“I Have a Dream”
Using the English Classroom to Learn about Discrimination in Japan

Lesson Plan by Keigo Shin
Introduction: Jazz chant “I have a Dream”

Black boy, white girl, brothers in the world
   I have a dream: color doesn’t matter

CHORUS
I have a dream
   No more discrimination
I have a dream
   Live in peace forever

White boy, yellow girl, friends in the world
   I have a dream: nation doesn’t matter

CHORUS
Yellow boy, black girl, family in the world
   I have a dream: money doesn’t matter

CHORUS
How much do you know about Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement? Try answering True or False with your partner.

(1) Martin Luther King Jr. was born in the USA.
(2) He was African-American.
(3) He campaigned for an end to racial segregation (the separation of whites and blacks) in the 1940s in the south.
(4) In the USA, African Americans were not discriminated against.
(5) “Racial discrimination” means “treating one group of people worse than another group of people, based on their national or ethnic origin or appearance.”
(6) “Negro” is an old word for “African-American”.
(7) The “Civil Rights Movement” was the fight for equal rights for women.
Introduce the topic

Today, we will learn about the speech of Martin Luther King Jr., “I have a Dream’”. King was a leader of the “civil rights movement” to fight for the equal rights of African-Americans. He gave this speech to oppose the segregation of African Americans in the ‘60’s in America. “Segregation” means that African-Americans had to live in different neighborhoods from Whites, were not allowed to go to the same schools as Whites, could not sit down in the front of busses, and could not even vote.
Sometimes White people attacked and even killed African-Americans, and the police would not protect the African-Americans. So many Black people were very angry. But MLK, Junior believed in “non-violence,” or fighting without violence. He said we shouldn’t attack each other, but should try and make a good relationship with each other.

The civil rights movement became bigger and more popular thanks to this speech. In it, King criticized how white people in the U.S. discriminated against African Americans just because of their skin color or African origins. His dream was that every American would be an equal member of society, and judged only by their efforts and character.
Discussion questions

(1) What problems does King talk about in this speech?
(2) King believed in “non-violence.” He was a pacifist, similar to Mahatma Gandhi. He encouraged African-Americans to protest against racism with demonstrations, boycotts, legal action, letter-writing, speeches, and so on. Do you agree with this advice? Why or why not?
(3) If a leader such as Martin Luther King Jr. hadn’t existed in America in the 1960s, what might have happened?
(4) People of African descent are a minority in the U.S. What minorities live now in Japan?
(5) Does discrimination exist in Japan? Against which minorities or other groups of people?
(5) What forms of non-violent protest do you see in Japan?
(6) What issues are people protesting against recently in Japan?
Application Activity: WHO SAID IT?
The minorities below were talking about their experiences in Japan. Try to guess who said what. Write the letter of the person near their story.

A  A Korean resident woman born in Japan, who loves teaching
B  A half-Filipina junior high school girl in Japan
C  An American female English teacher in Japan
D  A Peruvian man who has to rent a room from a Peruvian family
E  A Brazilian boy in Japan who used to love school in Brazil
G  A Chinese man born in Japan who has risen to a high position in his company
H  A Korean resident man born in Japan, who had to go to university in Korea
I  A Brazilian man who worked twenty years in factories in Japan
J  An Iranian man with a degree in engineering in Japan, who is depending on friends now for food and a place to live.
K  A Pakistani woman, who wants to participate in Japanese society and politics
“ARE THESE CASES OF DISCRIMINATION? WHY OR WHY NOT?”

1. The other students in my school called me “black,” and hit me. They laughed at my Japanese. I got very depressed, and ended up dropping out of school. WHO SAID IT? Write the letter: ________

2. No one in my class would eat lunch with me, or talk to me, for two years. When my mother who is a foreigner came to school, the other students made fun of her, and called her bad names. I was so lonely that I killed myself. WHO SAID IT? Write the letter: ________

3. I have lived in Japan for twenty-three years, and I have permanent residency (永住権) but I am not allowed to vote, even in local elections. But I don’t want to become a Japanese citizen, because I would have to change my name to a 漢字 name. WHO SAID IT? Write the letter: ________

4. My parents were born in Japan, and I was born in Japan, but I still am unable to get Japanese nationality. Because of this, I had to give up on my dream to become a public school teacher in Gunma. WHO SAID IT? Write the letter: ________

5. My ancestors are from another country, but I don’t tell anyone. I changed my name to a Japanese name, because otherwise, I might have trouble getting a job. WHO SAID IT? Write the letter: ________
Who said it? Continued.

1. My parents wanted me to learn their language, so they sent me to an ethnic school in Japan. But because of this, I was not able to go to my local university in Japan. The university didn’t accept my high school diploma from the ethnic school. WHO SAID IT? Write the letter: _______

2. I have worked in Japan for more than twenty years, but I cannot get a full-time job, because I am a foreigner. I can only get temporary work, for low wages. I feel depressed, because in my country I as a professional. WHO SAID IT? Write the letter: _______

3. My company’s profit was down, so I was fired first, because I was a foreigner. I was without money and tried to get money (生活保護) from the city office. But they wouldn’t give me the application and told me to “go back to my country.” WHO SAID IT? Write the letter: _______

4. I tried to rent an apartment, but the real estate agent told me, “No foreigners.” I complained to the police, but in Japan, the landlord or owner has the right to refuse to rent to foreigners. WHO SAID IT? Write the letter: _______

5. I was a full-time professor at my university, and I was the only foreigner. I worked very hard and I was popular. The other professors all had permanent positions. Only I didn’t get a permanent position. My university would only let me work for three years, then I had to quit and find a new job. I asked the other professors why. They said “Because we Japanese are uncomfortable with foreigners.” WHO SAID IT? Write the letter: _______
Follow-up: What can we do about discrimination?

• In a small group, choose one of the statements above, which you think is clearly discrimination. Think of at least three ideas for non-violent action or protest against that discrimination. Share your ideas with the class.

• Statement Number______

• Three ideas or more for non-violent action or protest:
  • 1.
  • 2.
  • 3.
  • 4.
  • etc