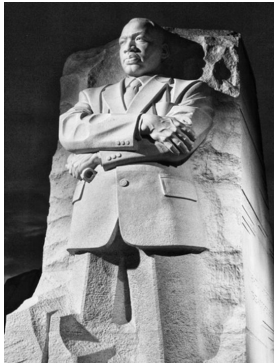


Years after King, race still divides: Your Say Interactive

USA TODAY 1:21 a.m. EST January 23, 2015

The best reader comments from the Web on what King would say today



(Photo: Kip Schmidt, Your Take)

In 1963, just five years before civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, the percentage of Americans who thought racism was the country's most important problem was its highest at 52%. Today, that percentage has risen again to the largest in more than 20 years, according to a Gallup Poll in December.

While attitudes on race have significantly improved in the 52 years since the March on Washington, the percentage of Americans who are satisfied with the state of race relations has dropped more in the past year than any other marker of national progress, according to a recent Gallup Poll. In 2014, more than half of the country (55%) was either very or somewhat satisfied with the state of race relations in America. This year, that percentage has dropped by 25 points (see graphic below for more details; for graphics on mobile go to the full site). Compare that with the percentage of Americans who are satisfied with health care (that ratio increased five percentage points over last year) or the nation's gun laws (that saw a two-point increase).

In digital age, a push for compassion



Social activist Krista Hazelwood on how words hurt, and on the importance, in this social media age, of teaching children compassion.

The recent deaths of young black men Eric Garner and Michael Brown at the hands of white police officers reflect racial tensions generally associated with the movement of 50 years ago. Those tragic deaths (along with others), have many wondering why, in terms of racial progress, the nation seems to be heading backward instead of forward.

We asked our readers on Twitter and Facebook to tell us how they would solve racial tensions in America and what they thought King would say today. Here are some of their answers in photos, videos and words, along with a glimpse of the national conversation. Take a look, then share your thoughts: What's impeding progress? What can improve race relations in the U.S.? What would King say today?

Politics, government play key role



Paul Whiteley Sr.
@PaulWhiteleySr

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[#mlkwordstoday](#)--Dr. King would address wide disparity between incomes of haves and have-nots, pervasive poverty, big money in politics.

3:23 PM - 19 Jan 2015



USA TODAY Opinion
@USATOpinion

21 Jan

What can the nation do to address racial tensions in America? Use [#tellusatoday](#). We may publish replies.



Mario Salinas
@MarioS2009

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[@USATOpinion](#) [@USATODAY](#) [#tellusatoday](#) Realize that the root of our inequality is not necessarily an ethnic one but an economical one.

3:04 PM - 21 Jan 2015



This photo makes Your Take contributor Deb Hearn think about how Martin Luther King Jr. "has gone to his heavenly home and is free. His legacy lives on." (Photo: Deb Hearn, Your Take)



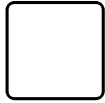
New VA Majority
@NewVAMajority

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@youtake Continue MLK's Poor People's Campaign-Keep college affordable 4 our generation! Virginia!!! #DebtFreeVA #mlkwordstoday

10:32 AM - 19 Jan 2015

1



USA TODAY Opinion wants to know ...

How big a role should government play in improving social and economic positions of minorities?

View Results

Major role

Minor role

No role

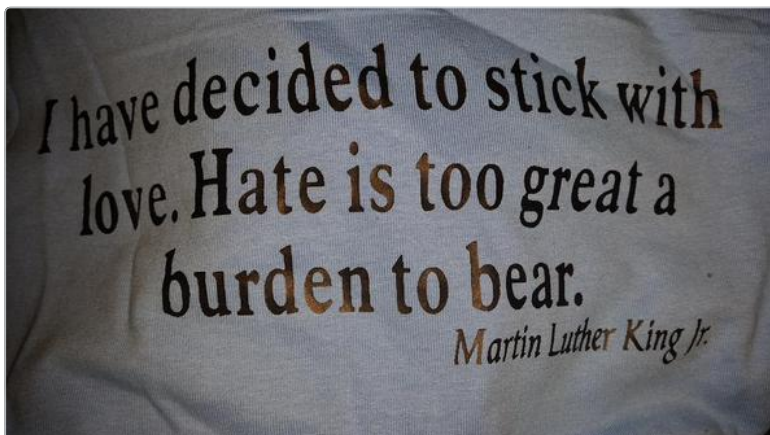


Make Your Own Poll!

