

What is Your Life's Blueprint?

Martin Luther King Jr.

Primary Source Document

Student Name: _____

ELA Teacher: _____

Directions: Read the following speech given by Dr. King on October 26, 1967. As you read, answer the questions provided within the text. Be certain to complete the follow-up activity for our next class!

"I want to ask you a question, and that is: What is your life's blueprint? Whenever a building is constructed, you usually have an architect who draws a blueprint, and that blueprint serves as the pattern, as the guide, and a building is not well erected without a good, solid blueprint."

- **Why does a blueprint have value?**

"Now each of you is in the process of building the structure of your lives, and the question is whether you have a proper, a solid and a sound blueprint. I want to suggest some of the things that should begin your life's blueprint. Number one in your life's blueprint should be a deep belief in your own dignity, your worth and your own somebodiness. Don't allow anybody to make you feel that you're nobody. Always feel that you count. Always feel that you have worth, and always feel that your life has ultimate significance."

- **Evaluate his assertion that self-belief is an important first step in a solid life blueprint. Agree or disagree? Why?**

"Secondly, in your life's blueprint you must have, as the basic principle, the determination to achieve excellence in your various fields of endeavor. You're going to be deciding as the days, as the years, unfold what you will do in life-- what your life's work will be. Set out to do it well."

- **How have you seen determination lead to success? Give a specific example.**

"And I say to you, my young friends, doors are opening to you- doors of opportunities that were not open to your mothers and your fathers- and the great challenge facing you is to be ready to face these doors as they open."

- **What doors are open to you that may not have been open to generations before you?**
- **Why might it be difficult to face these doors?**

"Ralph Waldo Emerson, the great essayist, said in a lecture in 1871. *'If a man can write a better book or preach a better sermon or make a better mousetrap than his neighbor, even if he builds his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to his door.'*"

- **What does this quote mean to you?**

“This hasn’t always been true- but it will become increasingly true- and so I would urge you to study hard, to burn the midnight oil; I would say to you, don’t drop out of school. I understand all the sociological reasons, but I urge you that in spite of your economic plight, in spite of the situation that you’re forced to live in- stay in school.”

- **What are some reasons a *gifted student* might drop out of school?**

“And when you discover what you will be in your life, set out to do it as if God Almighty called you at this particular moment in history to do it. Don’t just set out to do a good job. Set out to do such a good job that the living, the dead or the unborn couldn’t do it any better.”

- **List three people who could be characterized as having lived his/her life this way.**

“If it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep streets like Michelangelo painted pictures, sweep streets like Beethoven composed music, sweep streets like Leontyne Price sings before the Metropolitan Opera. Sweep streets like Shakespeare wrote poetry. Sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will have to pause and say: Here lived a great street sweeper who swept his job well.

If you can’t be a pine at the top of the hill, be a shrub in the valley. Be the best little shrub on the side of the hill. Be a bush if you can’t be a tree. If you can’t be a highway, just be a trail. If you can’t be a sun, be a star. For it isn’t by size that you win or fail. Be the best of whatever you are.”

- **Analyze MLK, Jr.’s use of metaphor. Besides a blueprint, what other comparisons might also be useful in considering planning for the future?**

REQUIRED EXTENSION:

Create a blueprint for your life; this blueprint may be in the form of a written response, vlog, blog, diagram, image, song, or some other physical product. Consider more than just career and/or education as you consider the steps needed to achieve “what your life’s work will be!” Make sure to include personal information from **Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence** strengths and how those will support or help your work. Include any of **Sandra Kaplan’s Habits of a Scholar** that will be necessary for your growth and goals. Additional points will be awarded for consideration of **Lawrence Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development** and your personal decision making growth.