

UNIT 8 Social Transitions
Early Contemporary Era 1960 to 1980

A STEIN WOOD
FROEBEL
BILINGUAL SCHOOL
Home of the Space Generation



LETTER FROM BIRMINGHAM JAIL

with Jim Soto

SPEAK YOUR MIND

Without laws there is chaos. Chaos breeds disorder and confusion.

Disorder and confusion are poisonous to a society.

Laws are vital to help make social dynamics possible, predictable and safe.

When, **if ever**, are people justified in breaking the law?

Take a minute to consider, use examples to explain your answer in your notebook.



On April 12, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. was jailed for disobeying a court order forbidding a group of African Americans from marching to downtown Birmingham, Alabama. Four days later, eight clergymen from Alabama, including bishops, ministers, and a rabbi, published a statement in a newspaper criticizing King for defying the law.

At first, King had only scraps of the newspaper to write on, but he nonetheless drafted a response to the clerics. (He later obtained writing paper.) The long letter would become a statement of principle for the Civil Rights movement. In the excerpt from this letter, King says he feels compelled to employ civil disobedience to protest **unjust measures**. In other portions, he explains that nonviolent tactics can bring supporters of segregation to the negotiating table. In response to his critics' remarks that change takes time, he notes that Blacks have waited centuries for equality.



Martin Luther King Jr's legacy is one of inspiring and leading the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. He fought for racial equality and justice through nonviolent means, inspiring others to do the same. His efforts contributed to the passage of the **Civil Rights Act** and the **Voting Rights Act**, which helped end segregation and discrimination. King's speeches and actions continue to inspire people around the world in the pursuit of social justice and human rights. In 1968, while in Memphis, Tennessee, to show support for striking sanitation workers, King was assassinated.



LITERARY ELEMENTS



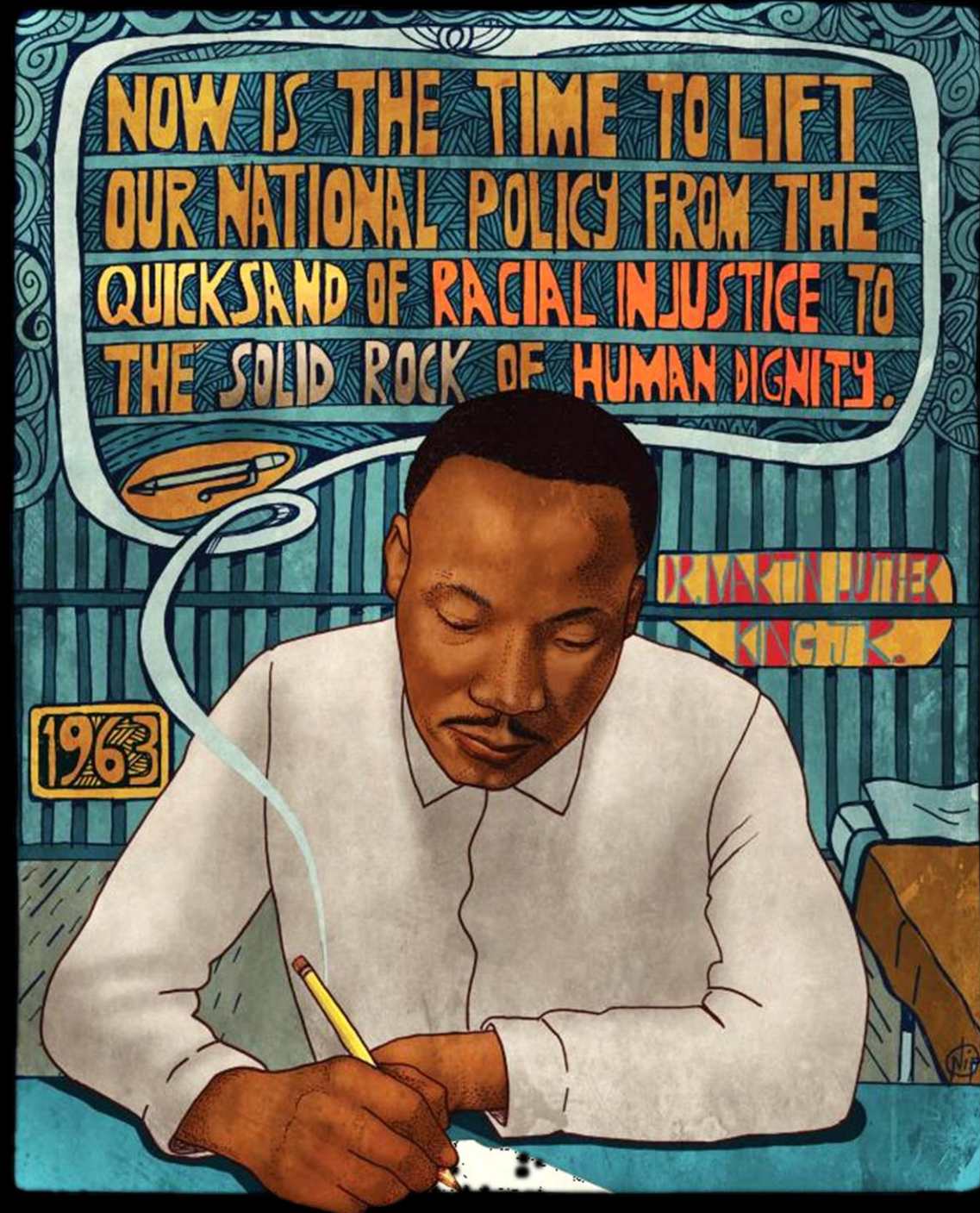
Argument

Is a form of persuasion that makes a case to an audience for accepting or rejecting a proposition or course of action.

Allusion

Is a reference to a well-known person, event, object, or work from history or literature.

Many of Martin Luther King's speeches and writings became statements of principle for the Civil Rights movement. As you read this excerpt, identify the arguments he makes and consider whether each is based primarily on religion or politics. Also identify the allusions King makes to support his ideas. Record these historical and literary references in a list.



ASSESSMENT

After reading pages 738-747 in your book, complete the activities:

1. REFER TO TEXT &
2. REASON WITH TEXT
3. & ANALYZE LITERATURE
 - **Argument and Allusion** - What arguments does King make in responding to his critics? Which arguments are based on religious tenets, and which are based on politics? Why might King have decided to present both types of arguments? Are these arguments still relevant today? Explain.
 - Review the list of allusions you recorded. How is each one used to support or clarify King's stance? Is King's use of allusions effective? Why or why not?



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