

Letter from a Birmingham Jail ~ Analysis Questions

Name _____ Period _____

Go to:

https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

As you read the document, answer the following questions.

1. To whom is the letter addressed? Why has Dr. King chosen to respond to them?

2. What are Dr. King's reasons for being in Birmingham?

3. How does Dr. King address the charge of being labeled an "outsider"?

4. Examine the following quote:

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

(A) What does this quote mean for the people of Birmingham?

(B) What does it mean for each of us today?

5. What are the four basic steps of nonviolent direct action?

(Continued on the Back)

6. Why did Dr. King and his supporters decide to delay their actions?

7. What does Dr. King mean by "constructive nonviolent tension" and how does he define its goal?

8. Read this quote from Dr. King's letter:

"We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."

Can you think of other examples in history that illustrate his point? Explain your answer.

9. According to Dr. King's letter, how does one distinguish between a law that is just, and one that is not? What historical examples does he use to support his argument?

10. Can you think of other examples in history where the law has been "wrong" or "unjust"?

11. What does Dr. King warn will happen if the Negro community is not allowed to demonstrate through nonviolent actions?

12. Why does Dr. King believe that religious leaders have a special role in leading the resistance against the system of segregation?

(The End)