I Have a Dream
Speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Literary Terms
Seminal U.S. Document

• Is a document or speech that has both historical and literary importance. The document or speech has helped shape the country and its people.

• Dr. King’s speech helped propel the civil rights movement, changing our laws and our ideas about equality.
Rhetorical Devices

• Are techniques that writers use to enhance arguments and convey ideas.

• Rhetorical Devices such as Extended Metaphor, Repetition, and Parallelism appear throughout Dr. King’s speech.
Extended Metaphor

• A type of Rhetorical Device
• A comparison between two unlike things that is explored in depth
• In lines 17-31, King uses an extended metaphor of a bad check to explain that the U.S. government failed in its obligation to its African-American citizens.
Repetition

• A type of Rhetorical Device
• Saying a word or phrase over and over for emphasis
• In lines 70-80, King repeats the words “we can never be satisfied” three times for emphasis.
Parallelism

• A type of Rhetorical Device
• The repeated use of the same grammatical construction to express ideas that are equal in importance.

• In lines 78-81, King uses parallelism when he says, “we cannot be satisfied...we are not satisfied...we will not be satisfied.”

Parallelism often employs repetition
Tone

• Is the author’s attitude toward the subject and the audience

• The use of repetition and parallelism can affect the meaning and the tone of a speech.

• The repetition of the words, “I have a dream...” shows that the author’s tone is uplifting and encouraging.
Theme

• Is the central message the speaker wants to convey. The theme is usually a statement about life or living.

• Determining a speech’s theme requires you to think about the speech’s context as you analyze the words.

• King’s speech emphasizes the theme that while everyone deserves freedom, some people must fight for it.
Vocabulary Squares

• Use the “I Have a Dream” Speech on pages 48-51 to locate the following vocabulary words:
  
  default  inextricably
  desolate  redemptive
  degenerate