time when you have to say something, when you have to make a little noise," Lewis said. "The time to act is now."

Lewis said the sit-in made him feel like he was reliving his life.

The event appeared to end early Thursday morning. The House of Representatives voted to go home until after the July Fourth holiday. The House is made up of mostly Republican lawmakers who do not think gun laws should be tougher. Some Democratic lawmakers were still on the House floor early Thursday. They vowed to keep fighting for tougher gun laws in the United States.

### **A Time-Honored Tradition To Bring About Change**

Lewis thanked his fellow protesters for getting into good trouble.

The words "good trouble" spread rapidly on Twitter during the sit-in. People praised the way Lewis blended new technology with nonviolent protest. Sit-ins are a peaceful political tactic that are an important part of American history.

Lewis has been getting into "good trouble" for a long time.

Growing up in Alabama, Lewis would ask his parents about signs that said bathrooms and drinking fountains were for "whites only." Lewis's parents said that was just the way it was. They told him not to get into trouble.

However, Lewis also listened to what civil rights leaders had to say.

### **Inspired by Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks**

Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks inspired Lewis to get into good trouble. Lewis said he hopes young people will get into good trouble, to make the world a better place.

The 1958 comic book "Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story" inspired Lewis when he was young.

In 2013, Lewis published his own comic book. It was 50 years after the March on Washington, D.C. Dr. King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, and Lewis was the youngest speaker.

Lewis' book is titled "March: Book One," and it opens with the March on Washington. The book chronicles the death in Mississippi of teenager Emmett Till, lunch counter sit-ins, and church bombings through Lewis' eyes.

Lewis hopes the comic book will help young children understand what the civil rights movement was like and what people tried to do.

### **There Is Still Work To Be Done**

Last year, Lewis attended Comic-Con to support "March: Book Two." Many people dressed as comic characters in capes and masks. Lewis wore a trench coat and backpack. He was dressed as himself in 1965, the year he led 600 marchers peacefully to Selma, Alabama.

At Comic-Con, Lewis led a group of excited third-graders in a march across the floor. He said that it was a very special moment.

On Thursday, Lewis said the lawmakers had made some progress at their sit-in, but had to keep on fighting. Lewis said it took marchers three times to make it from Selma to Montgomery.

# Fans take offense, player goes on defense after gesture during anthem

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 09.01.16

Word Count **592**

Level **980L**



San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick runs with the football during the first half of an NFL preseason game against the Green Bay Packers in Santa Clara, California, August 26, 2016. AP Photo/Tony Avelar

Football player Colin Kaepernick took a stand by refusing to stand as the national anthem played. The gesture brought support for the quarterback of the San Francisco 49ers even as it prompted protests by fans.

Angry fans burned their Kaepernick jerseys Saturday after the quarterback made headlines for remaining seated during "The Star-Spangled Banner." The song played before the team's preseason game Friday night.

"He says he's oppressed making \$126 million," Shane White, who says he is a lifelong 49ers fan, wrote in a Facebook post. The post included video of him lighting a jersey on fire while the national anthem played. "Well, Colin, here's my salute to you," he said, sarcastically.

A fan who calls himself Nate3914 also burned a Kaepernick jersey and told the quarterback, "if you don't love our country, get out of it. You should never play another down in the NFL. Move to Canada." The NFL is the National Football League.

## "This Is Bigger Than Football"

Ian O'Connor works for the sports TV channel ESPN. He pointed out that Kaepernick broke no team or league rule by refusing to stand. The 28-year-old Kaepernick is biracial and was adopted and raised by white parents who embraced his background. Kaepernick, who sat back by the water coolers during the playing of the anthem, said he was well aware that people would react.

"I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color," Kaepernick told NFL Media's Steve Wyche. "To me, this is bigger than football, and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street," he said. He was referring to the concerns about black people being shot by police. Lately, news about these shootings has been highlighted in the news and by activist groups like Black Lives Matter. People who support the Black Lives Matter movement believe that some police and courts treat black people unfairly.

Kaepernick's team spoke of the symbolism of the anthem while also pointing out Kaepernick's right to protest. The team said it was in keeping with "such American principles as freedom of religion and freedom of expression." His coach, Chip Kelly, also supported his right to express himself.

