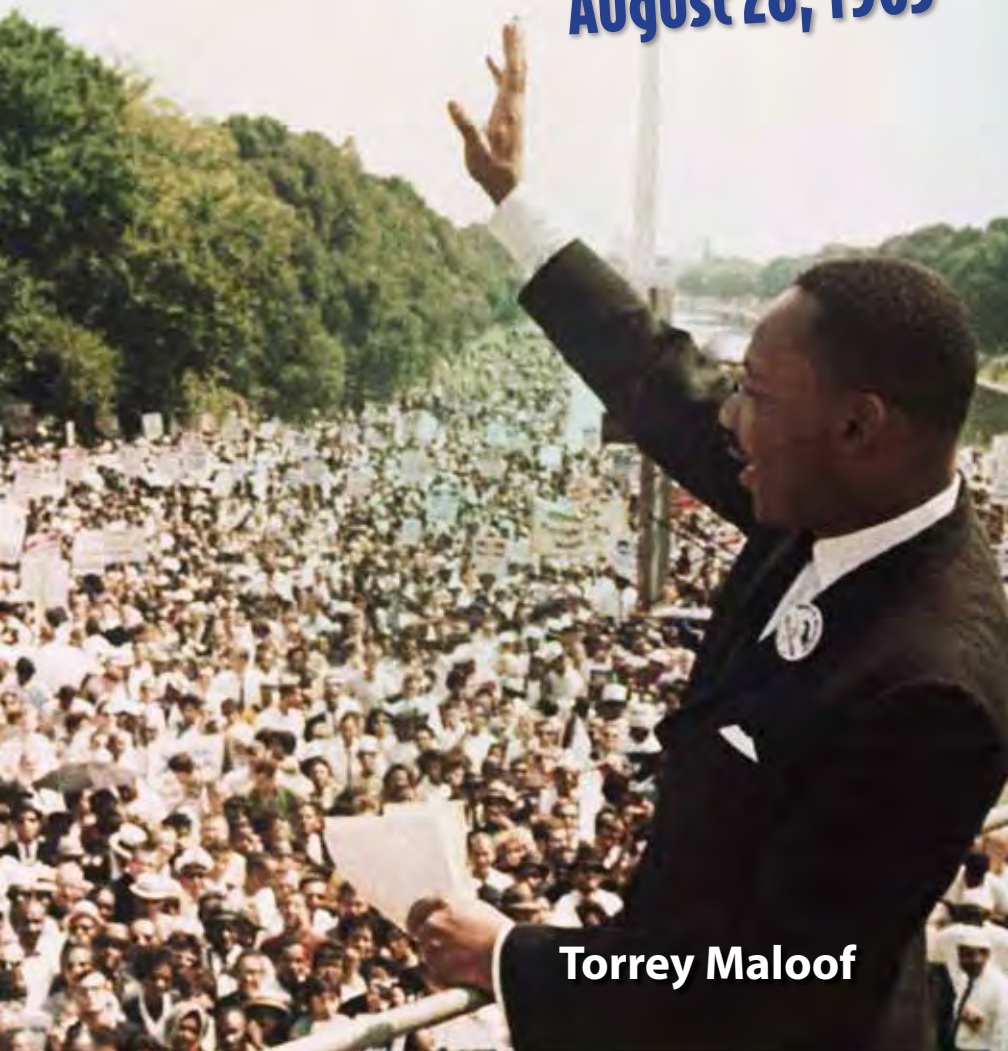
You Are There!

