

Civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. was murdered on April 4, 1968. Robert F. Kennedy, campaigning for the Democratic nomination for president, arrived in Indianapolis for a political rally among an urban, primarily African American crowd. His aides suggested that he cancel the appearance; he chose instead to make the announcement of the civil rights leader's death and then speak extemporaneously on the subject. [John F. Kennedy Library and Museum at <http://www.jfklibrary.org>]

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm only going to talk to you just for a minute or so this evening because I have some very sad news for all of you — could you lower those signs please? — I have some very sad news for all of you, and, I think, sad news for all of our fellow citizens, and people who love peace all over the world, and that is that Martin Luther King was shot and was killed tonight [screams from crowd].

Martin Luther King dedicated his life to love and to justice between fellow human beings. He died in the cause of that effort. In this difficult day, in this difficult time for the United States, it is perhaps well to ask what kind of a nation we are and what direction we want to move in. For those of you who are black — considering the evidence evidently is, that there were white people who were responsible — you can be filled with bitterness, and with hatred, and a desire for revenge. We can move in that direction as a country, in greater polarization — black people amongst blacks, and white amongst whites, filled with hatred toward one another.

Or we can make an effort, as Martin Luther King did, to understand, and to comprehend, and replace that violence, that stain of bloodshed that has spread across our land, with an effort to understand, compassion and love. For those of you who are black and are tempted to be filled with hatred and mistrust of the injustice of such an act, against all white people, I would only say that I can also feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a member of my family killed, but he was killed by a white man. But we have to make an effort in the United States, we have to make an effort to understand, to get beyond or go beyond these rather difficult times.

My favorite poet was Aeschylus. And he once wrote: “Even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God.”

What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence and lawlessness; but is love and wisdom, and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or whether they be black.

So I shall ask you tonight to return home, to say a prayer for the family of Martin Luther King, that's true, but more importantly, to say a prayer for our own country, which all of us love — a prayer for understanding and that compassion of which I spoke.

We can do well in this country. We will have difficult times; we've had difficult times in the past; and we will have difficult times in the future. It is not the end of violence; it is not the end of lawlessness; and it is not the end of disorder.

But the vast majority of white people and the vast majority of black people in this country want to live together, want to improve the quality of our life, and want justice for all human beings that abide in our land.

Dedicate ourselves to what the Greeks wrote so many years ago: to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world.

Let us dedicate ourselves to that, and say a prayer for our country and for our people.

Name: _____

Period: _____

On the flip side of this paper is the eulogy we listened to in class. On *this* side of the paper, please do the following for 25 points..

A. [10 points] Write 5 words from this eulogy (from the following paragraphs) which have a positive (good) connotation, and write the ideas those words connote:

[example: From paragraph 1: PLEASE; this word connotes manners and friendliness, because we use it when we are being polite.]

From paragraph 2: _____;

From paragraph 3: _____;

From paragraph 4: _____;

From paragraph 5: _____;

From paragraph 6: _____;

B. [15 points] In one paragraph, discuss what makes this speech an “ethical appeal.” That is, how is Kennedy trying to make the audience feel, so he can win them over? Be sure to cite textual evidence (but NO quotes, please).
