



Lapsits for Early Literacy Parent Tip Card  
Ages 9-11

***Martin's Big Words:  
The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.***

***written by Doreen Rapaport  
illustrated by Bryan Collier; Hyperion books, 2001***



**Note to Parents--**This biography is an overview of Dr. Martin Luther King's life. It tells his life in Dr. King's own words, movingly in passion and peace. Martin's Big Words is a "Read-Aloud-and-Grow-with-Me" Book.

There are many ideas here to discuss with your children. And as your children get older, the book will contain more and more to consider, share, and further explore.

**Sharing with 9 -11 Year Olds:** This book can be a springboard to many other books about the life of Dr. King. Plan for more questions as your child thinks about the issues involved. A good starting place for exploration is the Montgomery Bus Boycott because it is a concrete instance of injustice that most children can relate to. Video interviews with Rosa Parks and the people directly involved can be seen at [www.montgomeryboycott.com/frontpage.htm](http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/frontpage.htm). Seek additional answers in the library and on the web by looking under such topics as "Ku Klux Klan," "civil rights movement," "Bill of Rights," "NAACP," "Malcolm X," "school segregation," and "Medgar Evers."

Talk about the **Cover** and **Title Page**. Pay special attention to the **Notes Page**. Clarify background words such as "sit-in," or ideas like "fragility of being black." **Read** the book and answer questions.

Have your child tell you his ideas about Dr. King's life, the historical incidents, and the importance of words. Encourage his opinion. Then go back to the **Notes Page** clarifying what the author and artist say there. Does your child think that the author and artist met their goals?



On her website, [www.doreenrapaport.com](http://www.doreenrapaport.com), the author writes: "In 1965, I went to McComb, Mississippi, to teach at a freedom school. The experience changed my life. I met 'extraordinary ordinary' people— black Americans who had been deprived of rights that I took for granted, and who were threatened with death every day. Their courage inspired me. They were heroic. I knew there had to be many more 'unknown heroes,' people who helped change history. I set out to recover and write about this 'lost' history."



At [www.bryancoillier.com](http://www.bryancoillier.com), the artist says, "In my life and in my work I'm looking for the thread that connects all of us and I'm looking for that seed of individuality."

**Selected links:**

[www.thekingcenter.org](http://www.thekingcenter.org) --a timeline of **Dr. King's** life; an audio excerpt of a famous sermon, biographies, more

[www.education-world.com/a\\_lesson/lesson046.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson046.shtml)-- Family activities for grades Pre-K-12. Excellent multiple links about **Dr. King**.

[www.mahatma.com](http://www.mahatma.com)--official website for **Mahatma Gandhi** with a biography, timeline, speeches, quotations, photo gallery, and more

**Among many awards:** Caldecott Honor Book; Coretta Scott King Honor Book ; ALA (American Library Association) Notable Children's Book National Council of Teachers of English, Orbis Pictus Honor Book