### Players Not Required To Stand

The NFL, in a statement, said that players are "encouraged but not required" to stand for the anthem. O'Connor, among others, defended Kaepernick, writing: "This is what American servicemen and women have defended."

"As long as he's not interfering with his teammates' right to make their own red, white and blue choices, what's the problem here?" O'Connor said.

Responses on social media were mixed.

Anquan Boldin used to be a teammate of Kaepernick's. Boldin's cousin was shot to death by a police officer last year, but Boldin still stood for the anthem as a member of the Detroit Lions on Saturday night. He told the Detroit Free-Press newspaper that he supported Kaepernick's right to make the statement.

### Kaepernick Isn't Asking First

"I'm sure he's going to get flak for it, what he did," Boldin said, "but that's the great thing about being in America, you have that option."

Kaepernick noted that he had not asked for approval. NFL.com's Mike Garafolo points out that Kaepernick did the same thing in the previous preseason games.

"This is not something that I am going to run by anybody," Kaepernick told Wyche. "I am not looking for approval. I have to stand up for people that are oppressed."

# Martin Luther King Jr.'s Last March: The Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike

By National Archives, adapted by Newsela staff on 01.13.17

Word Count **637**

Level **890L**



U.S. National Guard troops block off Beale Street in Memphis, Tennessee, as civil rights marchers wearing placards saying "I AM A MAN" pass by on March 29, 1968. It was the third consecutive march held by the group in as many days. Martin Luther King Jr., who had left town after the first march, would soon return and be assassinated. Photo: Bettmann Collection/Getty Images.

**Martin Luther King Jr. was one of the great leaders of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.**

King and his followers fought for equal rights and fair treatment for all Americans. Their protests included marches of thousands of people. They also organized people to stop going to certain businesses or using services like buses. They wanted the law changed.

King waged a nonviolent war against racism. He and his followers fought against unequal treatment from police, mayors, governors and other citizens. There were two great victories. One was the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made discrimination against the law. The other was the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This made it against the law to do things to stop people from voting.

**King believed in nonviolent action**

King always believed in nonviolent action. But, this was put to the test while helping city workers in Memphis, Tennessee. This was King's final civil rights fight before his death.

During a heavy rainstorm in Memphis on February 1, 1968, two black city workers were crushed to death by their garbage truck. On the same day, 22 black workers were sent home because of bad weather. They went without pay while their white bosses received their pay. About two weeks later, more than 1,100 black city workers began a strike. They stopped working because they wanted job safety, better pay and more rights. Memphis Mayor Henry Loeb did not want to give in to most of the workers' demands.

As the strike lengthened, support for the strikers within the black community of Memphis grew. King was invited to join the fight by the Reverend James Lawson, who was helping the strikers.

### **A promise to lead peaceful protests**

King was already involved in other civil rights battles around the country. Still, he agreed to lend his support to the Memphis city workers. King spoke at a rally there on March 18, where he promised to lead peaceful protests.

Unfortunately, a demonstration on March 28 turned sour. A group of rowdy students used the signs they carried to break windows of businesses. People began stealing from these businesses and the march was stopped. About 60 people were injured, and one 16-year-old African-American male was shot and killed by a policeman.

Mayor Loeb asked the government for help. Nearly 4,000 National Guard troops were sent to Memphis, but the following day over 200 striking workers continued their daily march. They carried signs through the streets that read, "I Am A Man."

### **"I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech**

The violence deeply distressed King and he continued talking with those involved to reach a peaceful end. On April 3, King gave his famous "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech. He told the striking workers, "We've got to give ourselves to this struggle until the end."

Plans for a peaceful demonstration grew stronger. On April 4, leaders for the strikers worked out with officials that the march would continue on April 8. But, later that evening, on April 4, 1968, King left his hotel and was assassinated. He was shot by a man named James Earl Ray.

### **The strike ended with better pay for black workers**

Radio announcements urged calm in Memphis. Mayor Loeb called in the state police and the National Guard. Everyone was ordered to be indoors by 7 p.m. Black and white ministers pleaded with Loeb to meet the workers' demands. The mayor said no. President Lyndon Johnson sent his Undersecretary of Labor, James Reynolds, to help end the strike.

On April 8, about 42,000 people marched through Memphis in honor of King. They were led by Coretta Scott King, King's wife who also fought for civil rights. On April 16, the Memphis City Council agreed to more rights and better pay for black workers.



