2 How can we make our dreams come true?

Key Words

1 2.1 **Preview the Key Words.**

anxious

routine

pluck

pail

assemble

shrink

teardrop

stunned

disrespectful

eager

2 **Match the Key Words to the words with the same meaning.**

1 anxious	a excited
2 pail	b gather together
3 assemble	c rude
4 stunned	d bucket
5 disrespectful	e nervous
6 eager	f surprised
7 shrink	g pick
8 pluck	h reduce in size

Pre-reading

3 **Look at the pictures on pages 19–23 and make predictions.**

a Where does the story take place? _____

b Who are the main characters? _____

c How are the characters related to each other? _____

4 2.2 **Listen and read.**

The Honorary First-Graders

Inspired by a True Story

By Sarah Steinberg • Illustrated by Emmanuel Urueta

"Wake up, Soo-Jin." It's still dark out when I sit up in bed and rub my eyes. Grandmother is standing over my bed. She hands me a cup of steaming tea, and I start to feel anxious again before I can remember why.

"Soo-Jin, do you know what today is?" Grandmother asks. This is not her usual routine. Grandmother only wakes me up before dawn one day of the year. On all the others, my alarm goes off, and I meet her in the kitchen for breakfast, where she asks me about my day ahead: "Have you done your homework? Are you ready for the spelling test? Have you memorized the math formulas?"

But today is different, and I look forward to this day every year because it is the first day of the strawberry harvest. All those juicy, red strawberries just waiting to be plucked from the plants and put into my pail. The harvest is usually my favorite time of year, but today I'm not so excited. I remember the terrible news we got yesterday, when our school principal assembled all eight of us in his office.

Principal Park looked very serious as we stood around him. "Children," he said, "I have some bad news." Gi-Nam and Nara, the only two kindergarteners in our school, began to cry. Not me. I'm twelve, and I'm pretty tough. Principal Park continued, "When our small town was bigger, there were many children who lived here. We built this school for them, but our town has shrunk and so has our student population. Ten years ago the school had 25 students. Now, it's just the eight of you, and we don't have enough students to keep the school open."

"What will happen to us?" asked Shanae, my best friend in the village. She sounded as if she might cry, too.

"The school will close down, and you will have to go elsewhere," Principal Park said. "Some of you will move to bigger cities where you have relatives. I wish I could help, but we can't continue to operate the school when we have so few students here. I'm sorry."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing, but I understood that you can't have a school without enough children.

That was yesterday. Today, our strawberries need to be harvested. The air is cool as we pick the berries. While Grandmother hums contentedly, I drop my strawberries into my pail. My heart is heavy. I should be happy, but I'm not. The fruits, in the shape of teardrops, make me want to cry. I guess I'm not so tough after all.

"What's the matter?" Grandmother asks.

"Principal Park gave us bad news yesterday," I say.

Grandmother stops humming. "What did he say?" she asks.

"He said our school will shut down because there aren't enough students. What will I do?"

Grandmother stops picking now, too, and her face, normally cheerful, changes. The sides of her mouth turn down, and her eyes go cold. I know that look; she always gets it when she's thinking hard.

"When I was even younger than you, I had to quit school," she tells me. "I was one of the smartest students in my class, but I had not yet learned to read. Like you, my mother lived in another city for work. But then she got sick, and I had to find work and help my family. Soo-Jin, I'm ashamed to tell you that I never learned to read."

I cannot imagine my grandmother not being able to do anything. At seventy-two years old, she is the smartest person I know and the one who can persevere through anything. She knows how to make a little money go so far that I hardly ever notice that we are poor.

"You? You can't read?" I ask, stunned. My grandmother shakes her head sadly.

"I can recognize a few words, but it was always my ambition to learn. So, Soo-Jin, we will not let that happen to you because you are too smart and creative. You will have a career! You must go live with your Auntie Pearl," my grandmother says firmly. My Auntie Pearl never had children, and she lives in Busan, a big city that is a long drive away. Then, my grandmother says, a little more gently: "Wouldn't that be a good adventure?"

I try to imagine leaving everything that I know. I picture myself in my Auntie's apartment in Busan, in the middle of a loud and busy city, and all of the things I know and love—my room, my friends, my grandmother's soup, my grandmother—far away.

"No!" I say, full of emotion. "I don't want to go. I want to stay here with you!"

I drop my pail and run away across the field, and I keep running, right across town, past the temple and through the forest. I end up at Dasan Chodang, the little house where the great Korean scholar Jeong Yakyong once wrote many important books. It's a tourist site now, but people don't visit it much anymore. Just like the man who wrote his books here, I come here when I need to think. I sit on the floor and try to calm down, and that's when I have my idea.

I start walking to Shanae's house. She lives with her brother, her parents, and her grandmother, and that's who I want to speak to. I get to her house and ring the bell, and her grandmother greets me at the door with a smile. I bow politely, and she invites me in.