TWEET

SHARE

A call for social change



Classie Dudley
@Classie_Dudley

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Something everybody should live by everyday #mlkwordstoday

1:20 PM - 19 Jan 2015

2

1



USA TODAY Opinion
@USATOpinion

19 Jan

In honor of MLK Day, we want to know: What do you think the leader would say today. Use [#mlkwordstoday](#) or [@yourtake](#) [usat.ly/1C4GgMH](#)



Heather FunkPalacios
@WondHerful

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[@USATOpinion](#) [@yourtake](#) I think he'd say :
forgiving is winning.
2:20 PM - 19 Jan 2015



Imani Brown [PB]
@IL_LUKEBROOKS_

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[#mlkwordstoday](#) "We have made lots of progress, but we still
have a long way to go"
8:42 PM - 19 Jan 2015

1



js (not Sykes-Picot)
@randomrid2

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[@USATODAY](#) [#mlkwordstoday](#) There is only one race, the
human race. [btwsociety.org](#) [#KingsThings](#) [#AlvedaKing](#)
11:49 AM - 19 Jan 2015

A new movement



USA TODAY Opinion
@USATOpinion

21 Jan

What can the nation do to address racial tensions in America?
Use [#tellusatoday](#). We may publish replies.



Bijan C. Bayne
@bijancbayne

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[@USATOpinion](#) [@USATODAY](#) Shift the semantics. Incorporate
terms such as "holocaust", "Southern terrorists", "patriotic",
"forced labor", "rape"
2:59 PM - 21 Jan 2015



Your Take
@yourtake

19 Jan

What do you think [#MLKJr](#) would say today? Tweet us with [#mlkwordstoday](#). pic.twitter.com/cyS1k9aAlq



abdullah pollard
@abdullahpollard

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[@yourtake](#) [@USATODAY](#) [#MLKJr](#) would say. Strange, that even without weapons, Blacks are considered to be a threat to humanity [#mlkwordstoday](#).

3:50 PM - 19 Jan 2015

1



David Schnettler
@13Schnettler

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We must not show our dismay through riots and aggressive behavior, but through peaceful means such as marches through town. [#mlkwordstoday](#)

1:11 PM - 19 Jan 2015

1



Your Take
@yourtake

19 Jan

What do you think [#MLKJr](#) would say today? Tweet us with [#mlkwordstoday](#). pic.twitter.com/cyS1k9aAlq



time is short
@marc_eagle

Follow

[@yourtake](#) [@USATODAY](#) why blame whites & cops, when 91% of blacks murdered last year were killed by other blacks? This is not my dream 4 us

9:33 AM - 19 Jan 2015



Your Take
@yourtake

19 Jan

What do you think #MLKjr would say today? Tweet us with #mlkwordstoday. pic.twitter.com/cyS1k9aAlq



Benjamin Tapper
@bjtapper

Follow

@yourtake @USATODAY The journey up the mountaintop was only the beginning. Our struggle against injustice continues.
#mlkwordstoday

9:42 AM - 19 Jan 2015 · Indianapolis, IN, United States

Your Assignment – Due Today:

Answer the question "In today's climate, what do you think King would say? What does this nation need to hear?" Clearly state what King's words would be and provide specific reasoning for them. Expectation is 1 page.