# White House chooses not to comment on Women's March in Washington

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 01.24.17

Word Count **645**

Level **870L**



Organizers estimated that a half-million people attended the Women's March on Washington, D.C. Other large women's marches were held in Boston, Massachusetts, Chicago, Illinois, New York City and other U.S. cities, as well as in international cities. Photo by: Amanda Voisard for The Washington Post.

**Their voices could be heard from the White House lawn. And their pink, yellow and white signs could be seen from the driveway.**

Half a million people participated in the Women's March on Saturday, which was President Donald Trump's first day on the job. They gathered to voice their unhappiness that Trump is president.

The slow-moving masses of protesters got as close as they could to the White House. But those inside did not seem to be paying much attention to them.

## **Trump's First Day As President**

President Trump and his team went about their first full day in the White House. They were getting to know their new workplace. Workers began slowly moving into offices. Technicians helped activate phones and computers.

The president went to a morning prayer service. Later, he met with CIA leaders and spoke to 400 who work there. The CIA is the United States' spy agency.

Trump also talked on the phone with the leaders of Canada and Mexico. Trump's team finalized his first meeting with British Prime Minister Theresa May at the White House. He also plans to meet with Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto at the end of the month.

### **Remaining Silent About The March**

Still, Trump and his press team did not publicly talk about the protests that were happening during his first day on the job.

"A fantastic day and evening in Washington D.C.," Trump wrote on Twitter on Saturday morning. He was referring to his inauguration and the parties on Friday.

On Sunday morning, Trump wrote on Twitter, "Peaceful protests are a hallmark of our democracy. Even if I don't always agree, I recognize the rights of people to express their views."

The first days for any new president are a mix of trying to move in and learn many new things. But the Trump family's first days and the protests are an odd mix.

"Family bowling session at The White House," Donald Trump Jr., tweeted in the morning. He added a video of his wife in the White House bowling alley. Trump Jr. and his wife do not work in the White House, but were there visiting.

The video appeared to have been shot on Friday. But it was posted at the same time as the largest demonstration in Washington in years was taking place.

### **Demonstration Was The Largest In Years**

Inside the White House grounds, the driveway outside the West Wing was quiet. Yet beyond the gates, the protest was in full swing. The marchers were moving slowly around the grounds, getting as close as they possibly could. They held signs aimed at Trump's inappropriate comments about women. The comments came out while Trump was running for president.

Trump left the White House grounds twice in his motorcade. His car passed directly by the protesters.

The protest's larger-than-expected crowds dominated the news as the day continued. The White House said Press Secretary Sean Spicer would make a statement. The press secretary's job is to talk to reporters for President Trump.

### **Spicer Scolds The Press**

But, Spicer didn't talk about the protests. Instead, he attacked journalists for "false reporting" from the day before. It was incorrectly reported that Trump had removed a small statue of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. from his office. Trump had moved it to a different part of the room.

Spicer also scolded reporters for their coverage of Trump's inauguration. Spicer said that journalists said the size of the crowd was smaller than it really was. He said they did it on purpose. They wanted to make Trump look bad. He also said journalists were trying to write fake news stories about the new president.

Spicer then gave a recap of Trump's day and left. He did not answer the shouted questions from reporters about the marchers who were still outside the White House.

# The 1977 disability rights protest that broke records and changed laws

By Atlas Obscura, adapted by Newsela staff on 04.02.18

Word Count **1,004**

Level **810L**



Image 1. Sit-in demonstrators Karen Emerson and Chris Brewer of San Francisco, California, rejoice after hearing the news that rights regulations for the disabled had been signed on April 28, 1977, in Washington, D.C. They were among the 125 protesters who occupied the regional HEW office in San Francisco over demands that HEW Secretary Joseph Califano sign the regulations. Photo by: JP/AP

**Before 1977, it was much harder to be a person with a disability in the United States.**

"At that time in history, there was simply no access — no right to an education, no public transit. You couldn't get into a library or city hall, much less a courtroom," says Corbett Joan O'Toole. She is a disability rights activist who fought for fairer treatment of people with disabilities.

Curbs were often blocked, so wheelchairs could not get into them. Hardly any buildings had ramps to get in, or wider stalls for restrooms.

People with disabilities were tired of this unfair treatment.