"Thank you, but I only came here to ask you a question. I don't want to be disrespectful," I say. Shanae's grandmother nods at me, so I continue. "Did you go to school? Did you learn to read?" I ask.

Shanae's grandmother laughs. "I went to school," she says, "but I stopped when I was still very young. We had a bad harvest at the farm, and my parents needed me at home. I can read a few words and write my name," she says, "but I can't read or write very well. I would like to learn, though, because I want to read books aloud to my grandchildren."

I had found two grandmothers, and I knew I could find more.

Now it's two days later. We must look like a strange group with me leading the way, and a gang of elderly grandmothers following behind me. In the principal's office, I make formal introductions to Principal Park, even though he already knows all of the women.

Then, I say, "I know our school registration is low, but what if we could register these eight grandmothers today?"

Principal Park looks over at our town's grandmothers. What does he see? A group of grandmothers with gray hair and tired faces? Or does he see a group of eager students, hopeful and ready to go back to school? I hold my breath.

My grandmother steps forward and says, "Principal Park, it has been my dream to learn to read and write since I was a young child. I want to enroll in school now. Even if I'm an old lady, I can still be a student."

Principal Park grins. "If you are half as smart as your granddaughter, I'm sure you will do just fine," he says.

And now? Here we are. Every day the school bus takes us all to school, our honorary first-graders sitting at the back of the bus, smiling and laughing with their notebooks in their hands.

So that is how I doubled attendance at my school and saved it from closing, and how my grandmother and her friends began elementary school again. And, you know, there's some advantage to going to school with your grandmother. For instance, she always keeps a hard candy in her pocket so that she can give it to me during recess.

Key Words

1 Complete the crossword puzzle.

Across

1 worried about what might happen
2 the shape of a falling drop of water
6 a round container with a handle

Down

1 to come together in a group
3 a regular way of doing something
4 to pick something, like a berry
5 excited and ready for something

Comprehension

2 Read and circle *Y* (yes), *N* (no), or *DS* (doesn't say).

a Soo-Jin's grandmother always wakes her up before it gets light. **Y N DS**
b There are two students in the same grade as Soo-Jin. **Y N DS**
c Soo-Jin's grandmother wants Soo-Jin to finish her education. **Y N DS**
d Shanae's grandmother can't read or write at all. **Y N DS**
e Soo-Jin likes going to school with her grandmother. **Y N DS**

3 Answer the questions about Soo-Jin's and Shanae's grandmothers.

	Soo-Jin's Grandmother	Shanae's Grandmother
a How much can she read and write?		
b Why did she have to leave school?		
c Why does she want to learn to read better?		

Digging Deeper

4 **Write notes in the story map.**

Story Map

Setting	Characters
_____	_____

Plot: Beginning	Plot: Middle	Plot: End
_____	_____	_____

5 **Mark (✔) the theme of the story.**

a Life is difficult in a small Korean town. ☐

b Education is important for everyone. ☐

c Harvest time is more important than education. ☐

Personalization

6 **Would you like your grandparents to be in school with you? Why or why not?**

_____

2 How can we make our dreams come true?

Key Words

1 2.3 **Preview the Key Words.**

separate

sunrise

debate

unfair

peaceful

victory

march

perseverance

inequality

balcony

2 **Match the Key Words to the words with the opposite meaning.**

1 peaceful	a loss
2 separate	b fairness
3 sunrise	c giving up
4 victory	d together
5 inequality	e violent
6 perseverance	f sunset

Pre-reading

3 **Read the title and look at the pictures on pages 27–31. Circle the correct options. (There may be more than one.)**

1 What is the text about?

a dreams b Martin Luther King, Jr. c growing up

2 What do you think the author's main purpose is?

a to inform b to entertain c to persuade

3 What do you know about Martin Luther King, Jr.?

_____

4 2.4 **Listen and read.**

A Dream That Changed a Nation

By Kim Milne

Statue of Martin Luther King, Jr., in Washington D.C.

Have you ever had a dream? Not the type of dream you have when you go to sleep at night, but something you wanted so badly that you put all of your time and energy into making it come true? Many people have dreams. Some people dream of becoming a pop star or making a music video with a million views. Others dream of being the first astronaut to fly to Mars or even becoming the leader of their country. But what if your dream was to change your whole society?

That was the dream of Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK). It was a dream that seemed crazy at that time. His dream was to see that everyone in the United States of America was treated equally. This is the history of MLK, his fight to make his dream come true, and how he became one of the most important people in the history of the U.S.A.

Martin Luther King, Jr., was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929. He had a younger brother named Alfred and an older sister named Christine. His father, Martin Luther King, Sr., was a pastor, and his mother, Alberta Williams King, was a teacher.

When MLK was born, slavery was no longer legal. It had been abolished by Abraham Lincoln in 1864. But life was still very hard for African Americans in the United States of America. They were treated like second-class citizens. Some lawmakers made special rules, especially in the southern states, to keep black and white people separate. These rules said that black and white people had to use different bathrooms, eat in different restaurants, and go to different schools and hospitals. And often the places for black people were not as nice as the places for white people. This separation of people of different colors is called segregation. When MLK was growing up, he experienced segregation every day. It was as normal to him as the sunrise.

