

Your dream speech

Read what Elimane says about this activity

This lesson develops students' listening skills, provokes thinking about social justice and provides an opportunity to practice the use of similes as well as the future simple tense to articulate dreams, aspirations, and predictions.

Stage 1: Warm Up

Write the following words on the board: Dream, Freedom, Equality, Justice, Resistance. Ask students to work in small groups to discuss what these words mean and give an example of a historical figure or event to show these concepts.
Elicit answers from the class.
If possible, show a picture of Dr. Martin Luther King and ask the class if they know who he is and what he did.

Stage 2: Comprehension Phase (Listening Comprehension)

If you can, play the following excerpt from the "I Have a Dream" speech on an audio device: <https://youtu.be/qHc3FY9il1s>
If you can't play the track, read the speech out to them yourself.
The excerpt you need starts from where he says, "I am happy to join..." until he finishes with "we are free at last."

Instruction: Students listen to the excerpt for a general understanding. Indicate whether the following statements are True (T) or False (F).

A. Write the statements up on the board before you start the speech.

1. The speaker expresses satisfaction with the current state of the nation. ____ (false)
2. He mentions that all men are created equal. ____ (true)
3. He dreams that his children will be judged by the color of their skin. ____ (false)
4. He uses the image of a "mountain of despair" to talk about hope. ____ (true)
5. He only mentions the Northern states of the United States. ____ (false) ____

B. Second Listening: Synonyms and Antonyms - 5 minutes

Instruction: Listen to the excerpt a second time. Find the following in the speech:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| a) An antonym for 'Inequality' | (equality) |
| b) A synonym for 'Overheating' | (sweltering) |
| c) An antonym for 'Despair' | (hope) |
| d) A synonym for 'Fight / Effort' | (struggle) |
| e) A synonym for 'Slavery' | (servitude) |

Stage 3: Idiomatic Language

Write these sentences from the speech on the board:

1. "This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope..."
2. "It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity."
3. "...little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters in trouble."

Elicit the meaning of each.

Elicit how a simile works (comparing one thing to another)

Write these sentences on the board and ask students to discuss in pairs how they might complete them:

The silence in the room was as quiet as _____.

After the long walk, my feet were as heavy as _____.

The new song was like _____.

The news was welcomed like _____.

Stage 4: Idiomatic Writing

Elicit from the class what forms of injustice there are in the world today.

Ask each student to write two or three forms of injustice or unfairness.

Then ask each student to write a short speech on injustice, describing the situation and declaring what they wish for in the future.

They should try to use a simile either to describe the situation as it is now or the situation they hope for.

After the students have had time to write, they should verbally share their short speech with a small group.

Write on the board

"Which speeches did you find the most inspiring?"

Elicit answers and justifications from the class.

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