## Seeking Change For People With Disabilities

On April 5, 1977, adults, teenagers, and parents of all backgrounds were ready to protest in San Francisco. Most of the people in the crowd had disabilities. They were deaf, blind, using wheelchairs, or living with disabled arms or legs. More groups protested in other cities across the United States that morning.

Each group was gathering at a Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) office in their city. HEW was a part of the government that was supposed to protect the safety and well-being of Americans.

### Protesters Stage Sit-In At Federal Agency's Office

In San Francisco, protesters marched past security guards at the HEW office. More than 100 protesters began what became known as the 504 Sit-In. They stayed and slept there for about 26 days.



In 1973, a law had been passed called the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. One part of it was Section 504. This section said that no one with a disability could be excluded from "any program or activity" paid for by the government. It was supposed to give more rights to people with disabilities. However, this law was not being followed fully. To be confirmed, it needed a signature from HEW leader Joseph Califano. Disability rights activists decided to push Califano to sign.

Protesting can be uncomfortable and long. It was even harder for protesters with disabilities at San Francisco's 504 Sit-In. Many had never spent time away from home.

### Group Members Support Each Other

Inside the HEW offices, some people needed space for wheelchairs. Deaf protestors needed people to give messages to them in sign language. Others needed helpers to lift and turn them when sleeping and sitting. Protesters risked their health to achieve their goals, explains Dr. Catherine Kudlick, a professor of history at San Francisco State University.

O'Toole said that people with disabilities are used to the type of cooperation that happened in this protest. They already faced hardships every day.

About 120 protesters moved into the building. They covered a window air-conditioning unit with a plastic sheet. This worked as a refrigerator for the medicines they needed. They used pay phones to communicate with loved ones and news reporters outside. They had meetings each day.



This resourcefulness was key to the protest's success, O'Toole said.

Protesters played cards to pass the time. Women took turns washing each other's hair in bathroom sinks.

### **Oakland's Black Panther Party Helps Group**

Local groups donated food and beds.

Oakland's Black Panther Party was also a big help. They cooked and carried hot meals across the bay to San Francisco every single day to protestors. The Panthers had fought for civil rights of African-Americans. Their support showed how important the protest was to many different groups.

Of about 120 protesters, 22 were selected to go to Washington, D.C. They wanted to meet with Califano.

### **Protesters Hold Their Ground In San Francisco**

Government agents were guarding the San Francisco building. They hoped to push out the protesters. The agents mistakenly believed that with 22 protestors gone, they could scare out the remaining protesters. They said there was a bomb there, but there wasn't.

The protesters didn't scare. The San Francisco protesters were focused on holding the building. With every day they stayed in the building, the news reported more about them. This increased the pressure on Califano to sign the law.

### **Other Group Members Push Lawmakers In D.C.**

In D.C., the protesters spoke to lawmakers in Congress. News reporters were there. One of the occupation co-organizers, Judy Heumann, gave an emotional speech. She warned that more buildings would be overtaken if the needs of people with disabilities were not met.

Later, the group followed President Jimmy Carter to his church. They also followed Califano. He finally signed Section 504 on April 28, 1977.

Under 504, nondiscrimination became a legal right. It meant people with disabilities had to be treated fairly. Within months, changes took place.

### **New Law Aids People With Disabilities**

Cities created curb cuts from street to sidewalk, so wheelchairs could access them. Government buildings installed ramps and wider restroom stalls. As a result of 504, a new era of accessibility began. It led to the

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990. This law gave even more rights and protections to people with disabilities.





protesting. Protesters gathered in small groups in Africa and in swelling masses in European capitals.

In London, England, thousands marched by the Houses of Parliament. Some held signs saying "Winter is NOT coming" and "I'm taking time out of my lessons to teach you."

Martha Lickman is a 13-year-old from London. She held a sign that read "Oceans are rising and so are we."

Martha said teens are helping the environment by eating less meat and using less plastic. "It's still on the government to do something," she said.

### **Can Leaders Be Pressured To Make Changes?**

Outside Washington, D.C., students at Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, Maryland, walked out of class. They prepared to meet other protesters near the Capitol building. At the Capitol, members of Congress who help make laws could see them.

Maddie Graham, age 16, gripped a megaphone. She shouted with hundreds of her classmates:

"Whose future?!"

"Our future!"