TIME

March on Washington

August 28, 1963



Torrey Maloof

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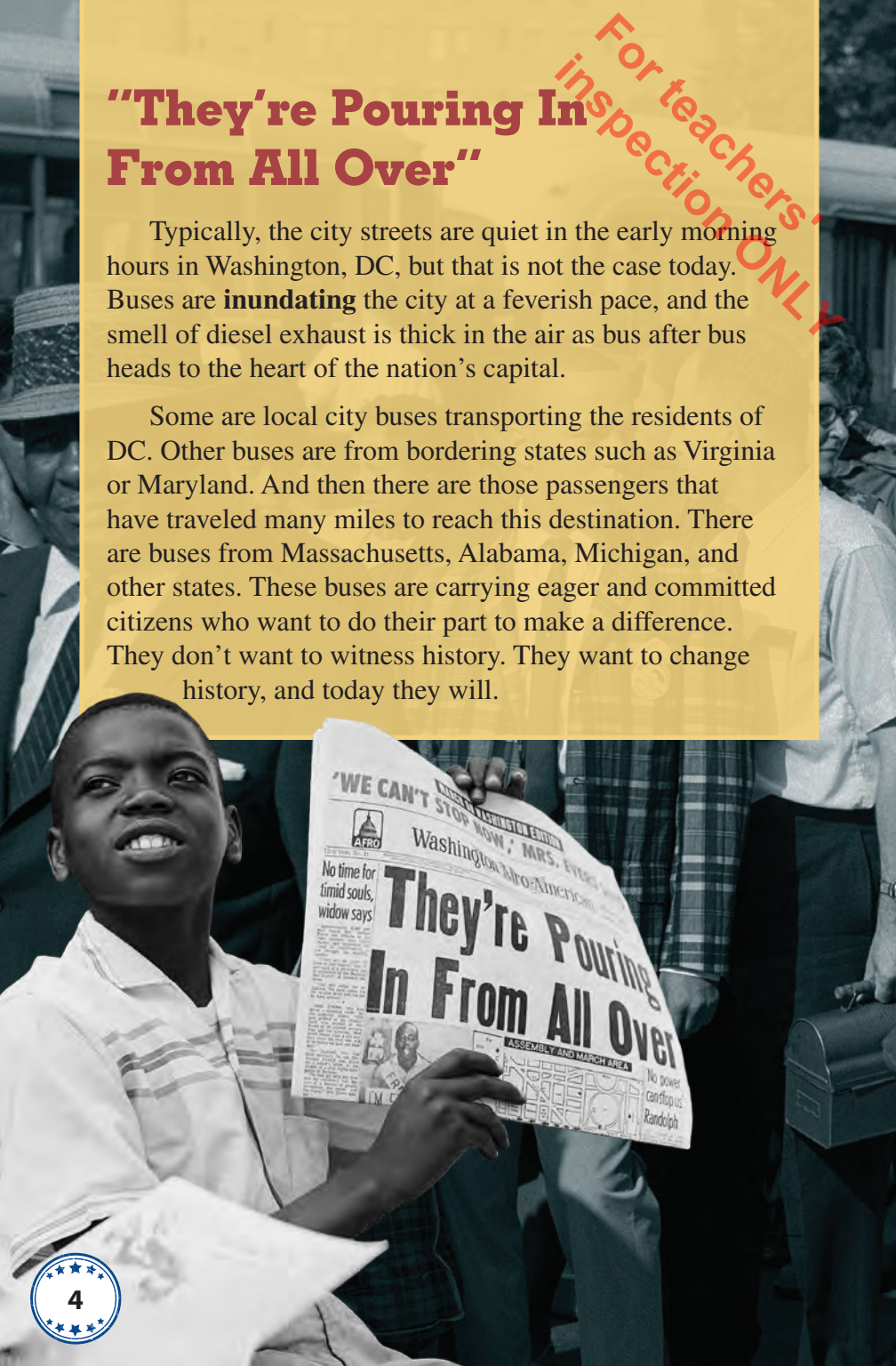
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"They're Pouring In From All Over"

Typically, the city streets are quiet in the early morning hours in Washington, DC, but that is not the case today. Buses are **inundating** the city at a feverish pace, and the smell of diesel exhaust is thick in the air as bus after bus heads to the heart of the nation's capital.

Some are local city buses transporting the residents of DC. Other buses are from bordering states such as Virginia or Maryland. And then there are those passengers that have traveled many miles to reach this destination. There are buses from Massachusetts, Alabama, Michigan, and other states. These buses are carrying eager and committed citizens who want to do their part to make a difference. They don't want to witness history. They want to change history, and today they will.



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The March

On August 28, 1963, the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom took place in the nation's capital. The intent was to bring national attention to the inequality and **racism** African Americans in the United States faced.

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While the many buses jam the asphalt arteries of the capital, pedestrians begin to fill the sidewalks on this cool, calm morning. Many of the people are dressed in their Sunday best, wearing suits and dresses. Other people wear hats and sunglasses, and many are carrying sack lunches.

African Americans aren't the only ones walking; there are white people, too. There are elderly people in wheelchairs and young children being pushed in strollers. People of all ages, ethnicities, and **creeds** have come together for this one extraordinary event.



Who Could March?

Organizers of the march called for "all Americans of good will who will subscribe to the aims and purposes of the March" to join them to "demand an end to the twin evils of racism and economic **degradation**."

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A sense of unity and excitement fills the air with each passing step. Polite conversations mix with the sound of shuffling feet on the cool pavement and the noisy chugging of the buses in the crowded streets. The **colossal** crowd is making its way toward the towering **obelisk** of the Washington Monument.

Sack Lunches

Organizers of the march encouraged attendees to bring their own sack lunches. They suggested a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, fruit, plain cake, and a soft drink. They urged marchers to avoid foods that could spoil in the day's heat, such as mayonnaise and salads.



Meeting at the Monument

Nearing the Washington Monument, it becomes virtually impossible to maneuver through the **throng** of people. The pressing crowd is growing larger with each passing minute. It is nearing 10 a.m., and the temperature of the air is starting to rise rapidly. People are using event programs and hand fans to keep cool.

The **congregation** at the monument is packed but peaceful. As more marchers arrive, they proceed to check-in stations. There are 40,000 people already present. Organizers want to make sure that each person at the march is accounted for and kept safe.

Premade picket signs with writing demanding equal rights, decent housing, and more jobs are handed out among the crowd. Marchers can be seen proudly hoisting them in the air as if they are practicing for the main event. Amid the clamor, the testing of a microphone, "Testing, one, two, testing," can be heard over loudspeakers.

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Approved Signs Only

The only signs allowed at the march were ones that the organizers had printed prior to the day's events. They were white signs with red or blue lettering. Some of the slogans included:

We Demand Voting Rights Now!
Civil Rights Plus Full Employment Equals Freedom
Gradually Isn't Fast Enough!



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Raising Funds

Many of the participants sported buttons showing a black hand and a white hand shaking, the day's date, and the name of the march. These buttons were sold months in advance to raise funds for the march.



Reader's Guide

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1. Why were famous personalities and entertainers performing at the march?
2. In what ways did Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. command the crowd's attention after a long, hot day in the sun?
3. Imagine being at the march. How might you have reacted to hearing King's speech?
4. Take a look at the list of attendees on page 24. Why were these men selected to attend the meeting?