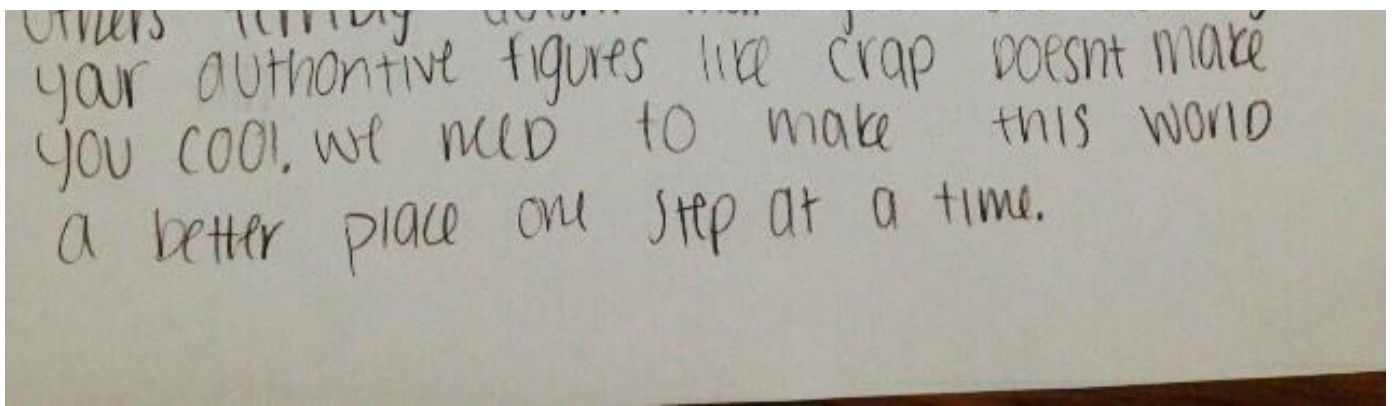
Extra Credit:

Post a response to these questions according to the USA today article on their website, facebook, twitter, etc. Forward me a copy of your posting at rubinb@zbths.org with your name attached.

Community Service:

Get your response posted on USA Today and you will receive 2 hours of community service.

In today's climate, I think Dr. King will say that he is disappointed because racism still happens everywhere. Not just for blacks, but for all races. This nation needs to hear that it doesn't matter what race or skin color you are, we're all people and we need to be treated equal. Bullying still goes on, too. Race is a factor of that as well. But what people need to hear is "treat people the way you want to be treated." No one wants to be harassed because of what they wear, how they talk, how they look, or how they act. Fairness needs to happen. Peace between "enemies" or "bad people." Treating others terribly doesn't make you cool. Treating



(<https://twitter.com/zeldaxvxc/status/557286266702544896/photo/1>)

Twitter | [@sxffell](https://twitter.com/sxffell) (<http://twitter.com/sxffell>)

paco taco on Twitter



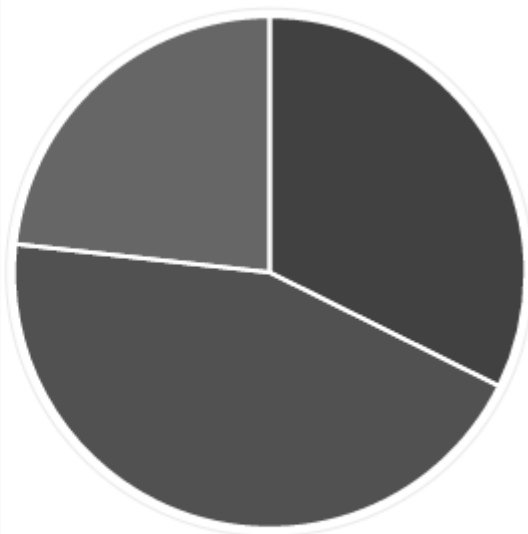
USA TODAY Your Take contributor Alaina R. Alexander of Mission, Kan., lists the three things she thinks Martin Luther King Jr. would address today.

Read or Share this story: <http://usat.ly/1BOvxK5>

FIX DISPARITY

More than half of blacks say government should play major role in improving minorities' social position.
Percentage of Americans who say:

- MAJOR ROLE
- MINOR ROLE
- NO ROLE



Gallup Poll
Eileen Rivers