The protests had monumental turnout that stretched across every continent. Still, it remains unclear whether the high-profile demonstrations can change the global forces contributing to climate change. Can elected leaders be pressured to make the difficult choices necessary to halt the world's warming? This kind of change is exactly what those behind Friday's marches have demanded. This includes a swift shift away from fossil fuels toward clean energy. It also includes halting deforestation, protecting the world's oceans and embracing more sustainable agriculture.



The strikes came three days before world leaders were set to gather at the United Nations (U.N.) on September 23. The leaders from many countries will be at a much-anticipated climate summit, or meeting. António Guterres is a top leader at the U.N. Guterres has insisted countries there promise to have zero carbon emissions by 2050. Carbon is created by the burning of fossil fuels.

### **Forget The Fancy Speeches**

The promises from other countries could include reduced government spending for fossil fuels. Oil and coal are examples of fossil fuels. It also could mean no more coal-fired power plants.

"I told leaders not to come with fancy speeches, but with concrete commitments," Guterres said.



The U.N. summit will be an important test for the world. Many countries signed the Paris climate agreement in 2015. This meeting will show if the countries can actually follow through on slashing carbon emissions as fast as scientists say is needed. Scientists want to avoid the worst effects of climate change.

The Paris agreement was signed by nearly all of the world's countries in France. They aimed to fight global warming by cutting carbon emissions. Fossil fuels are burned for energy. Too much of them can cause the atmosphere to trap heat. This causes global temperatures to rise.

A dark shadow over the proceedings will be the increasing pressure from a generation of youth. They are demanding that leaders take the problem more seriously. The youth want more quick action.

### **Teen Activist Calls For Real Action**

Among the largest of the protests was likely the one in New York City. It was led by 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg. She testified before U.S. Congress last week that nations must take unheard of actions to cut their carbon emissions in the next 10 years.

"I don't want you to listen to me," Greta said to American lawmakers as part of her message. She said they should pay attention to facts found from studies about the climate. "I want you to listen to the scientists. And I want you to unite behind the science. And then I want you to take real action."

In Moscow, Russia, Arshak Makichyan is a 24-year-old violinist. He says seeing Greta made a difference for him.

"I thought climate change was just science, but Greta had the right words to explain," Makichyan said. He said everyone should be concerned.

Russia ranks as the world's fourth-largest producer of greenhouse gases. The top three are China, the U.S and India.

Russia's government didn't allow Makichyan to hold a group demonstration. So he staged a oneman protest instead.

## Primary Source: Images of the protests in Boston, 1770-1774

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Image 1. This is an image of a man being tarred and feathered. Photo from: The Library of Congress.

*Editor's Note: Many major events surrounding the American Revolution occurred in Boston, Massachusetts. At the time, Boston was the capital of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, serving as the political and economic center for the colony.*

### Tarred and Feathered

American colonists were growing increasingly unhappy with Great Britain's tax acts and policies on the colonies. Some colonists began to target tax collectors with violence and abuse. One method of abuse was "tarring and feathering." In this kind of attack, a person would be covered in hot tar and feathers, then they would be publicly shamed. The victim pictured in this engraving was Boston Commissioner of Customs, John Malcolm, who was tarred and feathered twice.

## The Boston Massacre

This engraving based off of the work of artist Henry Pelham. However, Paul Revere published this image in the



newspapers, where it received more attention. The Boston Massacre occurred on March 5, 1770. It began when a mob of colonists fought against one British soldier in the street. Tensions between the mob and British soldiers escalated until several colonists were shot and killed by the British. This depiction is biased towards the colonists. However, it was important for encouraging other colonists to rebel against the British. This engraving portrays several real victims of the massacre, including Crispus Attucks in the lower left side. Crispus was an African American merchant. He had escaped from slavery two decades before the Massacre.

## The Boston Tea Party

The Boston Harbor was an important trade and transportation port for Great Britain. The Sons of Liberty was a secret group of rebels in the American colonies. They wanted to remove British rule in the colonies. On December 16, 1773, the Sons of Liberty staged a protest against tea policies. This became known as the Boston Tea Party. The Tea Act of 1773 told colonists that they could only purchase tea from the East India Tea Company. At this time, that company was owned by the British. In their protest, the Sons of Liberty disguised themselves as Native Americans and destroyed chests of British East India Company tea, dumping them into the Boston Harbor.



*Americans throwing the cargoes of the Tea Ships into the River,  
at Boston*