Separate water fountains for white people and people of color

How would you feel if you couldn't use a water fountain or a swimming pool because of your skin color?

Segregated movie theater for African Americans

He also experienced prejudice from when he was young. (Prejudice means that you have an idea or opinion about someone because of the way they look or speak even if you haven't spoken to them or don't know them.) For example, when MLK was a little boy, he had a friend whose dad owned the store in front of his house. They played together all the time. But, when they were six, they had to go to different schools because his friend was white. After a while, his friend's dad wouldn't allow him to play with MLK anymore.

MLK was a very smart boy and did well in school. He skipped both 9th and 11th grade and finished high school when he was just 15 years old. He loved books and was on the school's debate team. When he was 14, he entered a speaking contest and won. But, while he was coming back home on a bus, he had to give his seat to a white person. This, along with many other experiences in his life, led him to understand that society had to change.

MLK's house

Boston University

In 1944, he went to Morehouse College to get a degree. After that, he decided to study religion at Boston University. Around the same time, he met Coretta Scott, a beautiful girl who was studying music. They fell in love and got married.

In 1955, MLK became a pastor at a church in Atlanta. There, he started to help his community to fight and change unfair laws. At this time, he also became interested in the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi. He had helped change India by leading peaceful protests. MLK wanted to do the same. So he talked with other leaders, and they decided to try to fight against discrimination in a non-violent way. He organized "sit-ins," a kind of protest where people sit down in a public place and refuse to move or leave. For example, people sat peacefully in segregated restaurants to protest segregation.

MLK's church

How would you feel if someone told you to give up your seat on a bus because of your skin color?

One day in 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, a woman named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat for a white man on a bus. The racist bus driver was furious and called the police. She was arrested and put in jail. MLK heard about this and went to Montgomery to help. He told everyone not to use the buses. For 381 days, all black people and a few white people stopped using them. The bus company lost a lot of money. Finally, the rules about public transportation were changed. This was a big victory, and it also showed many people that change can happen through peaceful protest.

The bus Rosa Parks was removed from

Over the next few years, MLK gave many speeches and participated in many marches to change unfair laws. He was arrested over twenty times. His house was bombed. But he never stopped. His hard work and perseverance earned him a lot of respect. He became a great leader for the people fighting to get rid of inequality in American society.

One of his most famous speeches was given in Washington, D.C., in 1963; 250,000 people marched from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial. MLK was the last person to speak to the huge crowd. He described the dream he had for all American people: that everyone should be treated equally and with respect. It is considered one of the most important speeches in American history. And it has inspired millions of people around the world ever since.

The words of MLK

In 1964, shortly after his speech, new laws were passed. Black and white people could now go to the same schools, restaurants, and hospitals. Discrimination was officially against the law. It was a great moment in American history, but for MLK it was only the beginning. He continued to fight peacefully. However, some people were not happy with the changes and wanted to stop him. On April 4, 1968, MLK traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, to help black garbage workers. They wanted to get the same money for doing the same job as white workers. Sadly, while he was standing on the balcony of his motel room, he was shot, and later died.

Statue of MLK in Birmingham, Alabama

MLK helped to change many unfair things in the United States of America. He inspired thousands of people all around the world to fight for their rights in a non-violent way. He changed American history. Today, more than 50 years after his death, his memory lives on. Since 1986, every third Monday in January is a public holiday known as Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. It celebrates his life, his beliefs, and his never-ending fight to achieve his dream.

So what is your dream? What do you want to be? What do you want to do? What do you want to change? Whatever your dream is, if you persevere like MLK, you can make it come true—and you might make the world a better place.

Key Words

1 Complete the sentences.

debate **march** **sunrise** **balcony** **unfair** **victory**

a I woke up so early this morning that I was able to see the _____.

b MLK felt that American society was _____ and tried to change it.

c The protesters organized a _____ to demand more money for schools.

d We won the soccer tournament. It was our team's greatest _____.

e Our class had a _____ about where we should go on our next field trip.

f We sat on the _____ and watched the people below us walking down the street.

Comprehension

2 Complete the timeline with the correct dates.

3 Which page of the text gives us the most information about MLK's ...

a early life? _____

b school? _____

c speeches? _____

d death? _____

Digging Deeper

4 **Look at your answers in Activity 3 on page 26.**

a What do you think the author's main purpose is now? _____

b Were your predictions correct? _____

c What new things did you learn about MLK from the article?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

d Is there any part of the text that tries to persuade you? What does it try to persuade you to do?

_____

_____

_____

5 **Answer the questions.**

a Why did MLK think it was important to lead peaceful protests?

_____

b What is a "sit-in," and why is it called that?

_____

c Why did people hold sit-ins in segregated restaurants?

_____

d Why is MLK's speech from 1963 important?

_____

Personalization

6 **Write three of your dreams for the future.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____